

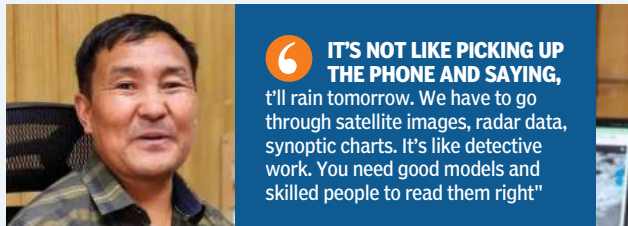
Why Kashmir's Weather Forecasts Go Wrong

Sonam Lotus Breaks Silence on 'Inaccurate' Forecasts: "The Sky Doesn't Obey Us"

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: As Kashmiris grumble about "missed" weather forecasts this July, the region's most trusted weatherman, Sonam Lotus, says the confusion isn't about failure. "It's about misunderstanding how weather works here," he said.

In a straight-talking interview with Kashmir Observer, the former IMD chief for J&K breaks it down: "Forecasting summer weather in Kashmir is a science of uncertainty." High heat, wild humidity, and Kashmir's rugged mountains make predicting rainfall in July and August far tougher than in winter. "In winter,



things are calm. In summer, the sky changes fast."

That's why forecast accuracy drops from 90% in winter

to nearly 70% in summer. And yet, when rain doesn't show up as expected, many call it a failure.

"We forecast rain from July 21 to 24, not a flood. People think it means continuous rain. It doesn't. It means likely, scattered showers across different parts of the region, not just Srinagar."

Lotus also dismisses a popular myth that monsoon clouds can't cross the Pir Panjal. "They can, and they do," he says. "Rain hit Jammu and other areas. The clouds came. They just didn't pour where people were expecting." As for the tools, IMD uses high-end national and global models, but Lotus says

machines don't do magic.

"Forecasting is part science, part skill. A wrong reading can throw it all off. That's why experience matters."

In this candid Q&A, Sonam Lotus explains why forecasting in Kashmir is as complex as the mountains themselves, what went right (and wrong) with the [| More on P6](#)



Flash Flood Alert For 12 J&K Districts



File Photo

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a Flash Flood Guidance Bulletin, warning of a low to moderate risk of flash floods in several districts, including Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Reasi, Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch,

Baramulla and Anantnag, over the next 24 hours.

In response, District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs) have been urged to take necessary precautions and measures as per established protocols to ensure public safety and mitigate risks. Further updates will follow based on IMD advisories. [| More on P6](#)

Rainstorm Disrupts Life In Rajouri, Poonch

incessant overnight rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri and Poonch districts triggered widespread disruption on Tuesday, forcing school closures, damaging infrastructure, and bringing life to a standstill across many areas. Flood-like conditions gripped Mendhar and parts of Rajouri, with water levels in rivers rising [| More on P6](#)

2 Convicted In Acid Attack Case After 15 Years

Observer News Service

Srinagar: After nearly 15 years of legal battle, a Fast Track Court in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Monday convicted two men in a 2010 acid attack that left a local schoolteacher permanently disabled and his wife severely injured.

Additional Sessions Judge convicted Mohammad Yaseen Kully and Mohammad Iqbal Kully, both residents of Kully Nad Lamad in Devsar, in connection with FIR No.

214/2010 under sections 452, 307, 326, and 34 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), registered at Police Station Qazigund.

According to Chief Prosecuting Officer (CPO) Zia-ur-Rehman, the victim Nazir Ahmed Bihad, a Rehbar-e-Taleem teacher from Kolinad Lamad, was attacked with acid while offering Maghrib (evening) prayers at home.

"His wife thought the accused had come to visit. He asked them to wait and she went inside to fetch food for them. In that [| More on P6](#)

Jailed Rashid Allowed To Attend Parliament

Observer News Service

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Tuesday granted custody parole to jailed Lok Sabha MP Engineer Rashid from July 24 to August 4 to attend the monsoon session of Parliament.

Rashid, currently lodged in Tihar Jail, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2019 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in connection with a 2017 terror funding case.

Additional Sessions Judge Chanderjit Singh granted the custody parole, which allows a prisoner to be escorted by armed police personnel for specific duties. [| More on P6](#)

'Statehood Restoration' J&K Cong Holds Protest At Jantar Mantar In Delhi

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Congress' Jammu and Kashmir unit on Tuesday staged a protest at Jantar Mantar here, demanding restoration of full statehood to the Union Territory.

Congress general secretary (organisation), K C Venugopal, AICC in-charge of J&K Naseer Hussain and J&K Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra, among others, took part in the

protest. "Jammu and Kashmir is the first instance of a state being downgraded into a Union Territory. Such democratic backsliding and insult to the people of a state is unacceptable," Venugopal said in a post on X after the protest.

"J&KPCC is protesting at Jantar Mantar, to demand restoration of full statehood to J&K. I joined in the protest and spoke about the need to

defend the Constitution and restore the dignity of the people of J&K. The promises made in Parliament must be fulfilled without delay," he said.

The Congress on Sunday said the party will raise the demand for restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir in the Monsoon session of Parliament.

Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi had last [| More on P6](#)

They Never Sought Our Support: CM

Observer News Service

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that the Congress never sought support for their campaign, demanding statehood

restoration to Jammu and Kashmir. "They (Congress) didn't even raise the issue during the INDIA bloc meeting recently. We are the [| More on P6](#)

arrangements and facilities for Amarnath pilgrims have steadily improved over the past three to four years, resulting in high levels of satisfaction among [| More on P6](#)

EXTREME WEATHER

1,200 Hectares Of Crops Damaged In Jammu & Kashmir: Centre

Agencies

New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir suffered significant crop damage due to unseasonal rains and extreme weather conditions during the 2025 Monsoon season with 1,239 hectares of Agricultural land affected, according to the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The information was tabled in response to a question in the Lok Sabha. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated that the losses were reported between April 1 and July 14, 2025.

Major crops impacted in the region include wheat, maize, paddy, barley and various horticultural produce, though district-level specifics were



File Photo

not detailed in the statement.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), over 9,500 farmer applications were insured in J&K, covering an area of 5,500 hectares. As of June 30, the

government disbursed Rs 2.7 crore in claims, benefitting insured farmers who faced yield loss due to extreme weather.

In contrast, Ladakh recorded zero crop damage during the same period, and no

compensation or claims were reported. However, 14 hectares were insured under the crop insurance schemes, suggesting a growing awareness and participation by Ladakhi farmers in risk mitigation measures.

The government said that disaster relief responsibilities lie primarily with State governments.

However, in cases of severe calamity, Central assistance is extended through the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) based on assessments by Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCTs). Jammu & Kashmir, like other states, can tap into the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for immediate relief. (KNO)

LG Launches Portal To Fast-Track Relief For Terror Victim Families

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday launched a web portal to expedite the process of providing relief and compassionate appointments to the families of terror attack victims in Jammu and Kashmir.

Developed by the Home Department in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC), the portal is designed as a centralized platform to capture comprehensive district-wise data on terrorism-affected families, ensuring institutionalized and accountable support.

