

Kashmir Court Drops The Hammer On Loan Defaulters Judges Warn Against Clogging Courts With Flimsy Loan Default Cases

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: For years, struggling borrowers in Kashmir leaned on legal loopholes to hold off banks from seizing their mortgaged land. That changed this week.



On July 17, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court ruled against a business firm, M/s G H S, that had defaulted on a loan and tried to stop J&K Bank from taking over its agricultural land.

The bank had used the

SARFAESI Act, India's main law to recover unpaid loans without going to court. The borrower argued that the land was protected because it was "agricultural."

The court dismissed the case as "grossly misconceived" and

fined the firm 50,000 for wasting judicial time.

A two-judge bench led by Justices Sanjeev Kumar and Sanjay Parihar said such cases "clog the justice system" and warned of further penalties for similar delays.

The verdict is being seen as a turning point.

"This judgment ends a long misuse of the 'agricultural land' argument," said Farooq Hameed, a senior lawyer in Srinagar. "From now on, if a borrower has | [More on P6](#)

Yatra Resumes After Weather Halt

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The annual Amarnath Yatra resumed on Friday after being suspended for a day due to inclement weather, with over 16,000 devotees performing darshan at the holy cave shrine, officials said.

An official confirmed that the pilgrimage was halted on Thursday following continuous rainfall that triggered landslides along the twin routes, raising safety concerns. With weather conditions improving, authorities allowed the yatra to resume on Friday morning.

Amid an atmosphere of devotion and spiritual zeal, a total of 16,858 pilgrims | [More on P6](#)

J&K Braces For A Wet Weekend Intense Showers Likely Between July 21-23: MeT



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Meteorological Department has predicted a spell of unsettled weather across Jammu and Kashmir over the coming days, with intermittent rain and thundershowers expected until July 26. A weather advisory has been issued for July 21-23, cautioning about gusty winds

and brief intense showers in some areas.

According to MeT officials, the region will experience scattered to fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall till July 20. "From July 21 to 23, J&K is expected to witness generally cloudy weather with intermittent spells of light to moderate rainfall," an official said, adding | [More on P6](#)

Rains Bring Relief to Farmers

After weeks of relentless heat and a troubling dry spell, Kashmir's farmlands are finally beginning to breathe again. The recent bout of rainfall across the Valley has not only eased soaring temperatures but brought long-awaited relief to orchardists and paddy cultivators struggling with irrigation woes. | [More on P6](#)

J&K Now a Hub of Education & Innovation Under PM Modi: LG

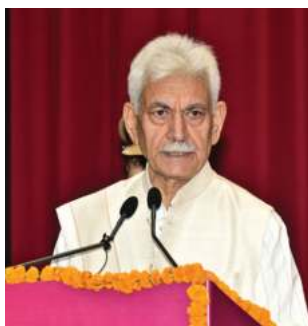
Says '5Cs' Will Empower Business Leaders Of Tomorrow

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday addressed the valedictory session of a five-day orientation programme at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, where he urged the new batch of students to emerge as business leaders committed to inclusive growth and national development.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also inaugurated the Tejas Sports Complex within the IIM Jammu campus, symbolizing the institute's commitment to the holistic development of its students.

Congratulating the incoming students, LG Sinha said their journey at IIM Jammu will build a vital bridge between academic learning and real-world problem-solving.



"I wish to see the young and bright minds as business leaders and thinkers of tomorrow who will shape the economic progress of society and the future of this great country," he said.

He underlined the need to ensure that India's growth benefits everyone, as the country works towards becoming a developed nation by 2047. "Our business leaders of tomorrow must focus on changing the lives of people,

push for inclusive growth, and make sure no one is left behind," he added.

The LG emphasized that the future of India's business innovation and resource management rests on the shoulders of young professionals. "It will be business leaders and thinkers' responsibility to accelerate industrial growth, secure private investment, promote economic activity and build a private sector that supports

the country's economic stability," he said.

Speaking about the transformation in Jammu and Kashmir, LG Sinha credited the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for turning the region into a major hub of education and innovation. He praised IIM Jammu for its growing contribution to the Union Territory's education sector.

"The Tejas Sports Complex inaugurated | [More on P6](#)



Gupta Sworn In As Ladakh LG

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, was on Friday sworn in as the new Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh at a ceremony held at Raj Niwas, Leh. Dressed in traditional Ladakhi Goncha, Gupta took the oath of office and secrecy, administered by Justice Arun Palli. | [More on P6](#)

KO IMPACT

Public Movement Barred Along LJHP Canal

Idrees Bukhtiyar

Srinagar: A day after Kashmir Observer reported that residents of Uri are demanding fencing along the Lower Jhelum Hydroelectric Project (LJHP) canal in Gantmulla to prevent further tragedies, the concerned department on Friday said that public movement along the canal has been restricted.

"The movement of people has been barred following the recent drowning incident," Gulshan Ahmad, Executive Engineer, civil maintenance wing LJHP

told Kashmir Observer over the phone.

He added that the department has also written to the local police, requesting deployment of personnel along the canal to ensure compliance and enhance safety.

Ahmad further stated that the department is planning to install fencing along the canal. "We will soon prepare an estimate for it," he said.

Notably, fencing the canal has been a long-standing demand of local residents. They have also called for the installation of | [More on P6](#)

PARLIAMENT'S MONSOON SESSION

HM, DM Discuss 'Op Sindoor' Ahead of Key Debates

Agencies

New Delhi: Ahead of Parliament's Monsoon Session slated to commence from July 21, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high level meet here on Friday.

The meeting held at Rajnath Singh's Delhi residence was attended by National Security Advisor (NSA), Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff, Tri-Services Chiefs and other top officers.

The top officers, according to the

sources, briefed the ministers about the success of "Operation Sindoor" and other proactive steps that were taken after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 civilians dead.

The Defence Minister is likely to give a statement on "Operation Sindoor" in the upcoming monsoon session of the Parliament.

Sources said that the Singh and Shah took feedback from the security top brass on the host of issues that are likely to come up during the customary all-party meeting scheduled to | [More on P6](#)

'EXCESSIVE 70% JOB RESERVATION IN J&K'

HC Allows Fresh Pleas, Seeks Govt Reply In 4 Weeks

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Friday issued notice to the government on a fresh petition, calling into question J&K UT's rationale in prescribing reservation up to 70% in government jobs for the candidates from the reserved categories against their population share of 30%.

A division bench comprising Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Sanjay Parihar has sought the response from government within four weeks, days after dismissing as withdrawn a batch of petitions with the liberty to the petitioners

to mount fresh challenge to various provisions of the Jammu & Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004, in particular Section 3.

In the fresh plea, the petitioners have challenged Section-3, Section-4, Section-6, Section-8 and Section-9 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act 2004, some rules of Jammu & Kashmir Reservation Rules of 2005 including Rule-4, Rule-5, Rule-9, Rule-10, Rule-13, Rule-15 and Rule-17, S.O 176 dated 15-03-2024, S.O 127 dated 20-04-2020, S.O 305 dated 31-05-2024, SRO 518 dated 02-Sep-2019, Jammu & Kashmir reservation Rules 2005.

According to | [More on P6](#)



Court Acquits Trio In 2017 Srinagar Murder Case

Orders Action Against IO For 'Faulty Investigation'

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A court here has acquitted three persons, one of them on charges of murdering a woman here and two others for having allegedly purchased stolen gold ornaments from him in January 2017.

The court of 1st Additional Sessions Judge Srinagar Anjum Ara also recommended departmental action against the investigating officer for "faulty investigation" in the case which pertained to the murder of a woman whose body was recovered three days after her death due to alleged strangulation while her two and half month milk sucking baby was found alive inside their home in Pukhrabal area of Bota Kadal Lal Bazar Srinagar.

The court found prosecution case wanting on as many as 20 counts including the investigation officer's | [More on P6](#)



FKC

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KO VIEW

Kashmir's Korean Connection

Kashmir's connected past is once again shaping how we see it today. A recent archaeological find in Kotli could reveal a history far older and more far-reaching than what we've learned from schoolbooks. While some are brushing it off as just another Sharda inscription, this discovery deserves a closer and more serious look.

Unearthed in the southern highlands, the inscription bears a rare combination: Korean characters alongside Proto-Sharda script.

At first, this pairing may seem implausible. But the region's geography and historical footprint support the possibility.

Kotli sits at a cultural and trade junction, close to Rajouri and Mendhar, and historically linked with both the Kashmir Valley and the broader Silk Route. Its terrain once served as a corridor for Buddhist monks, traders, and scholars journeying from India into Central and East Asia.

This isn't an isolated artifact. The surrounding site has yielded rock shelters, carved caves, ancient water pools, and fragments of pottery, pointing to continuous human activity from the 4th millennium BCE to the 18th century. Taken together, these findings suggest that Kotli was not a remote outpost, but part of a long-inhabited cultural network.

Historical precedent strengthens the claim. Korea's oldest texts, such as the Samguk Yusa, reference Buddhist links with the Indian subcontinent. Ancient Korean temples hold sculptures with unmistakable Indian influence.

Across Southeast and Central Asia, archaeological finds regularly reveal mixed scripts and hybrid iconography, evidence of regions once tied together by shared spiritual and trade routes.

The Indo-Korean connection is not new. It has simply lacked robust archaeological exploration in South Asia itself.

Dismissing the Kotli discovery as a coincidence or a misreading would be premature. Scholarly caution is necessary, but so is intellectual curiosity. The need of the hour is careful, multi-disciplinary research involving linguists, historians, archaeologists, and experts from Korea. A comparative script analysis could confirm or debunk the links, but only through rigorous study, not assumptions.

Kashmir's cultural history has often been eclipsed by its political present. But discoveries like Kotli remind us of its deeper identity as a place of passage, not just polemics.

If we look closely enough, the inscribed stone may not only reveal Korea's ancient ties. It may finally help Kashmir reclaim its place on the map of global history.

Manufactured Consent

Despite clear Islamic teachings on choice and consent, young Kashmiris, especially women, are still pressured into marriages that prioritize family pride over personal will.

Malik Daniyal

We grow up in Kashmir hearing the same refrains, over and over again: "Shaadi karne ki umar ho gayi hai," "Log kya kahenge," "Ladki ke liye ghar ka faisla buzurg karte hain."

At first, they blend into the background, part of the air we breathe. But as we grow older, the weight of those words becomes harder to ignore.

We see it in drawing rooms over nun chai. In hushed conversations during matchmaking visits. And later, at weddings, where the bride smiles for the camera, but not with her eyes.

She no longer knows how to say "no." Maybe she tried. But she was told not to create a scene, not to make it harder for her parents and not to dishonor the family.

She was met with lines like, "Cxe kiya chi gomut, maelis magi hund yezatuk khayal cheena?" ("What have you become? What will people say? Don't you care about your family's honor?")

All because she dared to say no, a right Islam explicitly gives her, stripped away by a culture pretending to speak in the voice of religion.

There is a troubling irony within Kashmiri society. The institution of marriage, which in faith is meant to begin with mutual respect and consent, too often begins with pressure and silent resistance.

The weight of tradition, family pride, and misrepresented religion falls heaviest on girls. Many are not married because they are ready or willing, but because saying no would upset the fragile order of things.

And this is not just a personal tragedy. It is a social failure that corrodes the very idea of family.

Islam, however, is unambiguous.

Marriage is a covenant, between two consenting adults, not families. Consent is not a ceremonial nod. It is a fundamental requirement.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was clear. In one hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas, a young woman approached him to say her father had married her without her consent. The Prophet gave her the option to annul the marriage.

In another instance, when Khansa bint Khidam came to protest a marriage arranged by her father, the Prophet didn't urge her to adjust. He annulled it.

He also said: "The virgin should not be given in marriage

until her permission has been sought" (Bukhari, 6968; Muslim).

Guardianship in Islam is a trust, not a tool of control. A wali is expected to act with sincerity and justice, not with pride or personal preference. A woman must be given to someone she accepts, not someone her family finds convenient or respectable. Her will matters - legally, spiritually and morally.

This principle is not marginal. It is central to the Islamic legal tradition. Scholars like Imam Abu Hanifa, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Qudamah, and Imam al-Nawawi have affirmed that a woman cannot be forced into a marriage she does not accept.

If she objects, her objection carries full legal and ethical weight.

In Kashmiri homes, the silence of a girl is too often mistaken for consent. "She agreed eventually," people say, or, "She didn't object, so we assumed she was okay with it."

But these are often the silent echoes of emotional blackmail and worn-down resistance. A forced "yes" is a silenced "no."

In many conservative households, questioning a parent's decision is seen as sinful or rebellious. Girls are told that saying no is equivalent to shaming their families or defying God.

Yet Islam, the very religion invoked to justify such pressure, offers them the right to choose. It is not disobedience. It is a God-given right.

The cost of these coerced unions is high. Marriages born of reluctant acceptance often give way to alienation, loneliness, and deep emotional trauma.

Divorce may come years later, but the damage begins long before.

Children raised in such homes grow up absorbing dysfunction. They learn that obedience is more important than honesty, that family image matters more than emotional wellbeing.

This creates a generational loop of unhappiness and disillusionment, leaving future couples even more skeptical of the value of marriage.

Compounding this problem is the entrenched obsession with caste, class, and familial pedigree.

Proposals are rejected not for lack of compatibility, but because the other family doesn't belong to the right khandan, or doesn't fit some unwritten social code.

Even people of strong faith and upright character are turned away for having the "wrong" lineage or profession.

Besides cultural snobbery, it is in direct conflict with Islamic values. The Prophet, in his final sermon, declared: "No Arab is superior to a non-Arab, and

no white is superior to a black, except by piety and good deeds."

Yet in Kashmir, the echoes of this sermon are drowned out by whispers of social pride and inherited prejudice. These attitudes shut out worthy matches and, worse, erode trust in the entire institution of marriage.

When these unions break down, and many do, the blame falls not on the system, but on the individuals. "They didn't try hard enough," people say. "The girl was too stubborn."

Rarely does anyone ask whether the marriage was ever based on respect, choice, or emotional readiness.

Religious leaders, who speak often about obedience and modesty, are notably silent on forced marriages. Their silence, whether out of fear or convenience, becomes complicity.

Parents, meanwhile, confuse control with care. They claim to be acting in their child's best interest, while often protecting their own fear, pride, or social standing.

The community, for its part, looks away. As long as the wedding is grand and the nikkah is performed, all seems well. But beneath the surface lies a truth we refuse to confront.

If we wish to restore trust in marriage, we must return to its spiritual roots. Consent must not be reduced to a checkbox. It is a divine principle, both moral and legal.

Religious scholars must speak plainly and consistently about this right. Families must learn to listen without judgment, and allow their children to say "no" without being branded rebellious.

Young people must be taught to seek compatibility in faith and character, not in caste or class.

And above all, we must stop confusing control with righteousness. Islam honors parents, but it does not grant them the right to dictate their children's life partners.

Forced marriages do not protect our culture. They only preserve pain.

Every time a girl is pressured into saying yes, every time a boy is told to "adjust" without being asked if he is ready, we commit an injustice. And the couple is left to suffer its consequences.

It is time we ask ourselves: are we building homes rooted in love, faith, and dignity, or are we merely staging ceremonies to protect names and egos?

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Strange Turf War

A growing conflict between apple orchardists and poplar planters in Kashmir reveals deeper cracks in the rural land governance. The law is unclear, the trees are tall, and trust is withering.

Mohammad Amin Mir

Picture two adjacent plots in a Kashmir village. One is an apple orchard, carefully cultivated over years. The other is a line of poplars, fast-growing, profit-friendly trees often planted for timber.

As the poplars shoot up, reaching 60 to 80 feet in just a decade, they begin casting long shadows over the orchard. Their leaves fall, roots stretch wide, and presence begins to impact the yield next door.

The orchard owner files a complaint. He says the shade is stunting his apples, the leaf fall is encouraging pests, and the roots are draining water from his soil. The poplar grower says it's his land. He can do what he wants.

This isn't just a local spat. It's a signal of a slowly spreading tension across rural India as land use patterns shift, climate pressures build, and farming becomes less about food and more about returns.

Agriculture in Kashmir still employs around 60% of the population. The valley grows over 20 lakh metric tonnes of apples every year, contributing nearly 75% to India's apple production.

At the same time, timber demand has created a poplar boom. Farmers are incentivised to plant fast-yielding trees, sometimes harvesting them in 10 to 12 years for plywood, packaging, and matchstick industries.

Schemes like the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) have pushed orchard expansion. Meanwhile, the poplar trade has turned timber into a second income stream for families.

Yet when these two models meet on opposite sides of a boundary, conflict follows.

At the heart of it is a legal and administrative vacuum.

The Jammu & Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat), gives landowners the right to use their land within its agricultural classification.

That means an owner can plant poplars, or apples, if the land is not designated as forest, kahcharai (grazing), or protected. There's no clause that says how close is too close, or whether shade counts as harm.

Indian civil law offers a few tools.

The Indian Easements Act, 1882 allows for the right to light and air if it's been enjoyed without interruption for 20 years.

The law of private nuisance says that one landowner's use of land must not interfere with a neighbour's ability to enjoy theirs.

The trouble is, proving that interference, especially in a field, without surveillance or technical evidence, isn't simple.

Judicial precedents try to fill in the gaps. In 2008, the Himachal Pradesh High Court ordered eucalyptus trees removed from near an orchard, ruling that "no landowner may exercise his right in such a way that it substantially harms his neighbour's lawful use."

In 2011, the Punjab & Haryana High Court upheld a 15-foot buffer zone for poplars after ruling they caused damage to an adjoining crop field.

In 2016, the Jammu & Kashmir High Court refused to issue a blanket ban but left the door open for "reasonable restrictions" if harm could be demonstrated.

These judgments help, but they aren't law. And local revenue officials - tehsildars, patwaris - often lack both the jurisdiction and the clarity to act.

When orchardists complain, the standard response is a Girdawari, or field inspection. The patwari checks how close the poplars are, which way the shadows fall, whether the apple yield has dropped.

It's a process vulnerable to bias, guesswork, and delay.

There's also no uniform rulebook. One tehsil may permit poplars five feet from the boundary, another may insist on fifteen. One patwari may recommend pruning, another may ignore the complaint entirely.

By the time the matter reaches a civil court, the apples are already lost. So, too, is the trust between neighbours who once harvested together.

This needs fixing.

First, panchayats should have clear, enforceable guidelines on tree plantations, especially species like poplars and eucalyptus.

Like building bye-laws, these rules should set minimum distances, maximum heights near orchards, and bans near water bodies or electric lines. The Forest Rights Act and Panchayati Raj laws can be amended to support this.

Second, revenue records need to evolve. Just as a Tati-ma Shajra maps land parcels, orchard areas should carry an "influence zone", a protective buffer recorded in land documents that restricts incompatible land use nearby.

Third, patwaris should be trained not just as record-keepers but as early conflict mediators. They are the first to see disputes forming during seasonal inspections. They should be empowered to flag risks, not wait for complaints.

Finally, the state should consider a Rural Land Use Mediation Panel at the block level.

Comprising agricultural officers, revenue officials, and local elders, such panels can offer faster, cheaper resolutions than courts. They also preserve the fabric of village life, which is slowly being torn by disputes that could be settled with dialogue.

What's being lost is the trust between neighbours, the cooperation that has long defined rural Kashmir. When one farmer sees shade as income, and the other sees it as theft, the gap between them widens.

And when the law fails to offer answers, that gap becomes a wound.

India's land laws were built in another century. They were written when most farmers grew the same crops, when land was abundant, and when the economy was simpler. Those conditions no longer exist.

Now, every acre is contested. Every plant is a potential business model. And every decision, of where to plant, what to grow, how high a tree can rise, carries consequences for the person next door.

Kashmir's trees are now symbols of that shift. Where once they offered shade, they now cast suspicion. Where once they stood for growth, they now signal grievance.

And unless we update our rules, retrain our officials, and rebuild our village institutions, these disputes will keep growing. Like the poplars themselves, tall and unchecked.

The author is a legal affairs columnist and policy analyst focused on land administration, rural governance, and institutional reform in Jammu & Kashmir.

The patient attendants who line the corridors of Kashmir's public hospitals know the routine.

One waits for word from the ICU. Another recites verses under their breath. A third paces with his eyes on the floor. Behind them is always a need that no one wants to talk about: the search for a usable toilet.