"The initiative will streamline and expedite the process of providing relief, compassionate appointments, and other forms of assistance to those who have



suffered from terrorism in the UT," LG Sinha said at the launch.

In addition to details about the victims, the portal will also track any encroachments on the properties of the victims or their next of kin (NOKs), the official spokesperson said. This move is aimed at ensuring that no legitimate case goes unaddressed

and that financial assistance, ex-gratia payments, and employment benefits are provided to all eligible families without delays or duplication.

Highlighting his administration's seriousness, the Lieutenant Governor is personally monitoring the redressal of cases across the Union Territory.

Helpline and Monitoring Cells To make the system more accessible, toll-free helpline numbers have been set up at the Divisional Commissioners' offices in both Jammu (0191-2478995) and Kashmir (0194-2487777). These helplines are managed by dedicated control rooms and trained personnel, serving as citizen interfaces for queries and grievances related to pending government support.

The helplines are fully integrated with the [| More on P6](#)

'Amarnath Yatra Sees Improved Security, Facilities'

Observer News Service

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that the security

arrangements and facilities for Amarnath pilgrims have steadily improved over the past three to four years, resulting in high levels of satisfaction among [| More on P6](#)

arrangements and facilities for Amarnath pilgrims have steadily improved over the past three to four years, resulting in high levels of satisfaction among [| More on P6](#)

Fake Firms, Forged Papers

ED Exposes ₹30 Cr Loan Scam In Srinagar

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) in a ₹30 crore money laundering case linked to a massive loan fraud involving Canara Bank's Residency Road branch in Srinagar. The scam, which came to light during investigations by the CBI and ED, involved the sanctioning of loans against fake firms and forged documents, resulting in major losses to the public sector bank.

The ED named 12 individuals in its chargesheet, including the then Canara Bank Branch Manager Kuldeep Kumar and several travel company owners who allegedly used fabricated documents to avail credit facilities under the guise of promoting tourism.

Among the accused are Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat of M/s Space Travels, Gowhar

Nazir Shah of M/s Greenland Travels, and Mushtaq Ahmad Wani of M/s Al-Khair Haj & Umrah Services, among others. The ED said these entities were either non-existent or shell companies used to siphon off funds through fake travel businesses.

The fraudulent loans were issued between 2012 and 2014 without proper verification, and many of the firms defaulted soon after, triggering suspicions.

The ED began probing the case based on a chargesheet filed earlier by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2019.

As part of the ongoing probe under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the ED has already attached properties worth ₹4.82 crore. These include land and residential assets believed to be purchased using proceeds of crime.

According to [| More on P6](#)

BANGLADESH SCHOOL JET CRASH Death Toll Rises To 31

Press Trust Of India

Dhaka: The death toll from the crash of the Bangladesh Air Force training fighter jet into a school building in Dhaka rose to 31 as more people succumbed to their injuries, authorities said on Tuesday.

The F-7 BGI aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, experienced a "mechanical fault" moments after take-off and crashed into the two-storey building of Milestone School and College at Diabari in Dhaka's Uttara area on Monday. The death [| More on P6](#)



Directorate Of Handicrafts Organizes Capacity Building Programme

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, being the Implementing Agency under the World Bank-supported Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme, successfully conducted one-day Capacity Building Programme on Branding and Packaging at the Conference Hall, Exhibition Ground, Srinagar. This workshop is fourth in the series of Capacity Building Programmes under RAMP.

The session was designed to equip artisans and weavers with practical insights and strategies for effective product branding and modern packaging-critical components in enhancing market reach and competitiveness in both domestic

and international markets. The training was conducted by experts and faculty from the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), who shared hands-on guidance, case studies, and design approaches.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 100 artisans and producers, particularly those engaged in G.I/ODOP/DEH products. The programme aimed to empower grassroots craft producers by introducing them to evolving consumer preferences, branding tools, and value-added packaging techniques.

This initiative is part of a broader series of capacity-building efforts under the RAMP scheme aimed at strengthening MSMEs and the artisan community of Kashmir by improving product positioning and market access.

SMC Cracks Down On Encroachments at Children's Hospital

Agencies

Srinagar: In a much-needed move to restore order and ensure smooth movement around two of the city's busiest hospitals, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Tuesday launched an anti-encroachment drive outside JVC Hospital and the adjoining Children's Hospital in Bemina.

The drive, led by Chief Anti-Encroachment Officer Muhammad Sayeed, aimed to remove scores of roadside vendors who had over the years virtually

taken over the road space, turning vital hospital access routes into congested, chaotic lanes.

The anti-encroachment team was assisted by police personnel, ensuring that the operation proceeded without disruption or resistance. Street vendors who had occupied every possible inch of road, many even encroaching on pedestrian paths and ambulance access points, were asked to vacate immediately. In some cases, illegally installed structures and stalls were dismantled on the spot.



Sakeena Itoo Reviews Functioning Of Cluster University

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, conducted comprehensive review of functioning of Cluster University Srinagar (CUS) and its constituent colleges in a meeting held at Civil Secretariat here.

Vice Chancellor CUS, Professor Mohammad Mobin; Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education department, Shantamanu; Director Colleges J&K, Special Secretary Higher Education department, Principals of constituent colleges and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Minister held a detailed assessment of academic performance, infrastructure development, faculty strength, student services, admissions and progress of ongoing projects in the University.

Addressing the officers, the Minister emphasized the urgent

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She directed the university administration and affiliated colleges to introduce skill-based, job-oriented courses in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Hospitality Management, Data Science, Cybersecurity and Tourism Management.

need to align the academic activities with current market demands. She directed the university administration and affiliated colleges to introduce skill-based, job-oriented courses in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Hospi-

tal Management, Data Science, Cybersecurity, Tourism Management and other job oriented fields.

She also asked the officers to maintain coordination with different stakeholders and ensure that the courses are industry-linked and designed in consultation with experts from the respective sector. She also called for strengthening the existing vocational and add-on courses.

“Academic excellence must go hand in hand with employability. Students don't need just degrees, but skills that make them competitive and employable in today's dynamic job market”, the Minister stated.

The Minister further reiterated Government's commitment towards transforming the higher education in Jammu & Kashmir into a dynamic, skill-driven and inclusive system. She assured continued support to the University from the government to implement transformative reforms.

Power Safety Teenager Succumbs After Battle For Life At SKIMS

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 14-year-old boy from Farashgund Daharmunah area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district succumbed to injuries he had sustained in an electrocution incident, plunging the entire locality into deep mourning.

The deceased, Farhan Shabir Mir, had suffered a severe electric

shock on Sunday evening and was rushed to SKIMS Soura in a critical condition. Despite being under intensive care for over 48 hours, Farhan passed away in the early hours of Tuesday. Hospital sources told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that the boy had sustained extensive internal injuries and burns, and despite all possible medical interventions, he could

not be revived.