In hospitals across Kashmir, what stands behind the bathroom door is worse than anyone deserves.

Walk into any washroom at SMHS, Lal Ded, or a district hospital, and the picture is predictably grim. Water stagnates on the floor. Foul smells rise from open drains. Taps are either dry or leaking. The commodes, often cracked or blocked, are unusable. Soap dispensers lie empty. Doors don't lock. The stench carries into the corridors, where patients sit with IV drips and fasting attendants try to pray.

In these conditions, ablution is impossible. Relief becomes shame. And the body becomes a site of stress when it should be healing.

This isn't rare. It is routine.

The bathrooms in Kashmir hospitals haven't seen meaningful upgrades in years. The cleaning, where it happens, is cosmetic. A swipe of a mop, a splash of water. The filth remains.

The logbooks meant to track sanitation lie untouched or don't exist. When you ask the staff, they offer tired honesty: "We do what we can." One cleaner at a government hospital told me that entire wings have toilets with no running water for days. "We pour buckets," he said. "That's all."

It's tempting to think this is a matter of inconvenience. It isn't. These bathrooms are disease vectors and incubators for infection.

What Lies Behind the Door

Kashmir's public hospitals promise healing but can't provide basic hygiene. What lies behind the toilet door tells a different story.

Dr. Fiaz Maqbool Fazili

For the pregnant women, newborns and surgical patients, these conditions are dangerous. And for those who come to hospitals in distress, the lack of a clean place to relieve themselves becomes a deep violation of dignity.

There are few signs that anyone in charge is listening. Officials blame delays in funds. Engineers wait on tenders. Hospital administrators say they've sent requests that go unanswered.

And in the meantime, Kashmir's public health infrastructure breaks down at the level of the toilet door.

Even staff are not spared. Nurses work eight or twelve-hour shifts and avoid using their own facilities. Some skip water. Others, especially women, report recurring urinary infections.

The idea that a healthcare worker must endure this kind of neglect, day after day, should shame the system into action.

The neglect isn't confined to hospitals. In city markets, transport hubs, and government offices, public urinals are either missing or locked. What's available is barely functional.

In Lal Chowk, at Batamaloo, or near

tourist points like Nishat, toilets are scarce and unsanitary. Many have become dumping grounds. Public urination is rampant, especially around hospitals. This is less a behavior problem and more a sign of structural failure. When there's no place to go, people will go wherever they can.

The Smart City mission hasn't touched this issue in any meaningful way. Beautification projects and fresh tiles on sidewalks don't change the lived reality of a man who must urinate behind a bush or a woman who holds her bladder for hours. We're spending crores on facades while the interiors collapse.

There is also a social deficit at work. Kashmiris take pride in hospitality, yet our civic sense in shared public spaces has eroded.

In washrooms that do function, people leave taps running, smear walls with filth, and exit without flushing. Toilets break not just from overuse but from misuse. Cleanliness requires both maintenance and a culture of respect. The first is a matter of policy. The second is about what we teach, at home, in

school, on the street.

Some hospital CEOs have attempted surprise inspections. A few toilets get cleaned for a few days. A broken pipe is repaired. But these are short-lived interventions. The larger system remains untouched. The smell returns and the complaints pile up. Nothing moves.

What Kashmir needs now is not another inspection but a reckoning. Hospitals must have functioning washrooms with clean water, working fixtures, and ventilation. Maintenance staff must be held to account with daily logs, visible records, and proper supervision.

The health department must release funds with urgency. Public urinals must be reopened and maintained, not locked for "staff only."

Sanitation is a public right. A working toilet in a government hospital is not too much to ask. It is the bare minimum.

When someone enters a hospital, they are already vulnerable. They are in pain, or in prayer, or holding hope for a loved one's survival.

In those moments, to force them into a space soaked in urine, smeared in waste, and reeking of administrative failure, is not just cruel. It is inhuman.

We have been silent for too long. It's time to say it clearly: these conditions are a public health emergency.

No Smart City plan, no hospital expansion, no development pitch can be taken seriously until it addresses what's behind the bathroom door.

Kashmir deserves care that heals, not harms. The filth we've learned to tolerate cannot become the standard we accept.

The author is a clinical auditor and expert in healthcare quality and standards. He can be reached at drfiazfazili@gmail.com.

The Boy from Nawa Bazar

Between an old home and government flats, a Kashmiri man recalls a childhood of bazaars, bus rides, and a father who taught character through an English playwright.

Dr. Sajad Hussain Din

I was born on a summer day in Srinagar, in August 1979. It was the day when the air in the city carried both heat and festivity, especially because it was also the month of Ramazan.

The hospital stood close to Dal Lake, and they say the view from the second floor made the place feel more like a retreat than a medical facility.

My family lived nearby, within walking distance. I like to think that when I opened my eyes, I may have seen a hint of that lake shimmer through the window.

My father was in administration. He was the man who believed in rules, and was respected by those who feared wasting time. My mother worked in the Education Department. Both of them took their work seriously. My father especially seemed carved out of purpose.

He was someone who didn't raise his voice often, but when he did, the walls listened. Yet when it came to his children, something softened.

I grew up between two homes: the ancestral one and the government quarters. The ancestral house leaned into the Jhelum River on one side and looked across to the noisy, fragrant lanes of Nawa Bazar on the other.

The market was a world unto itself. It had its own rhythm, and its own set of stars. Men like Ali Puj, Hassan Gor, and Nab Sabin ran shops that drew customers as politicians draw crowds. Their shops weren't just storefronts. They were gathering spots, stories-in-progress. Locals called them pend, and those early memories are tangled with the smells of fried bread, the sound of gossip, and the slow stretch of a lazy afternoon.

We were a big family. Grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins all lived together. One of my uncles, always full of life, worked at the State Secretariat. He rode a bike that should've retired years ago. Still, it took us to Mughal Gardens, Shalimar, Dachigam, and sometimes just to nowhere in particular. We rode for the sake of motion.

I went to New Era Public School with my younger cousin. It stood in a well-off part of the city, and even though the fee structure — ₹250 for tuition, ₹100 for the bus — was reasonable back then, it meant something to our parents. They made sure to keep up with our progress, often showing up without warning.

My father would bring his friends along, and we'd find out later they'd spoken to our teachers. His method of parenting leaned toward silent scrutiny rather than open praise.

He was the first teacher I ever had. He loved literature deeply: Shakespeare, Dickens, Wordsworth. He had studied English literature in college and treated it not like a subject, but like a way of seeing.

We didn't just read newspaper editorials, we talked about them, questioned them, and were asked to explain them in our own words. He dictated passages, and while my brother absorbed them like a sponge, I drifted. My attention was drawn toward open fields, sports, and stories that didn't always come with structured endings.

Still, he never gave up. He took me to watch an English film at Regal Cinema. The story didn't make sense to me right away, so he whispered the plot as we watched.

During intermission, we sat on cane chairs, sipping coffee and sharing popcorn with his colleagues. For a boy used to being scolded for unfinished homework, that outing felt like a truce.

Our weekends were claimed by games: cricket, carrom, badminton. The boys from different mohallas would gather near Zero Bridge. We'd walk there, teasing each other, forming a line of noisy schoolbags and laughter. Some days we lingered too long and missed our bus. Those walks home felt eternal and adventurous.

As uncles began their own families, our joint household scattered. We moved into new government quarters near my father's office. High-rise buildings, a larger playground, and elevators that creaked like old doors. We missed our old neighbours and the market life, but the new place had its own rhythm.

People from different castes and religions lived side by side, exchanging food during Eid and Diwali. Ram Singh, my father's subordinate, lived below us. He helped with shopping, carried messages, and even convinced the local butcher to give us the better meat cuts. Mutton sold at ₹45 per kilogram then. It was a price we still remember more fondly than the meat itself.

My health was fragile. I visited hospitals more than parks. I once saw Dr. Ali Mohammad Jan, the renowned physician of Lal Chowk. His reputation preceded him, yet his manner was calm. He didn't

rush. He looked into my eyes, felt my pulse, asked questions like he was learning a story. He scribbled a prescription: Sodafed, Vi Magna, a vitamin shot. Then he said, "You're fine. No need to come again."

That sentence stayed with me longer than the medicines did.

Winters took me to Jammu, where I stayed with my uncle's family. Sometimes I flew there alone. My uncle, who worked in the Secretariat, arranged my travel.

One time, I visited the Chief Minister's office for help with a ticket. A uniformed man walked me to Satwari Airport. I remember the nearby shrine, the trees leaning toward the tarmac, and the nervous pride of flying solo at age nine.

When my father neared retirement, we built a house in Bathindi. Legal issues over land dragged on for years. A court ruling finally gave us the green signal. A contractor from Bengal came with his men. They worked through frost and heat, and finally, we had a home we could call our own.

Back in school, I liked math. Teachers liked me too. Though I often missed classes, mainly because I depended on my elder brother to take me, once I was there, I followed rules. The principal, known for her stern manner, took a liking to me. There were bullies, as there always are, but my brother's friends made sure I was never hurt twice.

In eighth grade, I surprised everyone. I topped the exams. The class toppers looked stunned. Some whispered behind my back. Our English teacher, the principal's daughter, once asked us to write a long letter, four or five pages. I asked my brother to help, and we wrote one that even surprised me. She sent it to her father and later nominated me for a school award. That changed something.

I realized I wasn't drifting. I was discovering.

Now when I pass by the market lanes or hear the hum of Zero Bridge buses, those memories don't feel far away. They are stitched into the way I speak, the words I choose, and how I understand the world.

My childhood, like Srinagar itself, was full of contradictions: warmth layered with worry, tradition bumping against change.

Yet it all made sense then. And somehow, it still does.

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Grandfather at the Door

This is the story of a grandfather who became father, mother, and anchor in a storm.

Syed Majid Gilani

My earliest memories of my grandfather aren't attached to words. They live in sound. The soft shuffle of his slippers before Fajr. The creak of the garden gate. The faint whistle of the kettle warming on the stove.

Even now, I remember those mornings — the cold of Lal Bazar, the sky still dark, and somewhere in the house, a voice reciting verses from the Qur'an. Slow, even, and certain.

That voice belonged to Syed Abdul Rashid Gilani. He was my grandfather. For me and my sisters, Yasmeen and Sabiyah, he became something larger. He was the rhythm of our days. The man who held a fractured house together after it cracked wide open.