According to KNT, this is the second fatal electrocution incident to have hit Daharmunah in recent weeks. Earlier, another youth from Paul Mohalla of the same village also lost his life to electrocution under similar circumstances, triggering widespread concern over electrical safety and infrastructure in the area.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from Misbahul Hudda to Misbah ul Huda and My mother's name from Shaheena Begum to Shaheena Bano in future I will be known as Misbah ul Huda , Mother's Name Shaheena Bano. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the Passport Office Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

BMG

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written as Mohammad Atif Malik S/o AbdulHamid Malik while my correct name is Mohammad Atif Malik S/O Abdul Hameed Malik . Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Atif Malik S/O Abdul Hameed Malik
Douthpora Tehsil Kreeri

bmgi

از نیابت بومی زمینگیر

عنوان :- درخواست منجانب الطاف حسین انگریز عبدالخالق انگریز ساکنہ تھریچلی باربراد
عطا لگی OBC تحت 176 SRO بحق خود

اشہار ہر خاص وعام

معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض لیگل ہیر/ڈیپنڈنٹ سرٹیفیکٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بار سے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل کا والد شریف الدین مورخہ 2-8-1998 کو فوت ہوا ہے اور متوفی کے وارثان جائزہ ذیل ہے

خالد شریف پسر شریف الدین زیر تعلیم 28 سال
زادہ شریف پسر شریف الدین -- 26 سال

اس کے علاوہ متوفی کی بیوہ گلشنہ بیمنے دوسری شادی کی ہے اور اپنے شوہر کے ساتھ کاند آباد ہے اور متوفی کے وارثان صرف اور صرف خالد شریف اور زایدہ شریف ہے
سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عزیار یا عزیز ہو وہ بعد مشہر اخبار سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنے عذر یا اعتراض عدالت حد کو دفتر یا اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار

FKO

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

No: 128/B&D/T2/2025

Date: 22/07/25

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

Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Faisal Ahamd Gajrey S/O Gh Mohammad Gajrey , Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of self who was Born on 25/05/2008 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant.

In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days.

After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Naib Tehsildar

Executive Magistrate Bomial

fko

از نیابت بومی

عنوان :- درخواست منجانب الطاف حسین انگریز عبدالخالق انگریز ساکنہ تھریچلی باربراد
عطا لگی OBC تحت 176 SRO بحق خود

اشہار ہر خاص وعام

معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹیفیکٹ بذمہ انگریز پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بار سے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل واقعی انگریز ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور سائل تھریچلی بار میں رہائشی پذیر ہے اور کبھی بھی ترک سکونت نہیں کی ہے سائل کا تہذیب ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

اشفاق احمد بانگر ولد عبدالخالق تجارت 38 سال
لطیفہ شکر وچہ اشفاق احمد گھریل کام 37 سال

الطاف حسین ولد عبدالخالق وکالت 32 سال
رضیہ خالق دختر عبدالخالق زیر تعلیم 28 سال

انصر خالق دختر عبدالخالق -- 23 سال
عائشہ بیگم زوجہ عبدالخالق عمر رسیدہ 60 سال

سائل مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفیکٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کہہ کہ ہوا اردنی 10,000 روپے تک ہے ۔ سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عزیار یا عزیز ہو وہ بعد مشہر اخبار سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنے عذر یا اعتراض عدالت حد کو دفتر یا اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار

FKO

ریاض احمد سراج انتقال کر گئے



یہ خبر انتہائی رنج و غم کے ساتھ شائع کی جاتی ہے کہ ریاض احمد سراج ولد مرحوم غلام علی الدین سراج ساکنہ بگڑی محلہ نوہٹہ سرائگر 21 جولائی 2025 بروز سوار انتقال کر گئے، اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جو ارحمت میں جگہ دے اور لواحقین کو یہ صدمہ برداشت کرنے کی توفیق عطا کرے،

مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی اُن کے آہانی مقبرہ واقع ملکہ بونی بگڑی محلہ 25 جولائی 2025 بروز جمعہ 2.30 بجے انجام دی جائے گی
نوٹ : منوات سے گزارش کی جاتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے ساتھی کبھی قہر کا بیوہ وغیرہ نہ لائیں
سوگوار خاندان

LINE

NORTHERN RAILWAY			
E-TENDER NOTICE			
Tender Notice No. : 433-Sig-T-19-25-26 Closing Date/Time: 13-08-2025 15:00 Date: 22/07/2025, Sr.DSTE/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders on https://www.ireps.gov.in against Tender Notice no. 433-Sig-T-19-25-26 Closing Date/Time 13-08-2025 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal LIKE net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.			
NIT HEADER			
Contract Type		Works	
Name of Work: Conversion of BH-01 from IBH to IBS on Jalandhar-Sahnewal Jn. section.			
Tender Closing Date Time	13/08/2025 15:00	Date Time of Uploading Tender	22/07/2025 16:25
Advertised Value Rs.	22153359.48	Bidding Start Date as per IREPS	30/07/2025
Earnest Money (Rs.)	260800.00	Period of Completion	12 Months
NOTE:	Tenderer should keep himself updated about the Tender amendments, Corrigendum, etc. by remaining in touch regularly with the website.		
			2220/2025
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	
AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.	
Ttd: 01932-247954/247955 WebSite: www.iust.ac.in	
Quotation Cancellation Notice	
This is for the information of all quotationers who have submitted their quotations in response to the Notice titled "Notice for inviting Quotation for the supply of Gold Medals" issued vide No: IU/ST/Reg/Exam-unit/Conv./25/1322 Dated: 02-07-2025 published on 04-07-2025 that the above notice stands withdrawn ab-initio. The concerned may approach the office of Controller of Examination for the release of relevant documents.	
No: IU/ST/Exam-unit/Conv./25/1417 Dated: 21-07-2025	Sd/- I/C Controller of Examinations
DIPK-NB-1271/25	DATED: 22-07-2025

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

AIRPORTS	
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311	

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

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

PRAYERS	
	FAJR 3: 56
HIJRI CALENDAR	ZUHR 12:37
27 Muharram 1447	ASR 5: 34
	Magrib 7:42
	ISHA 9: 18

This Day In History

- 1793 - The Prussians conquer Mainz
- 1798 - Napoleon captures Alexandria, Egypt
- 1812 - Battle of Mogilev Russia-Napoleon fights Tsar Alexander I
- 1914 - Austria-Hungary presents an ultimatum to Serbia; demanding acceptance within 48 hours making peacekeeping difficult
- 1929 - The Fascist government in Italy bans the use of foreign words
- 1930 - Earthquake strikes Ariano Italy, 1,500 killed
- 1942 - German troops conquer Rostow
- 1942 - World War II: Operation Edelweiss (a German plan to gain control over the Caucasus) begins.
- 1943 - Battle of Koersk, USSR ends in Nazi defeat (6,000 tanks)
- 1944 - Soviet Army marches into Lublin Poland
- 1944 - US forces invade Japanese-held Tinian in WW II
- 1944 - US troops occupy Pisa Italy
- 1956 - Bell X-2 rocket plane sets world aircraft speed record of 3,050 kph
- 1968 - PLO's 1st hijacking of an El Al plane
- 1973 - US President Richard Nixon refuses to release Watergate tapes of conversations in the White House relevant to the Watergate investigation
- 1978 - Israeli government rejects Sadat's call for return of 2 Sinai areas
- 1980 - Soyuz 37 ferries 2 cosmonauts (1 Vietnamese) to Salyut 6

From KO Archives

Tunnel Beneath Kohi Sulaiman

Govt exploring feasibility to ease traffic

Observer News Service

S RINAGAR – Jammu and Kashmir government would explore feasibility of constructing a tunnel across the Shankaracharya (Kohi Sulaiman) hill to address the acute traffic congestion on the Boulevard and Dalgate.

"We will explore the possibility of constructing a tunnel in the Shankaracharya hill to connect the Gupakr road with the Boulevard," Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said here this morning at a function organised to name the road from Jehangir Chowk to Batmalu as Mohammad Yusuf Rathar Avenue. He unveiled a black marble plaque to announce the new name of the road.

Rathar a brilliant-engineer who headed the R&B department in Kashmir lost his life in a grenade blast in the south Kashmir village of Kapran on July 19, 2004.

The Chief Minister said traffic congestion in the Srinagar City is assuming alarming proportions and movement of vehicles on busy routes has become a real problem. He cited the instance of Dalgate and the Boulevard and said his government, apart from planning a flyover near the J&K Bank Corporate Office, is also contemplating construction of a tunnel in the Shankaracharya hill so that some of the traffic is diverted through it. This would ease the traffic congestion at the busy traffic junction of the city. He said technical and environmental feasibility of the tunnel would be explored.

The Chief Minister said he has asked the R&B department to repair on priority the city roads which have been damaged due to heavy snowfall last winter. He said the city is the heart of the valley and its roads should present a beautiful picture. He alluded to the efforts made by his government in the beautification of the city and said the various development measures taken during the last about 3 years would soon transform Srinagar into a city of international reckoning.

Mufti Sayeed paid rich tributes to late Engineer Mohammad Yusuf Rathar and said he was an honest, dedicated and upright officer. He said he had excelled himself as an able and efficient officer. He said the rechristening of the Jahangir-Batamalu Road after his name is a tribute to this son of the soil. He also remembered other victims of the Kapran blast including Abdur Rashid, Special Assistant to Minister for Power and paid tributes to them.

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KO VIEW

Peace Was Earned

In the five years since the revocation of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir has undergone sweeping changes, both on paper and in perception. The union has witnessed economic revival, bolstered in part by surging tourism. According to figures shared in Parliament, over 7.6 crore tourists have visited the Union Territory since 2020, including nearly 1.5 lakh foreign nationals. These are staggering numbers that would be the envy of any hill state.

What's more, the trend is upward. From 25 lakh domestic tourists in 2020 to 2.35 crore in 2024, the boom is unmistakable. Foreign arrivals too have jumped significantly post-pandemic, from just 1,650 in 2021 to over 65,000 in 2024. It's clear that Jammu and Kashmir is back on the map for travellers, pilgrims, and adventure-seekers alike. Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat's data backs this optimism. Several projects worth Rs 519 crore, under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, have been completed, ranging from flood rehabilitation to building tourist circuits across Srinagar, Pahalgam, Leh, and Kargil.

Yes, Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 civilians was a big setback. Overnight, the Valley was empty of tourists and those who had booked for future travel cancelled. But in recent past, tourism has bounced back. Amarnath Yatra too is seeing an overwhelming response. More than three lakh pilgrims have already completed the Yatra this year. We have nowfull hotel bookings in Pahalgam and Sonamarg. Even Srinagar, often used as a political weather vane, is reporting 40% hotel occupancy, a promising sign amid concerns about safety.

But while tourism shines and infrastructure expands, leading to restoration of peace and stability in a long time, it would be in the fitness of things to restore J&K statehood. In the very session of Parliament where the tourism numbers were announced, there was no mention of the long-pending demand for restoring statehood to J&K, a commitment made by the central government more than once. Prime Minister Modi's declaration of the Monsoon Session as a "Vijay Utsav" and his assertion that Operation Sindoor achieved its military objectives in just 22 minutes are no doubt meant to instill national pride. This should now culminate into re-statement of statehood to J&K, a promise made both by the PM and home minister Amit Shah.

In an interview, Lieutenant Governor Sinha has rightly said that people and history will judge what has changed in the last five years. There's so much that has transformed during this period. But now the time is to build on these achievements and take them forward. And giving people a sense of political empowerment that flows from statehood is a reward that they deserve.

That judgment will not be based on tourist arrivals alone. It will rest on whether the people of J&K are seen as active participants in shaping their destiny, or merely as subjects in a centrally governed region. It is time to give J&K its voice back.

FINANCIAL FIX

The Mansion Myth

The rush to own a house is locking many into long-term debt.

Irshad Mushtaq

Getting a government job is a big deal in Kashmir. It brings respect, security, and access to easy loans. Many young employees, eager to plan their future, quickly take housing loans. They believe they are making a smart move, saving taxes, building a dream home, and settling early.

But this often turns into a trap. Big houses are built. Three floors, extra rooms, modern designs. Yet many of these families don't really need such large homes, especially when children are still young. The real problem begins after the house is built. Monthly loan payments, or EMIs, take up a big part of their salary. In the early years, most of this money goes into paying interest, not the loan itself.

After a few years, more costs come in: furnishings, repairs, school fees. The house becomes a financial burden. The money that could have been used to invest, save, or grow, gets locked into a building that does not earn anything.

This story is common in Kashmir. The promise of tax savings and early success often leads people into unnecessary debt. Many forget the difference between a smart investment and an emotional decision.

A loan should help your future, not hold it back. Business loans, if used wisely, can bring income. Housing loans, if taken too early, often bring stress.

Before taking a big loan, it's important to ask: Do I need this now? Can I afford it without struggle?

Many Kashmiris are learning the hard way. A strong future needs smart choices, not just strong walls.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

On June 20, 2025, Pulwama finally got the news it had waited years for: the garbage dump at Dangerpora was shut down.

For families living next to that giant, stinking landfill, it felt like a small victory. The air had reeked for years. Flies, filth, and rising heaps of rotting waste had become part of daily life. They had begged officials to move it, again and again.

Finally, the dump was gone, or so they thought. Relief came, but it didn't stay long.

Soon after, I started receiving calls from another village: Nawa. A new dumping site, they said, had been created there, without any public notice and scientific process, and in complete violation of the law.

On July 19, I visited the site. What I saw confirmed their fears. Dangerpora hadn't been shut in the name of reform. It had been shifted.

The new garbage station sits on Haes Khudd, an elevated karewa plateau in Nawa. It is common village land, used for grazing by Gujjar-Bakarwal families, home to apple and almond orchards, and sits less than 400 meters from a freshwater stream called Pari-gam Nallah.

Waste was already leaking downhill during the rains, mixing with the stream. Videos of faecal sludge tankers dumping sewage at the site have gone viral. No action has followed.