He was born in 1927 in Khanqah Moula, one of the oldest and most storied quarters of Srinagar. There, in a neighbourhood of latticed windows, green-tiled shrines, and water-smoothed stones, he came into a family of teachers, clerics, and poets.

His father, Maulana Syed Mohammad Yasin Shah Gilani, was known across the valley for his knowledge and moral standing. His uncle, Maulana Syed Mubarak Shah Gilani, who wrote under the pen name Fitrat, was a Persian scholar and poet. Theirs was a house where language sat beside faith, and knowledge was passed on not as information, but as inheritance.

He left for Punjab University, Lahore, in a time when such journeys were rare. He earned a degree, brought it back home folded into a briefcase with polished buckles, and entered the state's Food Control Department.

He climbed the ranks over decades, from Supervisor to Assistant Director, then retired in 1982.

Around that time, he built the home where I would grow up. He called it Gilan House. Its walls were pale, the garden small but orderly, the floors spotless. Everything about the home — the way shoes were placed, newspapers folded, curtains drawn at Maghrib — mirrored him.

He wrote poetry, but never talked about it. Not once did I hear him say "I'm a poet." Yet, in the drawers of his study, I once found worn notebooks full of verses in Urdu and Persian, written in clear, upright letters. He signed them with his takhallus — Showk.

The pages smelled faintly of ink and attar. The poems were devotional, inward-looking. Lines about Karbala, longing, patience, and unseen reward. He never published

a word. Those poems, like his prayers, were private.

His library was his sanctuary. Alongside Qur'anic commentaries and theological texts were Ghalib's divans, Iqbal's Bang-e-Dara, and the marsiyas of Mir Babbar Ali Anis.

During Muharram, he would take down a special copy of Anis's elegies, its spine cracked from use, and sit by himself near the window. I would find him there, shoulders still, his eyes shining.

In those moments, I understood that faith could ache.

My father, Syed Iftikhar Gilani, died of a heart attack on 12th June 2001. He was only in his forties. The call came in the afternoon, and the shock landed like thunder through our house.

I was young. My sisters were younger. None of us understood death. But we understood that something enormous had left the room.

He wrote poetry, but never talked about it. Not once did I hear him say "I'm a poet." Yet, in the drawers of his study, I once found worn notebooks full of verses in Urdu and Persian, written in clear, upright letters.

In that silence, my grandfather stepped forward. He didn't weep in front of us. He didn't tell us to be strong. He began, instead, by preparing dinner.

That night, he placed a hand on my shoulder and said only this: "We will carry each other now." I didn't understand the weight of those words until years later. Because that is what he did. He carried us.

He stood beside our mother, Shahida Chishti, with a grace I've rarely seen. In a society where widows often bear the double burden of grief and judgment, he made sure she never stood alone. He treated her like a daughter. He defended her choices. He protected her dignity.

There was no announcement of this support. It was built into how he arranged the cushions in the drawing room before guests came, how he ensured she always sat beside him at the head of the table

and how he checked in with her before anyone else.

He ran the house like a clockmaker. He woke before dawn every day, even in his eighties and nineties. He offered Fajr, read from the Qur'an, then recited Aurad-e-Fathiya, a set of litanies passed down in our Sufi tradition.

After that came the garden. Even in deep winter, he walked among his rose bushes and apple saplings, whispering names of plants like they were old friends.

He read English newspapers with a pencil in hand. He marked passages. He corrected our grammar. He insisted that language, any language, must be clean. He believed in the power of the written word but never tried to impose it.

When I began writing, he never praised or critiqued. He only once said, "If you ever write something worth keeping, make sure you know why."

He lived long enough to see us grow into adults. He saw us graduate, find work, make mistakes, come back home. He never said much about our success. He was more interested in whether we arrived on time, whether our shoes were polished, whether we still remembered the dua for leaving the house.

He passed away on 13th March 2016, in the room he had chosen for himself, in the home he had built with his retirement fund. There was no pain. He had prayed his evening prayers, read a few pages of Iqbal Nama, and then lay down.

My sister found him just before midnight: serene, covered with his woolen blanket, a misbaha still between his fingers.

We buried him in the ancestral graveyard at Khanqah Moula, near the feet of saints and family elders. As we lowered him into the earth, I remembered something he had once told me during a conversation about poetry: "The best verses," he said, "are the ones that return to you when you least expect them."

His life was a verse like that. Measured, composed, full of meaning you only recognize when you grow older. His impact wasn't imposing. It was woven into the order of our lives: the clean shirt, the turned page, the steady tone, and the prayer at dawn.

Even now, when I hear the call to Fajr and find myself rising, automatically, sleepily, I sometimes think he's still in the next room, waiting with his Qur'an open, the kettle on, the garden already watered.

The author is a government officer and a storyteller drawn to memory, routine, and the hidden weight of love. He can be reached at syedmajid6676@gmail.com.

Stillness in the Square

Now every shutter is a stanza, every lane a half-remembered verse.

Faria Bhat

You walk through Lal Chowk the way you walk into an old photograph: cautiously, reverently, afraid your presence might disturb what remains.

The air here is different. Thicker, somehow. It wraps around your shoulders like a shawl woven with stories.

Everything smells faintly of walnut wood, old paper, and burnt sugar. If memory had a scent, it would linger here.

There's a bakery on the corner where the glass is always fogged. No queue outside now, only the baker's slow rhythm as he brushes egg wash over golden buns.

Years ago, this place opened before the azan and closed long after the last minibus had left.

Now, he bakes just enough for the loyal few, the ones who still show up, who still remember. You hear his radio playing something old, something soft. It doesn't ask for attention. It hums like a companion.

The streets are clean but tired. Their silence has settled in like dust in the folds of a pashmina. A pigeon lands near the clock tower and stays. Nobody shoos it away.

You walk past Bata, the shoe shop that once rang with schoolchildren's chatter and the slap of sandals being tried on. The glass looks smudged now. A mannequin stares out with shoes too new for this time.

You try to remember how it used to



sound. The calls of vendors: "do sau ka teen", and the rhythmic snapping of plastic bags.

How strangers bumped into each other and then stayed to talk. The man at the bookshop who'd recommend a poetry collection based on how you held the last one.

Those days aren't gone. They're tucked inside things: the rusting shutters, the crooked doorframes, the smell of samosas that still floats up near Samci if you pass at the right hour.

Lal Chowk is not abandoned. It's

inhabited by memory, thick and textured, like snow that hasn't melted.

You pause at Fairdeal Complex. Once, it was where brides arrived in hope and left in blush. Now, the sequins on the window lehengas catch the sun and reflect it onto the pavement like small, scattered stars. Inside, the salesman adjusts hangers even when no one enters. A woman comes in to ask if there are new collection. He replied with a suppressed smile.

There's an intimacy in this empti-

ness, the one that holds your hand instead of letting you go.

You step into an old bookshop. The owner looks up from his prayer beads and nods as if he knew you were coming. The books smell of dust and ink, their spines stiff from waiting. Ghalib, Manto, Ismat. A hardback copy of Rumi in the corner, still wrapped in cling film. You remember coming here with your father. You asked for something to read "with feeling." The shopkeeper had handed you Faiz, and your father had nodded, approvingly.

You still have that book. It still smells like this room.

The man says nothing, just gestures to the shelf. You take your time. This isn't a place for rushing.

Outside, a boy leans against the clock tower, recording a video. His girlfriend twirls in a floral shawl. He tells her to do it again, this time with the tower in full view. They'll caption it something sweet, something short. They won't mention that this square has its own spirit. It doesn't matter, as long as the space is spreading smiles.

Amid this festivity, a fruit vendor wheels his cart down the empty stretch. Apples, red as remembrance. No one stops him. He still calls out, his voice cracks a little, but he calls anyway.

That's the thing about the place. It doesn't shout anymore. It listens. It remembers your footsteps. It recognizes the way your fingers trace the edge of an old shop sign. It holds grief like a shawl on a hanger, folded, but never far.

This isn't nostalgia. It's presence. You are here, and so is everything that came before.

Sometimes, you think the market breathes, shallow, but breathing. It inhales when someone steps inside for a loaf of bread, exhales when they leave with a smile they hadn't expected.

A shopkeeper tells you: "People used to come here and leave lighter."

He smiles, almost to himself. "And now?" you ask.

He shrugs. "Now they come and remember."

You walk a little longer. The light tilts. The day folds into the soft belly of evening. Behind you, the square stands as it always has. Holding onto what it knows, offering it to whoever comes with time.

The square doesn't ask to be saved. It only asks to be seen. And if you walk slow enough, you just might.

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Seek Criminal History In Bail Pleas: SC To HCs

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said all high courts should consider including in its rules a direction to the accused to disclose criminal antecedents in bail pleas.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol and Sandeep Mehta passed the order while expunging the strictures passed by the Rajasthan High Court against a judicial officer who granted bail to an accused in an attempt to murder case.

"We feel that every high court in the country should consider incorporating a similar provision in the respective high court rules and/or criminal side rules as it would impose an obligation on the accused to make disclosures regarding his/her involvement in any other criminal case(s) previously registered,"

the bench said.

A court later allowed the complainant's plea and cancelled the bail to the accused.

The accused then moved the high court which rejected his bail plea and passed strictures against the judicial officer saying he had granted bail in a "grossly inappropriate and cavalier manner", ignoring his criminal record.

After the judicial officer moved against the strictures, the apex court said accounting for criminal antecedents of the accused while considering bail applications was the subject matter of concern for courts across the country.

It referred to the rules and orders of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, including the one which specifically provide that in bail applications, the petitioner shall mention whether he or she was involved in any other

criminal case or not.

The top court directed for its order copy to be communicated to the registrar generals of all the high courts to include the rule if not already in place.

In the case at hand, the bench said the law was well-settled stipulating high courts to ordinarily refrain from passing strictures against judicial officers while deciding matters on the judicial side.

"In the present case, the fact remains that the strictures and/or the scathing observations were made by the single judge of the high court to the detriment of the appellant-judicial officer without providing him any opportunity of explanation or showing cause," it said.

Expunging the strictures passed by the high court against the judicial officer, the bench said they were "uncalled for".

HC To Hear Arms License Scam PIL On Aug 7

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has scheduled August 7, 2025, for the next hearing in the long-pending Public Interest Litigation (PIL) related to the multi-crore Arms Licences Scam.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal directed the re-listing of the case after it could not be heard on Thursday due to time constraints.

During the hearing, Senior Additional Advocate General Mohsin Qadri and Counsel Maha Majeed informed the court that the General Administration Department (GAD) had submitted a fresh status report, as directed in April. The petitioners' counsel, Advocate S.S. Ahmed,

confirmed the receipt of the report.

Under CBI investigation since 2018, the scam involves the fraudulent issuance of over 2.63 lakh arms licences across Jammu and Kashmir between 2012 and 2016. Several District Magistrates allegedly issued the licences in exchange for bribes.

So far, the CBI has registered two FIRs and filed more than 15 charge-sheets, primarily implicating JKAS officers. However, prosecution sanctions against nine IAS officers are still pending, with only one officer officially charge-sheeted to date.

The PIL alleges deep-rooted corruption and highlights the J&K administration's hesitancy to take action against senior officials. The case will now come up for further consideration on August 7.

Promotion Of Alternate Tourist Destinations

J&K Govt Forms Steering Committee

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has constituted a high-level Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of its new tourism initiative, Sustainable Promotion and Revamping of Emerging Alternate Destinations (SPREAD), aimed at promoting lesser-known tourist destinations across the Union Territory.

As per Government Order No. 936-JK(GAD) of 2025, issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), the committee will be chaired by the Chief Secretary of J&K and will include top administrative secretaries from key departments such as Tourism, Jal Shakti, Planning, Public Works (R&B), Power, Finance, Agriculture, Forest, Industries, Rural

Development, and Housing & Urban Development, among others.

The initiative seeks to diversify the UT's tourism landscape by focusing on emerging and alternative destinations beyond the conventional hotspots. The committee will play a pivotal role in providing strategic direction, facilitating policy approvals, ensuring inter-departmental coordination, and monitoring the overall progress of SPREAD.

According to the order, the committee will also address resource allocation and high-level problem-solving to ensure smooth execution of the project. The Tourism Department will act as the nodal agency to service and coordinate the committee's functions.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Court Drops

mortgaged property, whatever type, it's fair game for recovery."

The ruling comes at a moment when J&K Bank is pushing hard to recover loans. According to its recent investor presentation, the bank wrote off 529 crore in bad loans in FY 2023-24. But it recovered even more: 843 crore, including 57 crore through settlements.

In the second quarter of FY 2024-25 alone, the bank recovered 92 crore from "technical write-offs," or loans earlier marked as unrecoverable.

Net profit has surged: 2,082 crore in FY 2024-25, up 18 percent from the previous year.

"This is not just a legal win," said Amit Sharma, a banking analyst at India Ratings. "This is part of a bigger national trend. SARFAESI is now a key recovery tool. In many banks, recoveries through it touch 20 percent of total bad loans."

J&K Bank's Gross NPA (bad loans before provisions) has dropped to 3.37% by March 2025, from 6.04% a year earlier. Its Net NPA now stands at 0.79%, a strong sign of improving loan health.

SARFAESI (Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act) allows banks to take possession of mortgaged property and sell it to recover unpaid loans, without waiting for a court order.

Borrowers do have some rights. They can object, appeal to the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT), or repay to stop the sale.

But once the auction process begins, stopping it gets harder.

"SARFAESI is our last resort, applied only after all else fails and always with full procedural fairness," former J&K Bank Managing Director Baldev Prakash said in a recent interview, confirming that the bank had launched three One-Time Settlement schemes in FY 2023-24.

Legal experts say SARFAESI is fast, but not careless.

"Banks are still required to follow procedure, give notices, and consider objections," said Sabiya Maqbool, a Srinagar-based lawyer who has worked on debt recovery cases. "But the courts are clearly not entertaining delays anymore."

According to RBI data, banks across India recovered 1.24 lakh crore in bad loans in FY 2023-24, with nearly 23% recovered through SARFAESI alone.

Recovery drives are sensitive in Kashmir, where land has emotional and ancestral value. Public backlash last year forced J&K Bank to soften its approach when it published lists of MSME defaulters.

"We're part of this society," said a senior bank officer on condition of anonymity. "We have to recover, but also listen."

Yet, many borrowers now see early settlement as the smarter option.

Maqbool Dar, a fruit exporter in Shopian, said he paid off his dues as soon as he received a recovery notice.

"Earlier people thought they could delay for years," he said. "Now, you have to deal with it before it gets serious."

With this court support and record profits, J&K Bank is in a stronger position to lend.

In August 2024, it received an AA- rating upgrade from India Ratings. That means more loans could flow to traders, small business owners, and farmers who had once been turned away.

Financial experts believe this is just the beginning.

"This ruling unlocks not just one case, but thousands of crores stuck in the system," said analyst Amit Sharma.

"For J&K Bank, and Kashmir's economy, that's huge."

Yatra Resumes

offered prayers at the sacred 3,880-metre-high shrine in the Himalayas of south Kashmir.

The pilgrims included 11,357 males, 4,816 females, 220 children, 125 sadhus, 18 sadhvis, and 322 security personnel. With Friday's numbers, the total number of pilgrims who have visited the cave shrine since the Yatra began has touched 2,73,091.

Meanwhile, the 16th batch of 7,908 pilgrims departed from the Jammu base camp early Friday under tight security arrangements. The convoy moved in 261 vehicles, with 92 heading via the Baltal route and 169 via the Pahalgam axis.

The batch consisted of 5,957 men, 1,613 women, 26 children, 290 sadhus, and 22

sadhvis, the official added.

The Amarnath Yatra, which began on July 3, is scheduled to conclude on August 9.

US Designates

terrorism and enforcing President Trump's call for justice for the Pahalgam attack.

Rubio said the US State Department is adding the TRF as a designated Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).

The TRF, a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) "front and proxy", claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack which killed 26 civilians, he said, adding it was "the deadliest attack on civilians in India since the 2008 Mumbai attack conducted by the LeT."

"TRF has also claimed responsibility for several attacks against Indian security forces, including most recently in 2024," Rubio said.

"These actions taken by the Department of State demonstrates the Trump Administration's commitment to protecting our national security interests, countering terrorism, and enforcing President Trump's call for justice for the Pahalgam attack," he added.

In New Delhi, India welcomed the decision by the US with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar describing it as a "strong affirmation" of India-US counter-terror cooperation.

India said the designation of TRF is a "timely and important" step and that it has consistently emphasised the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India remains committed to a "policy of zero tolerance" towards terrorism and will continue to work closely with its international partners to ensure that terrorist organisations and their proxies are held accountable.

"The government of India welcomes the decision of the United States Department of State to designate TRF as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). We acknowledge and appreciate the leadership of Secretary of State Marco Rubio in this regard," it said.

In a social media post, Jaishankar specially complimented US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for designating the LeT proxy.

"Appreciate @SecRubio and @StateDept for designating TRF—a Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) proxy—as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). It claimed responsibility for the April 22 Pahalgam attack," he said.

The MEA said India welcomes the decision of the US State Department to designate TRF as an FTO and SDGT.

The TRF, a "proxy" of the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation LeT, has been involved in numerous terror-related activities, including the heinous attack on civilians in Pahalgam for which it twice claimed responsibility, the MEA said in its statement.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

"India has consistently emphasised the need for global cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the dismantling of terror infrastructure," the MEA said in a statement.

It said the designation of TRF is a "timely and important step reflecting the deep cooperation between India and the United States on counter-terrorism."

"India remains committed to a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism and will continue to work closely with its international partners to ensure that terrorist organisations and their proxies are held accountable," it added.

The TRF claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack, but later backtracked as tensions soared between India and Pakistan.

India's National Investigation Agency has identified TRF head Sheikh Sajjad Gul as the mastermind of the attack.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in Washington also underlined New Delhi's firm stance against terrorism.

"Another demonstration of strong India-USA counter-terrorism cooperation. Appreciate the Department of State for listing The Resistance Front (TRF) as a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist. TRF is a proxy of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and claimed responsibility for the April 22 terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam," it said.

J&K Braces For

that isolated heavy showers, gusty winds, and thunderstorms may also occur during this period.

Officials have warned of possible flash floods in vulnerable areas, along with risks of landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones in hilly terrains. Rising water levels in rivers, streams, and local nullahs could also lead to waterlogging in low-lying regions.

"People living in landslide-prone zones and along nullahs should remain cautious. Travelers and pilgrims have also been advised to stay updated about the weather and road conditions," the advisory added.

The department has further predicted brief spells of rain at scattered places across the Union Territory from July 24 to 26.

Meanwhile, farmers have been advised to take advantage of the relatively stable weather conditions between July 18 and 20 to carry out orchard spraying and other essential agricultural activities.

Rains Bring Relief

The rainfall, though modest in quantity, has helped revive irrigation canals and recharge local water bodies that had nearly dried up. "We had almost given up on the crop," said Bashir Ahmad, a farmer from Anantnag. "But the rain came just in time."

According to the Meteorological Department, Kashmir received a cumulative rainfall of 11.5 mm on July 16 and 17, with moderate intensity recorded in South Kashmir. The department expects light to moderate rainfall to continue intermittently until July 26, with heightened activity between July 21 and 23, possibly accompanied by gusty winds and localized flooding.

"This phase of precipitation is crucial for crops that were nearing the stress point," said an official from the Agriculture Department, adding that many orchards and paddy fields had already begun showing signs of wilting due to the heatwave.

Farmers across Baramulla, Shopian, and Pulwama districts welcomed the change, some even calling it "a prayer answered." Yet, concerns remain. "If the rainfall doesn't sustain for at least a few more days, the moisture won't hold," warned Abdul Hamid, an apple grower from Shopian.

The Met Department has also urged caution, warning of possible flash floods, mudslides, and waterlogging in low-lying areas. Farmers have been advised to utilize the dry window from July 18-20 to spray pesticides and manage their orchards.

J&K Now a Hub

today is a testament to IIM Jammu's commitment to students' holistic growth," he remarked.

LG Sinha also highlighted the significance of the "5Cs"—Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Communication, Creativity, and Curiosity—as essential life skills for navigating the fast-changing global business environment.