The Municipal Council Pulwama did not seek consent from villagers, hold a Gram Sabha, or follow any process outlined under the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Rules, 2016.

A senior citizen from Nawa, Ghulam Mohammad Wani, told me, "They came with police and handed over our common land to the municipality. This was done behind our backs. We were never asked. They've violated every norm."

That violation runs deeper than just consultation.

The MSW Rules 2016 require local authorities to ensure waste is segregated at the source. Organic, recyclable, and reject waste must be collected separately. None of that is being done.

Mixed, untreated garbage continues to arrive daily, just as it did in Dangerpora. No processing facility exists at Haes Khudd. There's no fencing, drainage, or lining that would qualify the site as a legal landfill.

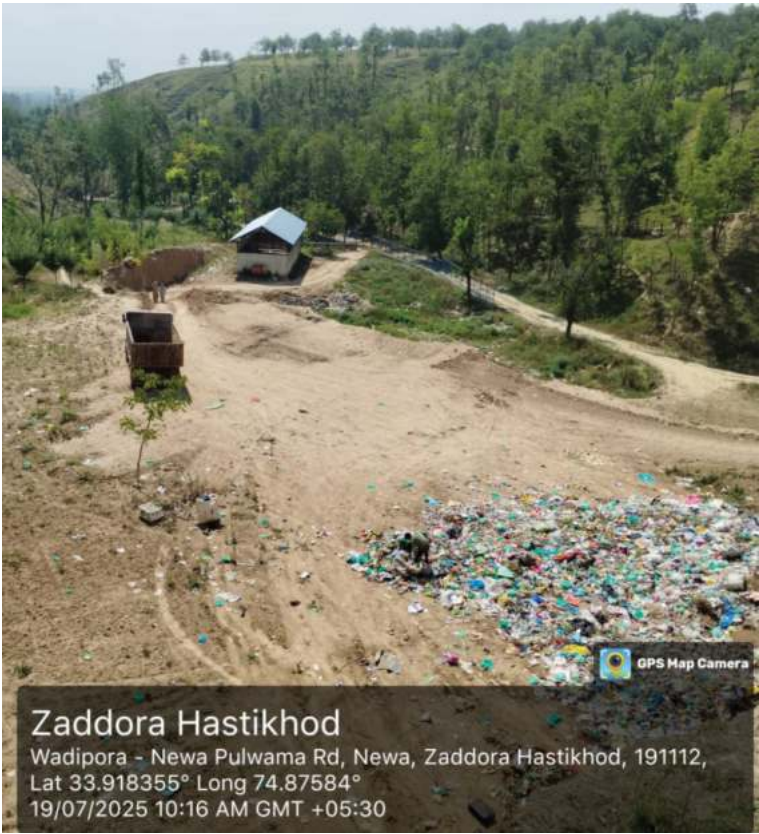
In fact, it is not a landfill at all. It is an illegal dump.

Rule 15 of MSW Rules makes it clear: municipalities are responsible for door-to-door collection of segregated waste from every household, commercial space, and informal settlement.

This has never been imple-

Garbage Hits New Ground

Aviation safety norms ban garbage near airfields, yet Kashmir's new site defies logic and law alike.



mented in Pulwama town since the rules were introduced nearly a decade ago.

As a former waste management professional and someone who has studied this space for over 12 years, I can say with certainty: Haes Khudd is unfit for any form of waste treatment or storage. Even more troubling is the aerial risk.

The site lies just 7 to 8 kilometers from the flight path of aircraft landing at Srinagar Airport. I saw dozens of birds circling the dump: eagles, crows, scavengers drawn by the garbage.

The MSW Rules prohibit landfill sites within 20 kilometers of an airport unless special permission is obtained from the civil aviation authority.

Was such a No Objection Certificate (NOC) ever secured? Have the Airport Authority of India or the Indian Air Force even been informed?

A bird-hit at landing altitude is not a minor concern. It's a flight safety hazard.

The Awantipur Quil air force base lies nearby. The authorities must answer whether they considered this while clearing the site.

The dumping also violates Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, as the rain runoff is visibly polluting Pari-gam Nallah, a drinking water source for many.

Then there's the impact on livelihoods. The karewa land in Nawa has historically supported sheep grazing and orchards. I counted four to five dozen stray dogs during my visit. Soon, this area will become a magnet for dogs across nearby villages.

Farmers have already reported damage to fruit crops and fear attacks on livestock. Government offices in the vicinity are also affected.

Waste is being burned in the evenings by workers or ragpickers, choking the air. On some days, the municipality itself has been seen burying waste with JCB machines, posting videos online as if it were a matter of civic pride.

This isn't waste management.

Waste is being burned in the evenings by workers or ragpickers, choking the air. On some days, the municipality itself has been seen burying waste with JCB machines, posting videos online as if it were a matter of civic pride.

It's institutional ignorance. And it's illegal.

As per Schedule I-A (VII) of the MSW Rules, landfill sites must be 100 meters away from homes, parks, rivers, and must not be built on hills or elevated land.

Yet, the Haes Khudd site is karewa land: elevated, sloped, and

adjacent to residential homes, including families who have lived here for over two decades. Some of these families are in the process of receiving land grants under the J&K government's landless housing scheme.

Instead of supporting them, we're dumping waste at their doorstep.

Where is the Deputy Commissioner of Pulwama? Under Rule 12(b), the DC is duty-bound to review the performance of municipal bodies at least once every quarter, including whether solid waste is being processed and disposed of according to law. What action has been taken so far?

Across Jammu & Kashmir, the enforcement of MSW Rules remains dismal. Sanitary landfill sites are rare, scientific processing units rarer still. Srinagar's Achan landfill, infamous for its towering heaps of trash, is a cautionary tale we never seem to learn from.

But I know change is possible.

Ten years ago in Budgam, I helped initiate a pilot project in the Ompora housing colony. With support from the municipal committee, we began door-to-door collection of segregated waste. Organic matter was composted, dry waste sorted. It was cost-effective, community-led, and sustainable campaign covered by national media.

But when it came time to expand the project to other wards, bureaucracy took over. Files were delayed, no fresh Expression of Interest was invited, and the pilot collapsed.

So I took another route: judicial activism. At the National Green Tribunal, I've secured landmark orders on Doodh Ganga, Mamath Kul, Poonch River, and others. But the legal path is long. The more urgent need is for local governance to wake up.

Waste does not vanish when moved from one village to another. It comes back, into our water, air, and land, and eventually, into our bodies.

What's happening in Nawa is a symptom of a larger problem: a lack of accountability, training, and respect for the law. Our sanitation workers are not trained, our planners aren't listening, and our citizens are not consulted.

With the result, our streams are choked, hills scarred, and children exposed.

Pulwama must shut down the Haes Khudd site immediately. An expert committee should be formed to assess the environmental damage. Compensation and relocation support must be extended to affected residents. Most of all, a proper, scientifically approved waste management plan must be drafted and made public.

Waste can be managed. The rules exist. The knowledge exists. What's missing is the will.

And that must change, before another village wakes up to trucks at dawn, and a dump in their backyard.

- The author is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Sincerely

Ali Ashhar
Award-winning Author

Letter to Editor

Dreams Against the Deadline in Kashmir

Preparing for competitive exams feels like stepping into a storm in India. The syllabus is vast. The coaching centers are everywhere. The pressure is real. And in places like Kashmir, where uncertainty often hangs in the air, the race to crack an exam like UPSC, NEET, or NET feels even more intense.

Every year, thousands of young people sit down to study not just facts and formulas, but also to figure out themselves. These exams, as anyone who's tried knows, are essentially about mindset than memory. They

test your patience, demand your consistency, and ask if you can hold your ground when things don't go your way.

What often gets lost in the rush for results is that the journey itself is shaping something far deeper. It's not just about coaching notes or practice tests. It's about learning what drives you.

If you're only doing it because everyone else is, or because society says this path leads to success, it's easy to lose steam halfway through. You have to know why you want it.

A smart strategy helps. Look at previous years' question papers, connect the dots, build a plan, and then stick to it. But it's not only about technique. It's about passion, patience, and perseverance.

We've seen so many stories of resilience in the valley. Students who made it in their third or fourth attempt. Young women who balanced family duties and study hours. Those who didn't crack the exam but found better paths along the way. The truth is, exams may shape careers, but they don't define lives.

The comparisons with peers, the noise on social media, the feeling that others have it all figured out is all smoke. What matters is your pace, your peace, and your purpose.

So, if you're preparing right now, remember this: you're not falling behind. You're learning how to stand tall.

This isn't just about a test. It's about becoming a person who's ready, no matter what comes next.

Houses Without Hope

Kashmir is building faster than it's thinking. As housing projects rise, the people who might live in them are leaving. Without jobs, a home is just a shell.

Syed Aarsalan Abid

On paper, Kashmir is developing. In reality, it's emptying out.

You don't have to go far to see the change. Construction is everywhere. Residential towers are rising in the outskirts of Srinagar, gated colonies are coming up outside Anantnag, and promotional hoardings promise smart homes in Baramulla.

Developers from Delhi, Punjab, and even Dubai are buying up land and selling visions of modernity. But take a closer look. Many of these structures are finished, or nearly so, and eerily unoccupied.

Glass balconies reflect the sun, but not life. Entire floors are dark. In some places, caretakers live alone in buildings designed for families.

This isn't progress. It's a disconnect. What's missing isn't infrastructure. It's people. And what's pulling people away is what this new growth fails to provide: work.

Each year, thousands of Kashmir's most skilled and educated young people leave. Engineers go to Bangalore. Nurses head to the Gulf. MBAs, designers, tech workers, teachers follow the trail of employment across India and beyond. They leave not out of ambition, but out of resignation.

Back home, the job market offers little more than government exams, low-wage private work, and the promise of uncertainty. So they leave, often reluctantly, often for good.

And yet we keep building. This contradiction, empty houses in a place where so many want to stay but can't, is a signal we're doing something wrong.

Housing is rising as if demand were growing. In truth, the demand is speculative, driven by investors betting on a future that may never come.

These aren't homes being built for families to live in. They are assets being traded, often by people who will never live here.

When real estate outpaces reality, it becomes a bubble. And Kashmir is not immune to what happens when that bubble bursts: prices crash, investors lose faith, and the local economy suffers.

But the deeper loss is cultural and emotional. We risk becoming a place



of empty buildings and empty hopes, a place full of homes, but not of lives.

There is, however, a way to redirect this trajectory.

If Kashmir is to hold on to its people, it needs more than buildings. It needs local, dignified, and durable work that matches the aspirations of its youth.

That's why the idea of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is both relevant and urgent here. They're spaces where real employment can take root.

If designed around Kashmir's strengths, like handicrafts, horticulture, information technology, and food processing, they can create clusters of opportunity, and give young people a reason to stay.

Most of all, they can breathe purpose into the houses already built.

But SEZs on their own won't change the story unless they are part of a broader shift in thinking. We have to stop treating housing as a product and start seeing it as a consequence.

People don't choose where to live because of tiles or terraces. They choose to live where life happens, where there is work, where there is community, and where the future feels possible.

The government has a central role to play here as a facilitator. It must align industrial growth with residential expansion, invest in infrastructure that supports livelihoods, and discourage speculative hoarding of

property.

This means easing approvals for businesses, ensuring power and internet reach rural corners, and offering incentives for industries that employ local hands.

It also means looking beyond Srinagar and investing in smaller towns, where talent is abundant but opportunities are rare.

Kashmir cannot afford to become a land of commuters and remittances. It cannot afford to outsource its youth. Every time a son leaves to drive a cab in Dubai, or a daughter boards a bus to Chandigarh with her nursing degree, we lose more than manpower. We lose a little of ourselves.

The problem is economic, yes. But the cost is emotional.

Families here still dream of being together. Parents still hope their children will return and stay. Many of the young still long to live in the land they love.

But dreams can't fill dinner tables. Sentiment alone doesn't pay bills. If we want people to build lives here, we must give them the tools to do it. And jobs are the foundation.

The housing boom will mean something only when the homes fill up. That will happen when people see a future here, not just a roof.

Right now, we're building the shell. It's time we built the substance.

The author is a Commercial Advocate & Corporate Advisor.



Marriage Without Rights

Mehar is a legal right, not a gesture. But in Kashmir, women are battling families and officials to claim it.

Mohammad Amin Mir

Across towns and villages in Kashmir, Muslim women are routinely denied the land promised to them at marriage.

Haq Mehar, guaranteed under Islamic law and upheld by Indian courts, is treated as symbolic, not legal.

The woman may have the Nikanama. She may have a sworn affidavit from her husband. She may even live on the land. Still, when the husband dies, she is asked to prove ownership all over again.

Revenue officers hesitate. Without a gift deed, mutation is stalled. The heirs object. The woman is asked to get a relinquishment from her own children or go to court.

In most cases, she gives up. The land remains in the husband's name. The promise dissolves.

Mehar is a debt, and it is not optional. The Supreme Court has said so. High Courts have said so.

In Amina Bi v. Revenue Authorities, the Karnataka High Court held that land mentioned as Mehar in a Nikanama, backed by possession, must be mutated.

The Jammu & Kashmir High Court stated that mutation is not ownership. It is a fiscal entry. It reflects possession and

agreement, not a title dispute.

Still, revenue officials resist.

They cite the Transfer of Property Act. They say immovable property above ₹100 must be registered. They fear future litigation. They follow manuals that do not address Mehar. They reject Nikanamas and affidavits, even when there is no objection from heirs. They tell the widow to go to court. They treat her claim as suspicious.

In rural Kashmir, many Nikanamas list land as Mehar. Two kanals, three kanals, and sometimes more. Women live on that land for years. After the husband's death, they apply for mutation. The patwari refuses. The clerk delays. The family pressures her to withdraw. She is told to accept maintenance instead. Her legal right becomes a family negotiation.