"Technology is rapidly reshaping our world, especially the business landscape. Your role will be to utilise management practices and technological innovation for ease of doing business and enhancing ease of living for all," he noted.

The new academic session at IIM Jammu sees an enrolment of 474 students across various programs, including MBA, MBA in Healthcare & Hospital Management, PhD, PhD for working professionals, and EMBA.

The event was also attended by Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director of IIM Jammu; Sudhir Langer, CEO & MD of RPSG FMCG; senior officials, faculty members, and newly admitted students.

Gupta Sworn

Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. His appointment was read out by Chief Secretary Pawan Kotwal.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Member Parliament Haneeefa Jan, Chief Executive Councillors of Leh and Kargil Hill Councils, Tashi Namgyal and Dr. Jaffer Akhoun, BJP J&K unit president Sat Pal Sharma, along with top bureaucrats and police officials.

Speaking to reporters after the ceremony, Gupta pledged to pursue a development agenda that rises above religious, regional, and political divisions.

"Ladakh has faced discrimination in the past. Our focus will be to work together and transform Ladakh into one of the world's finest tourist destinations," he said.

Gupta also expressed gratitude to President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their trust in appointing him to the

post.

Public Movement

basic safety infrastructure, including warning signage and rescue equipment such as boats.

The canal draws many visitors, particularly during the summer months when people flock to the area to escape the heat. Unfortunately, it has seen several drowning incidents in recent years, mostly involving youth and children.

The recent drowning of three individuals has once again raised serious concerns about the safety measures in place and prompted authorities to take action by restricting access to the canal.

HM, DM Discuss

be held on Sunday and during the "Monsoon Session."

Later another meeting of the Group of Ministers chaired by the Defence Minister and the Union Home Minister discussed government's stand over a host of matters amid the opposition raising heat on issues, including the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar, the Pahalgam attack and "Operation Sindoor," sources said.

They said the meeting was attended by Union Ministers J P Nadda, Kiren Rijju, Piyush Goyal and G Kishan Reddy.

Pertinently, the opposition has been pushing for debate in Parliament on issues like "Operation Sindoor" and the claims of US President Donald Trump that he brokered the "ceasefire" between India and Pakistan.

The government has rejected Trump's claim, but the opposition has been insisting on a debate and has even demanded a special session of Parliament over the issue. The government has termed Operation Sindoor a big success, which inflicted massive damage on terror sites and military facilities in Pakistan.

It may be recalled that a few days after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, armed forces on May 6, 2025, launched "Operation Sindoor" and destroyed nine terrorist camps deep inside Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The attack on terrorist camps led to breaking out of skirmishes between India and Pakistan that continued till May 10. Hostilities ended after Pakistan Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) approached his counterpart in India and requested for a ceasefire. (KNO)

HC Allows Fresh

the petitioners they provide the grounds for "excessive reservation" that cumulatively result in approximately 70% of posts being reserved across various categories, leaving a mere 30% for Open Merit/General category candidates.

The petitioners submit that this reservation pattern was without any basis on any quantifiable data and also contravenes the mandate of Article 16(4) which allows the state to make provisions for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of any backward class of citizens who, in the state's opinion, are not adequately represented in the services under the state.

Besides challenging provisions and notifications, the petitioners have challenged ensuing advertisement /notifications issued pursuant thereby, contending that no fresh assessment or independent commission has been constituted by the authorities to examine the current representation of backward classes in public services. This has rendered the present reservation structure arbitrary and unsustainable under law, they contend.

The petitioners among others have sought directions to declare Section-3, Section-4, Section-6, Section-8 and Section-9 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004, Jammu & Kashmir Reservation Rules of 2005: Rule-4, Rule-5, Rule-9, Rule-10, Rule-13, Rule-15, Rule-17 framed thereunder, S.O 176 dated: 15-03-2024, S.O 127 dated: 20-04-2020 S.O 305 dated 31-05-2024, SRO 518 dated: 02-Sep-2019, as unconstitutional and ultra vires to the mandate of Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India, on account of absence of quantifiable data and breach of the principle of adequacy of representation.

They have also sought direction or quashing the S.O 127 dated: 20-04-2020 S.O 305 dated 31-05-2024, SRO 518 dated: 02-Sep-2019

Besides, they have sought directions for quashing Advertisement Notification, Appointment Notifications bearing Advertisement Notification No. 04 PSC (DR-P) of 2024 dated 26.07.2024, Advertisement 02 of 2024 dated: 22.11.2024, corrigendum dated: 29.07.2024 to Advertisement No. 02/RR/RC of 2024 dated: 09.05.2024,

Advertisement No. 04 dated: 29.07.2024 / RR / RC of 2024 dated: 28.08.2024, Advertisement No. 06 of 2024, dated: 28.08.2024, Advertisement No. 03 of 2025, dated: 24-04-2025, Advertisement No. 05-PSC of 2025, dated: 14-05-2025, Advertisement No. 02 of 2025/RR/RC, dated: 26-05-2025, recruitment processes, and consequential actions undertaken pursuant to the Act and Rules "being violative of constitutional provisions and principles of equality as it provides only 30% share for Open Merit/ General and 70% share for reserved categories."

They have also sought directions, commanding the authorities to redefine Rule 4 Para 3 Socially and Educationally backward Class as other Back Class (OBC) to enable them to claim Central Reservation.

Besides, directions have been sought to make rationalization of reservation by providing due share to the tune of 80% and 20% to reserved categories.

The petitioners have also sought directions to exclude the creamy layers candidates belonging to ST, SC, OBC, from reservation as also provide Reservation to only single generation in tune with the judgement of Supreme Court of India in case titled: State of Punjab Versus Davinder Singh decided on 1-August-2004

Court Acquits Trio

failure to obtain an opinion as to how a two and half month old child can survive for three days without milk and without human presence that too in the harsh winter season.

".....the prosecution evidence is weak, fragile, inconsistent, contradictory and do not inspire confidence in the mind of the court rather same creates serious doubts in the prosecution case," the court said while acquitting main accused, Shiraz Ahmad Ellahi of Machwoo Chadoora who had been charged for the offences under RPC's sections 302 (murder), 380 (theft in a dwelling house), 454 (lurking house-trespass) and 201 (Causing disappearance of evidence of offense) RPC and two others namely Ashiq Hussain Ganai of Chadoora and Mohammad Amin Zargar of Draigam Budgam from the commission of the offence under Section 411 (dishonestly receiving or retaining stolen property).

Among others factors and reasons which the court observed made the prosecution case doubtful includes the "incomplete" chain of evidence, leaving sufficient and reasonable doubts as whether the alleged acts have been done by the accused persons.

"The only material that connects A-1 (Shiraz) to the alleged crime is the CDR (call record details) as the presence of the accused (A-1) (shiraz) at the place of occurrence at the relevant point of time is not proved," the court said, adding, "The CDR's appended with the charge sheet have not been proved in light of Section 65-B of Indian Evidence Act, as such is inadmissible under law." The court said that the neighbors being the most material witnesses were cited as witnesses in the case.

"The investigating officer focused on one accused only and faded the other aspects of investigation," the court said, adding, "Investigating officer failed to collect scientific evidence including location of all suspects at the relevant time." The court said that the stolen ornaments were not properly identified.

Regarding the Investigating officer, the court observed that he has not investigated the case in a proper manner and within the parameters which were required to have been adopted during the investigation. "He seems to have deliberately and intentionally paved a way for safe passage to the accused persons by way of his faulty investigation," the court said and directed that the copy of the judgment be forwarded to I.C of Police Kashmir for initiation of departmental inquiry against the investigating officer.

NOTICE

I, Niyaz Ahmad Calcatti, want to transfer electric Connection registered in my name bearing account no: 0202010000821 under Div-II (Rajbagh) to Mohammad Shafi Calcatti R/o H.no: 119, Jawahar Nagar Srinagar. In this respect if any body has any objection, He/ She may contact the Executive Engineer, Div-II Rajbagh with in a week after the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of said period.

Every Disaster A Lesson To Learn From: CS



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant step towards enhancing disaster resilience and preparedness, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir conducted a high-level workshop on the Incident Response System (IRS) Friday.

The workshop was attended by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Principal Secretary Home and DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti, senior Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners, Heads of Departments and National Disaster Management experts including Brigadier Kuldip Singh (Retd), Former Senior Consultant, Ministry of Home Affairs.

In his opening remarks, the Chief Secretary underlined the critical importance of building a culture of disaster preparedness among the citizens and institutions. "Disasters often arrive without warning and in every such instance, citizens are the first responders," he said. "Each capable individual has a moral responsibility to contribute to disaster resilience by being aware, prepared and proactive."

Highlighting Jammu and Kashmir's unique geopolitical and environmental vulnerabilities, the Chief Secretary emphasized the UT's susceptibility to earthquakes, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), landslides, cross-border tensions and climate-induced challenges. "Given our exposure to multiple hazards, our preparedness must be all-encompassing, institutionally sound and technologically enabled," he stated.

Dulloo stressed that disaster readiness is not measured by paperwork but by the number of lives saved and the responsiveness of the system during a crisis. He noted that increasing urbanization and climate change have escalated the intensity and frequency of disasters, placing greater responsibility on governments, institutions and citizens to act decisively.

He advocated for clear institutional frameworks with defined roles and responsibilities. He emphasised the need of optimising use of advanced technologies such as GIS mapping, real-time weather forecasting and drone-based surveillance besides active community engagement, capacity building of NGOs, civil society and local volunteers. He also asked for integration of mid-career training for the officers and regular mock drills to ensure readiness.

The Chief Secretary called for customisation of IRS protocols based on local risk profiles at the district and block level. He proposed development of a Disaster Dashboard to map available resources, machinery, manpower and vulnerable zones across the UT.

CS Inspires New Batch At IIM Jammu

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In an insightful address to the newly admitted batch of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Friday exhorted students to embrace their journey with purpose, passion and a deep commitment to public good.

The event marked the commencement of the academic year for one of India's youngest and most dynamic IIIMs.

Congratulating the students for securing admission to a premier national institution, the Chief Secretary emphasized that IIM Jammu is not merely an academic campus, but a crucible of transformation. "You have crossed a significant milestone and now stand at the threshold of an experience that will transform your lives," he said, calling upon the students to not only become professionals but also leaders of values and vision.

Quoting Malcolm X, he remarked, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today," setting the tone for an address that combined wisdom, pragmatism and inspiration.

Describing IIM Jammu as a

In his inaugural address, Principal Secretary, Home and DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti, described the IRS as a newly notified system in J&K aimed at establishing a well-coordinated command structure during disasters. He explained that the IRS, modeled on international best practices and customized by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), defines precise roles for each officer to eliminate confusion during emergencies.

Bharti highlighted the ongoing initiatives under the Disaster Management Department including the Mitigation plans for GLOFs and landslides, Integration of the India Disaster Resource Network (IDRN), Deployment of Decision Support Systems and Establishment of Emergency Operation Center (EOC).

He expressed optimism about significantly strengthening the disaster management mechanisms through these efforts and urged the officials to institutionalize the disaster response protocols across all levels.

Delivering a detailed presentation, Brigadier Kuldip Singh (Retd), a distinguished disaster management expert, shared his insights on disaster typologies, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the defined responsibilities of various stakeholders during emergencies. Drawing from real-life disaster incidents across India, he emphasized that "no region is immune to disasters", and increased development must go hand-in-hand with increased vigilance and responsibility.

Brigadier Singh stressed the critical roles of central and UT governments, NDMA, SDMA, DDMA and block-level institutions in developing a seamless and scalable disaster response framework. He reiterated the need for integrated planning, resource allocation, and community-based preparedness to make India one of the most disaster-resilient nations in the world.

Later, a comprehensive Handbook on the Incident Response System (IRS) was unveiled, clearly delineating the roles and responsibilities of each officer and department involved in disaster response.

At the Union Territory level, the IRS is being headed by the Chief Secretary, who functions as the Response Officer. The handbook also outlines the hierarchical structure, including designated roles for the Incident Commander, Nodal Officer, Liaison Officer, Planning and the Media Communication System, thereby institutionalizing a well-coordinated and structured mechanism for disaster preparedness and response in the UT.

symbol of aspiration and excellence in New India, the Chief Secretary said the institution carries the energy and potential to shape the future leaders who can contribute to the region and the nation. "You are not just students, you are ambassadors of this institution," he told the gathering, underlining the mutual responsibility between the individuals and institutions.

Dulloo highlighted that an MBA is more than a degree, it is a holistic journey that shapes decision-making, leadership character and ethical thinking. "You will learn the language of markets and innovation, but more importantly, you will learn collaboration, humility and empathy," he said, quoting Martin Luther King Jr., "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."

Speaking on India's evolving economic and developmental landscape, the Chief Secretary observed that the country is witnessing a historic transformation through rapid digitalization, infrastructure growth, start-up momentum and global positioning. However, he stressed that along with these opportunities come challenges like climate change, social equity and sustainable development.

Dr Farooq Demands Immediate Restoration Of J&K Statehood

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday reiterated that the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood is the democratic and constitutional right of its people and must be granted without any further delay.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Dr Farooq expressed his gratitude to the Congress leadership, including Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Rajya Sabha LoP and party president Mallikarjun Kharge, for taking up the cause with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"I am thankful to Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge for raising the issue of statehood restoration with the Prime Minister and urging the government to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir," Dr Farooq said.

Describing the move as a significant gesture, he added, "They have taken a stand for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Their letter to the Prime Minister is a welcome step. Statehood is our constitutional right. Why wouldn't



we get it? We will raise this demand strongly in the INDIA alliance meeting on Saturday (July 19)."

It is pertinent to mention here that Congress leaders had recently written to Prime Minister Modi, seeking immediate restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir—a move that drew appreciation from several quarters, including former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who had earlier stated they were awaiting a response from the opposition on the matter.

Reiterating the urgency of the demand, Dr Farooq said, "If they don't give us what's ours, we will see how to deal with it," signaling possible future strategies if the demand continues to be ignored.

Doctors Call Off Strike At GMC Jammu

Observer News Service

JAMMU: After two days of disruption, the doctors at Government Medical College (GMC) and Hospital (GMC&H) Jammu have officially called off their indefinite strike, bringing much-needed relief to the patients and restoring regular medical services across the hospital.

The strike, which began following an alleged physical assault on two female doctors by attendants of a deceased patient on Wednesday, had severely affected healthcare delivery, including Out-Patient Department (OPD), in-patient care, and several critical services.

Emergency services were only partially operational, managed by senior doctors and limited medical staff.

According to KNO, the decision to end the protest came after successful negotiations between the hospital administration and representatives of the protesting doctors.

According to officials, the woman accused of assaulting

the doctors has been taken into custody and a formal case has been registered against those involved.

"We deeply respect our duty to serve patients and regret the inconvenience caused. However, our protest was essential to demand accountability and protection for healthcare professionals," said a spokesperson from the doctors' association. "Following firm assurances from the administration and the government, we have decided to end the strike."

The doctors had demanded immediate arrest of the culprits, registration of an FIR, and stronger security arrangements to prevent such incidents in the future. Their primary concern was ensuring a safe and secure working environment within the hospital premises.

The hospital administration, in a statement, acknowledged the doctors' concerns and assured that strict legal action will be taken against those responsible for the assault. Of-

ficials also committed to enhancing the hospital's internal security system to safeguard medical staff.

"Patient care is our top priority, and any threat to our healthcare workers will not be tolerated. We will strengthen surveillance and ensure more security personnel are deployed within the hospital premises," an official said.

As the strike ends, normalcy is gradually returning to GMC Jammu. OPD and in-patient services have resumed and patients who had been waiting for consultations and treatment have begun receiving care again.

Patients and their attendants expressed relief at the resumption of services. "We understand the doctors' concerns, but we are glad that things are finally getting back to normal. Healthcare must not suffer," said Ramesh Kumar, an attendant at the hospital.

The incident was widely condemned especially by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and various doctor bodies across India.

ACB Arrests Junior Official Of JDA For Accepting Bribe

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday said to have trapped and arrested a Junior official of Jammu Development Authority (JDA) for demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, ACB received a complaint alleging therein that a public servant namely Kewal Krishan, Junior official of Jammu Development Authority (JDA) demanded illegal gratification from the complainant for allowing further construction of the double storey building at Ballain Domana, Jammu.

"The accused had demanded a bribe of Rs 20,000 from the complainant for allowing further construction of the

double storey building at Bal-lain Domana, Jammu and has agreed to receive 1st installment amounting Rs 10,000 out of the demanded bribe," the statement said, adding that since, the complainant didn't want to pay the bribe and he approached Anti-Corruption Bureau for taking legal action against the accused public servant under law.

"On receipt of the complaint, a discreet verification was conducted, which corroborates the demand of bribe by the public servant concerned and accordingly, a case FIR number 14/2025 U/S 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 was registered in Police Station ACB Jammu and investigation taken up," the ACB said.

During the course of investigation, a trap team headed by Gazetted rank officer was

constituted, it reads, adding that the team laid a successful trap and the accused public servant was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting a bribe amount of Rs 10,000 from the complainant in the presence of independent witnesses.

"The accused was arrested on the spot by the ACB team after following the due process of law. The bribe money was also recovered from his possession in the presence of independent witnesses associated with the trap team. Moreover, search is being conducted in the residential house of the accused situated in Flore Haramkund Gajansoo, Tehsil Marh, District Jammu in presence of independent witness and Magistrate," it reads, adding that further investigation of the instant case is going on.

Students In Seasonal Schools Face Teacher Shortage

Agencies

BANDIPORA: As the seasonal migration of Gujar and Bakarwal communities begins in Kashmir this June, many students from these nomadic groups are struggling to continue their education in the seasonal schools set up in Bandipora's upper Himalayan regions.

Several Bakarwal students have raised serious concerns over the absence of teachers in these temporary education centers. "We come here with the hope to study, but there are no regular teachers in some schools. How

can we learn without anyone to teach us?" said Auregzab, a young Bakarwal student.

These seasonal schools, mostly set up in tents in remote high-altitude areas, were meant to ensure continued education for nomadic children during their migration. However, the reality on the ground tells a different story.

Students say that not only are teachers missing, but basic facilities like waterproof tents, blackboards, and proper learning materials are also lacking—especially during heavy rains.

Chief Education Officer (CEO)

Bandipora admitted the challenges but said the department is trying to address the issues. "We have 51 seasonal education centers with 51 teachers deployed to educate 581 students. We are also providing tents, books, and stationery," he said, adding that any teacher found absent will face strict action.

Despite these assurances, students are still demanding regular teacher attendance and better infrastructure. They are urging the government to take urgent steps so that their education is not lost in the harsh conditions of the Himalayas.(KNS)

Er Rashid To Move Resolution For Statehood In Parliament

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) has announced that its President and incarcerated Member of Parliament from Baramulla Er Rashid will bring a resolution in the upcoming Parliament session beginning July 21, 2025, demanding the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement, AIP Chief Spokesperson Inam Un Nabi said, "Despite being unjustly jailed, Er Rashid has not allowed the chains of incarceration to silence the voice of his people. He will continue to use every democratic platform available to uphold the aspirations and sentiments of Jammu and Kashmir."

Inam added that the demand for statehood is not a favour but a constitutional right that was

unilaterally taken away in 2019. "It is time Parliament corrects this historic wrong. Er Rashid's resolution is a reflection of people's yearning for dignity, democratic rights and self-respect," he stated.

The party reiterated that Er Rashid's presence in Parliament is not merely symbolic but a continuation of his decades-long struggle for justice and representation. "His decision to move this resolution, even from behind bars, shows that neither walls nor injustice can suppress the democratic spirit that he embodies," Inam said.

AIP urged all political parties, especially those claiming to represent Jammu and Kashmir, to support the resolution and stand for constitutional guarantees and the restoration of democratic institutions in the region.

QAZIGUND HORROR

Groom-to-Be Killed In Staged Midnight Raid

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a chilling incident that has left a South Kashmir village in shock, a 25-year-old man, set to be married next month, was murdered during a fake midnight search operation by a man impersonating a security forces personnel.

The victim, Zahid Ahmad Bandy, was killed in his home in Qazigund area when the accused, Naseer Ahmad Sheikh—dressed in a forces' uniform and armed with a pistol, dagger, and walkie-talkie—stormed the residence late Thursday night.

According to police and eyewitnesses, Sheikh claimed the area was under a cordon due to militant movement and ordered the family to surrender their phones. "It all looked real. These operations are routine here, so no one doubted him," a

relative said.