This is not a legal vacuum. The framework exists. Islam supports it, courts enforce it, yet practice lags. The system assumes the woman is lying or misinformed. Officials want a gift deed. Families want silence. No one wants to make the process work.

A mutation based on Mehar is possible. It only needs clear guidelines. A Nikanama and affidavit should be enough when land details are mentioned and there is no challenge.

A one-time mutation category, "Based on Dower under

Muslim Personal Law", should be introduced. Revenue officials should follow court rulings, not personal interpretations. Legal aid must reach these women. Revenue staff must be trained. Delay must not become denial.

The State cannot demand registered deeds when the law accepts marital contracts. It cannot ask widows to go to court when the record already exists. It cannot treat religious obligations as optional paperwork. It cannot ignore the courts.

The system is not blind. It is indifferent.

When a woman is refused mutation of her Mehar land, she loses more than property. She loses legal standing. She loses trust in the contract that began her marriage.

She is told that her rights end with her husband's life.

Land is not just soil, it is proof, protection, and recognition. To deny Mehar is to erase her from the record.

The woman doesn't need sympathy. She needs a file that moves. She needs a law that works. She needs the State to act.

The promise was made. The law agrees. But the file still gathers dust.

The author writes on legal matters in Kashmir and can be reached at miramin354@gmail.com

Kashmir Is Losing Its Wild Heart

As roads cut through forests and wetlands turn to silt, Kashmir's wildlife is retreating, and with it, the region's ecological future.

Sahil Jahangir Mir

The sky in Kashmir still blushes pink at dawn. The rivers still catch glints of snowmelt. But listen closely, and you'll hear what's missing.

The forests are no longer alive with birdsong. The rustle in the undergrowth is gone. The wild is retreating, step by step, into silence.

Development has picked up pace in the valley, and with it, the natural world is vanishing.

Roads now slice through forests that once formed uninterrupted corridors for wildlife. Massive hydroelectric dams block rivers that once fed thriving wetlands. New homes, hotels, and tunnels are taking shape at record speed.

But behind the cement and steel lies a silent story of extinction, displacement, and irreversible ecological damage.

The Hangul, Kashmir's crown jewel of wildlife, is nearly gone. Once seen in the open meadows from Kishtwar to Dachigam, the Kashmir stag, with its proud antlers and deep reddish coat, is now largely missing from the landscape. Fewer than 200 remain. In the 1940s, there were thousands. Now, they're confined to a sliver of their natural range inside Dachigam National Park.

Feroz Ahmad, a senior wildlife biologist, has tracked their decline for years. "The Hangul isn't vanishing because of disease or age. It's vanishing because we've carved up its home," he says.

Forests have been turned into pasturelands. Urban sprawl has eaten into protected zones. And



in Dachigam, the last refuge, human intrusion is growing: tourists, grazing animals, and illegal encroachments.

This pattern is repeating across species and landscapes.

The Himalayan black bear, once a shadowy figure in the

high woods, is now regularly seen raiding apple orchards and entering villages in search of food.

These aren't wild animals turning aggressive. They're desperate, as their food sources are gone, and their forests have shrunk.

They're adapting to survive.

In 2024 alone, more than 40 leopard sightings were recorded in Kupwara, Anantnag, and Pulwama. Some ended in attacks. Many ended in killings. Fear spreads in communities. And so does anger.

But leopards don't prefer villages. They've been forced there.

This is the new normal in Kashmir: a rising wave of human-wildlife conflict. It's easy to blame the animals. It's harder to admit that they are reacting to what we've done.

Take the wetlands. Hokersar, once a stopover for thousands of migratory birds flying in from Siberia and Central Asia, is now choked with garbage and churning with silt.

Shalbugh, another bird haven, is bordered by illegal construction. Wular Lake, Asia's largest freshwater lake, is shrinking. Entire species of birds, like the Northern Pintail and the Black-necked Crane, are now rare sights.

And these are not just environmental losses. They're warnings.

Wetlands aren't optional. They regulate floods, recharge groundwater, and house fish and insects that support entire food chains. When they die, ecosystems collapse.

What we're seeing is an ecological chain reaction.

As forests vanish, herbivores have less to eat. As herbivores dwindle, predators descend into villages. As wetlands shrink, birds stop coming. And as birds disappear, pollination suffers.

Every lost species is a crack in the foundation of life.

Yet the machines keep drilling. The tunnels keep expanding. Entire slopes are being blasted for road widening.

In places like the Sindh Valley and Pir Panjal, critical forest zones have been flattened for infrastructure projects. Riverbanks are being cemented. Nocturnal animals are fleeing the lights and noise. Regulations are either missing, ignored, or brushed aside.

There is no coherent environmental planning. Wildlife corridors are never mapped. Projects are cleared without

credible ecological assessments. The mindset is simple: build now, worry later.

But later is here.

Kashmir's identity is inseparable from its natural heritage. The Hangul is not just a deer. It's a symbol etched into our memory, our folklore, even our government insignia. The Himalayan bear, the snow leopard, the black-necked crane are part of the valley's soul.

And that soul is flickering out. The way forward isn't complicated, but it requires political will and public pressure.

Conservation must be treated as central to development, not a side concern. Eco-tourism must replace destructive tourism. Grazing must be controlled inside protected zones. Illegal constructions around wetlands must be demolished. And communities must be made partners, not bystanders.

Schools should teach children about the valley's wildlife. Villages should be equipped to report poaching and track sightings. Forest departments must be strengthened, not sidelined. Environmental clearances must be real, not rubber stamps.

Kashmir does not need to choose between roads and rivers, or progress and preservation. It needs to plan. It needs to care.

And above all, it needs to listen to the growing silence in its forests before there is nothing left to hear.

The author is an environmental researcher and columnist based in Kralapora, Srinagar.

Hope Dhankhar's Successor Will Do Justice To VP's Chair: CM

Agencies

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday wished Jagdeep Dhankhar, who resigned as Vice President on Monday, good health and expressed hope that his successor would do justice to the office.

"First of all, I hope for his better health and pray to God to keep the former vice president well and give him a long life. I think this is the first time perhaps that a vice president of the country has resigned in such a manner.

"Obviously, his health did not allow him to work further. We hope the next vice president will do justice in a real sense to the chair and the office," Omar told reporters at Safapora in Ganderbal district.

The chief minister visited Safapora to offer his condolences to the family of an assault and murder victim.

On the Congress party's protest in support of the demand for the restoration of statehood to J-K, the chief minister said the party did not consult his National Conference (NC).

"Let them talk to us first. We came to know about these through newspapers, no one talked to us. There was a meeting of the INDIA bloc some days back and had they mentioned this, why would we have taken a backseat when it is we who have taken it upon our shoulders? "We passed a resolution in the cabinet, we brought the resolution in the Assembly, but it is a separate thing that it was not discussed because of the situation," he said.

In a sarcastic dig, Omar said it is a good thing that the Congress party remembered to take out protests after such a long time.

"If they wanted our support in it, then they should talk to us, our colleagues will also participate in that," he added.

Omar said the government will provide all possible support to the victim's family.