However, Zahid became suspicious when the intruder began searching cupboards and personal belongings. As he confronted him, Sheikh reportedly attacked Zahid with a sharp weapon, fatally injuring him. Attempting to flee, the accused jumped from a second-floor window but fractured his leg and was caught by alert locals.

The police later confirmed that Sheikh, a resident of a nearby village, is in custody and being questioned. Authorities are probing whether he acted alone or was part of a larger gang. "We're investigating all angles, including criminal conspiracy and impersonation of a government official," a police official said.

The incident has sparked outrage in the locality, with residents demanding a swift and thorough investigation.

Budgam Woman Killed, Toddler Battles For Life After Accident

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A tragic road accident in Srinagar's Parimpora area on Friday evening claimed the life of a 36-year-old woman, while her three-year-old son was critically injured and her husband sustained injuries, officials said.

According to officials, the mishap occurred when a private vehicle collided with a truck, leaving all three fam-

ily members injured. They were rushed to the hospital, where the woman, identified as Nusrat, wife of Bilal Ahmad Kumar, succumbed to her injuries.

The injured child, Hami, and his father Bilal Ahmad, residents of Charar-e-Sharif in Budgam district, are undergoing treatment.

Police have detained the truck driver and initiated an investigation into the incident.

Div Com, IGP Review Arrangements For Budha Amarnath Yatra



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, and Inspector General of Police, Bhim Sen Tuti reviewed the arrangements for the forthcoming Budha Amarnath Yatra 2025 to ensure smooth and secure conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The review meeting, held here the other day was attended by senior officials including the DIG CRPF, DIG JSK Range, DIG Rajouri-Poonch, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs of Jammu, Poonch, Rajouri, and Reasi, along with heads of key departments such as JPDCL, Tourism, Health, PWD, Jal Shakti, BRO and Traffic Police. Representatives from civil society also participated and shared suggestions.

The Yatra's first batch will depart from Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu, on July 28, 2025, moving towards Tehsil Mandi in Poonch in a regulated convoy amid full security arrangements.

The Divisional Commissioner directed officials to establish a help desk and registration counter at Bhagwati Nagar and Jammu Railway Station to facilitate the pilgrim Deputy Commissioners of Rajouri and Poonch were instructed to ensure adequate accommodation with es-

sential facilities including power supply, drinking water, langars, parking, waterproof tents and mobile toilets along the route.

The Tourism Department was tasked with promoting the Yatra through newspapers and hoardings from Lakhnau to Poonch to ensure wide publicity.

Emphasizing safety, the IGP Jammu stressed strict adherence to convoy timings and urged public awareness for travelling only with the official convoy.

The BRO was directed to maintain road conditions and clear any debris promptly on the Jammu-Poonch highway. JPDCL was asked to ensure uninterrupted power supply with backup generators, while the PHE Department will provide drinking water at halt points, night stays, and at the Budha Amarnathji Temple.

PWD officials were instructed to repair the Poonch-Mandi road and the SSP Traffic Rural will arrange parking spots for convoy vehicles. The Deputy Commissioner Reasi also apprised the arrangements for devotees visiting Shiv Khori shrine during the Yatra period. The meeting concluded with valuable inputs from civil society members for the peaceful and successful conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

Govt Preparing For 2036 Olympics, Providing Rs 50K To 3K Athletes Every Month: Amit Shah

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The government is preparing for the 2036 Olympics by providing an assistance of Rs 50,000 per month to approximately 3,000 athletes and is making a detailed systematic plan for it, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Friday.

Addressing an event where the Indian contingent participating in the 21st World Police and Fire Games-2025 were felicitated, Shah said victory and defeat are the eternal cycle of life and setting the goal to win, planning for victory should be everyone's "nature" and winning should be the habit.

He said those who cultivate the habit of winning always perform exceptionally.

The home minister said the Modi government is making ar-



rangements to take sports to every village.

The selection and training of children from different age groups in every sport are being done scientifically, he said.

"Under the leadership of PM Modi, sports has been given great

importance in the last 10 years. The budget has been increased by five times. The government is also preparing for the 2036 Olympics by providing assistance of Rs 50,000 per month to approximately 3,000 athletes and is making a detailed systematic plan for

it," he said.

Shah said every police officer's routine should be such that the day begins with a parade with subordinate staff in the morning and ends with sports in the evening.

"If all police personnel develop a habit of regular sports, it will not only relieve stress, but also improve the quality of work," he said.

The home minister said all police forces that are part of the 'All India Police Sports Control Board' should aim to win at least three medals each.

"If we achieve this goal, the record you have set this year will be surpassed by you at the World Police and Fire Games to be held in Gujarat in 2029," he said.

He said the success of the police personnel who participated in the World Police and Fire Games 2025 should be celebrated and

the people of the country should also receive accurate information about it.

Shah said that just as Arjuna could only see his target -- the eye of a bird -- similarly, all police officers and athletes connected to sports must aim for the World Police and Fire Games 2029 and move forward.

These games will take place in 2029 in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Kevadia, he said.

The home minister said that as India progresses on the global sports stage, the country's athletes must perform in a way that sparks worldwide discussions about the immense potential of sports in India.

He said he was fully confident that India will be among the top five medal-winning countries in the 2036 Olympics.

Aqua Kashmir Avengers Defeat Greenend Heroes FC 2-0 In Kashmir Super League

In a Kashmir Super League 2025 matchup on Friday, Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC defeated table-toppers Greenend Heroes FC 2-0 at TRC Ground in Srinagar. Adnan Ayoub put Aqua Kashmir Avengers 1-0 ahead via a penalty in added time of the first half. Hayat Bashir made it 2-0 in the 66th minute to put the game out of reach for Greenend Heroes.

The postmatch awards were dominated by players from Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC.

The Player of the Match went to Hayat Bashir, while Adnan Ayoub was awarded the Game Changer of the Match. Salah Wani won the Golden Moment award, and Furkan Ahmad took the X-Factor Excellence award. Round 4 of Kashmir Super League 2025 will begin on Saturday, with New JK United FC taking on Athwas India XI in Game 10 of the competition. The contest kicks off at 7:00 PM. (Observer News Service)

Provincial U17 Girls Baseball C'ship Begins In Ganderbal

The Inter District Provincial Level Baseball Championship for Under-17 Girls, organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, commenced on Friday at GCOPE Gadoora, Ganderbal. The championship has nine districts from Kashmir competing. Day One featured high-intensity league matches across both pools. In Pool A, District Anantnag and host District Ganderbal emerged as semi-finalists. Pool B matches are ongoing, with the two semi-final spots yet to be finalised.

Several exciting matches are scheduled for Saturday, including the remaining league fixtures and the much-anticipated semi-finals. Players from all participating districts showcased commendable sportsmanship, energy, and passion for the game.

Selectors nominated by the office of the Joint Director YSS Kashmir were present throughout the day to identify outstanding talent. The best performers from this championship will earn the opportunity to represent Kashmir in the upcoming inter-divisional event. (Observer News Service)

Water Sports Delegation Meets Sports Minister Satish Sharma

A delegation comprising national medal-winning athletes, office bearers of water sports associations, and key stakeholders met J&K Sports Minister Satish Sharma on Friday. The meeting marked a pivotal moment for the future of rowing, sculling, kayaking, canoeing and other water sports disciplines in the region.

The delegation was led by Dr. Burhan Bazaz, President of the J&K Rowing and Sculling Association, accompanied by other senior stakeholders including Dr. Imran Nazir, Hussain Khan, Latif Ahmad and other distinguished members of the water sports community. The interaction was driven by a shared vision to position Jammu & Kashmir as a national and international hub for water sports. (Observer News Service)

Pulwama Wins Provincial Level U-14 Boys Volleyball Tournament



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam conducted the Inter-District Provincial Level Volleyball Tournament for Under-14 Boys at Sports Stadium Charar-i-Sharief, bringing together top young volleyball talent from across Kashmir province.

The event saw intense competition, beginning with the first semi-final match between Anantnag and Pulwama, where Pulwama secured a convincing win. The second semi-final featured a clash between Ganderbal and Kupwara, with Ganderbal emerging as the winner.

The final match between Pulwama and Ganderbal was a thrilling contest, ultimately won by Pulwama, who lifted the champi-

onship trophy.

The tournament was held under the guidance and supervision of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone.

The closing ceremony was attended by Jaha Aara, Zonal Physical Education Officer Charar-i-Sharief and Nodal Officer of the event, along with Physical Education Lecturers Muneer Aslam Khan and Iqbal Ahmad, Activity Incharge Ghulam Hassan Khanday, Senior PEM Manjee Singh Gill, and several other officials from the department.

"The DYSS Budgam remains committed to fostering sportsmanship and providing opportunities for youth to excel in the field of sports across all age groups," the department said in a statement.

Shah-e-Hamadan Cricket Tournament 2025, England, Concludes In Sheffield

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Kashmir Downtown CC has been crowned as the winners of the Shah-e-Hamadan Cricket Tournament, England, Season 2025.

The inaugural cricket tournament was recently held in England. There were in total six participant teams in this tournament which ran from May till July.

Matches were played across the Midlands region of England with the final played at Bentley Cricket Club ground, near Sheffield.

The participants, teams and the players are exclusively from Kashmir. Nearly 100 members from Kashmiri community came together for the final match to cheer, connect and celebrate not just cricket, but also Kashmiri culture.

Nun chai was served as the welcome tea and rice dishes were prepared for the lunch.

The tournament was filled with incredible performances, emotional moments, dramatic upsets and above all, unity among Kashmiris living in England.



TEAMS:

- - KASHMIR QALANDARS
- - KASHMIR DOWNTOWN
- - KASHMIR MIDLANDS
- - KAESHIR SHAHZADS
- - NORTHERN TABARDARS
- - SOLIHULL SHAHEENS

The final of the tournament was played between Kashmir Qa-

landars and Kashmir Downtown.

Kashmir Qalandars batted first and scored 185 for 5 in their allotted 35 overs. In response, Kashmir Downtown scored 189 for 4, winning by 6 wickets.

The final match was a thriller, full of drama with pendulum swinging both ways throughout the match but Kashmir Downtown held their nerve and came out on top, hit the winning runs on the penultimate ball of the match.

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