"Police have taken action, a case has been registered and God willing, will be taken to conclusion. The promise of justice with the family will be kept and there is also a need to support them.

"Their elder son cannot walk because of spinal injury, they have sought some help from the government and we will make a case and do whatever is possible," he said.

AI Plane's Tail Catches Fire After Landing In Delhi

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: An Air India plane's tail caught fire shortly after landing at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Airport (IGI) from Hong Kong on Tuesday. Though the aircraft sustained some damage, passengers and crew members disembarked from the plane safely.

The aircraft has been grounded and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is looking into the incident, a source said.

"Flight AI 315, operating from Hong Kong to Delhi on 22 July 2025, experienced an auxiliary power unit (APU) fire shortly after it had landed and parked at the gate. The incident occurred while passengers had begun disembarking, and the APU was automatically shut down as per system design," an airline spokesperson

said in a statement.

The spokesperson said there was some damage to the aircraft, while passengers and crew members disembarked normally and are safe. "The aircraft has been grounded for further investigations and the regulator has been duly notified," the spokesperson added.

The flight, operated with an Airbus A321 aircraft, landed at 12:12 pm at the Delhi airport, as per information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com. The incident on Tuesday is at least the third incident involving an Air India plane in two days.

On Monday, a Kolkata-bound Air India plane aborted takeoff due to a technical snag at the Delhi airport and an Air India plane coming from Kochi veered off the runway while landing in heavy rain at the Mumbai airport.

NIT Srinagar's Alumni Association to host 'SANGAM-2025' on Oct 10-11

KO Web Desk

Srinagar, July 22: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar in collaboration with Alumni Association will host its grand Alumni reunion, "SANGAM - 2025 "(Student Alumni Networking for Growth, Aspirations and Mentorship), on October 10 and 11, 2025.

The event will bring together former students from within the region, across the country and abroad for two days of celebrations, expert's talks, mentorship, cultural programs and branch wise alumni-student interactions.

In his message, Director NIT Srinagar Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia said that Alumni are the true ambassadors of an institute, and their success reflects the strength of our academic and cultural foundation.

"SANGAM 2025 will not only

celebrate past achievements but also lays the groundwork for a future of collaboration, mentorship, and shared growth", he said.

"We are committed to make this event memorable and impactful, and I extend my full support to all initiatives taken in this direction," Prof Kanaujia added.

Registrar NIT Srinagar, Prof. Atikur Rehman said the alumni community is one of the greatest assets of our Institute and their experiences, guidance, and contributions can transform, motivate the journey of our current students.

"Through SANGAM 2025 and associated programs, we aim to strengthen this vital relationship," he added.

These initiatives were thoroughly discussed during the first and second Alumni Association meetings held on June 15 and July 16, 2025 at NIT Srinagar.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Why Kashmir's Weather

recent rain predictions, and how public perception can misjudge a science still evolving.

Lately, people have been saying the weather forecasts haven't been quite right. Why do you think that's happening?

That's a fair question, and I get why people feel that way. But here's the thing: forecasting the weather in summer, especially in July and August, is much tougher than in winter. These are the hottest months in both Kashmir and Ladakh, with very high surface temperatures.

Another big challenge is the terrain. We're dealing with a really complex geography here: Pir Panjal, the Greater Himalayas, valleys, hills like Kupwara. All this uneven land messes with weather patterns.

And then, there's the moisture. Summer brings in heavy humidity from the Arabian Sea. The atmosphere gets loaded with moisture, and clouds can build up fast. That can lead to sudden, intense showers in one place and dry skies just a few kilometers away. So predicting exactly when and where it will rain is not easy.

So you're saying it's actually easier to forecast in winter than in summer?

Yes, exactly. In winter, things are way more stable. Temperatures often stay below freezing in Kashmir and Ladakh, so the atmosphere isn't shifting every hour. That means the weather models we use, especially the ones for North India, behave more reliably. So yes, we tend to get better accuracy in winter.

So as a general rule, can people expect better forecasts in winter?

Yes, that's usually the case. In winter, we can often get accuracy levels of 80 to 90 percent, especially for things like snowfall or rain.

But in summer, with all the constant changes in the atmosphere, accuracy dips a bit, down to around 70 to 75 percent.

What kind of forecasting systems or models does IMD actually use?

We use a mix of national and international models, and we've also developed some in India, like the Bharat Weather Forecast System. But here's the important part: the tools are just one side of it. Interpretation is equally critical.

It's not like picking up the phone and saying, "It'll rain tomorrow." We have to go through satellite images, radar data, synoptic charts. It's like detective work. You need good models and skilled people to read them right.

Okay, let's talk about the recent forecast. It said it would rain from July 21st to 24th, but we didn't see much. Did the monsoon fail us?

Ah, the monsoon debate! Yes, the monsoon definitely plays a role, but here's the thing: there's this common myth that monsoon clouds don't cross the Pir Panjal or reach Ladakh. Even some so-called experts believe that. It's not true. When the currents are strong, they do reach us.

Take July 21, for example. We said it would rain, and it did rain, just not everywhere.

People often expect the forecast to mean rain exactly where they live, but when we say "rain in Jammu and Kashmir" we're talking about the whole region. It rained heavily in places like Jammu, around Mata Vaishno Devi, and several hilly areas. In fact, there were even injuries due to heavy rain in some spots.

Also, when we say rain from the 21st to the 24th, we don't mean it's going to pour non-stop for four days straight. That would cause flooding.

What we mean is: expect rain here and there across the region during that period. For example, parts of north Kashmir did get showers, and more was expected later that evening too.

Got it. So what's the forecast looking like after July 25th?

From July 24th afternoon to around the 27th, we expect things to calm

down a bit. No major rain spells, so it'll be relatively stable.

That said, if temperatures rise too much, we might get those pop-up thunderstorms or gusty winds. Those are tricky, as they're sudden and hard to pin down.

But the type of widespread rainfall we saw earlier probably won't continue.

Final question. How much does a meteorologist's experience matter when interpreting forecasts?

It matters a lot. You can have all the data in the world, but if the person reading it makes a mistake, even something as simple as reading a "2" instead of a "1", that changes everything.

Forecasting isn't just about machines or numbers. It's about how you analyze and interpret.

The good news is, forecasting in India has come a long way. Our systems are getting stronger, models better, and our understanding deeper.

But the atmosphere is unpredictable by nature. No forecast can ever be 100% perfect, especially in a place like Kashmir where the weather has a mind of its own.

Flash Flood

The Meteorological Centre Srinagar also issued a short-term weather advisory on Tuesday forecasting generally cloudy skies with intermittent rain and thundershowers over many parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The alert spans regions of north, central, and south Kashmir, as well as multiple districts in the Jammu division.

Kupwara, Handwara, Baramulla, and parts of central Kashmir, along with sections of Banihal-Ramban, Doda, and Kathua, are likely to experience intense rainfall accompanied by gusty winds reaching speeds of 30 to 40 kilometers per hour.

Widespread rain is also expected in Banihal, Ramban, Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua, Doda, and Kishtwar, raising the possibility of flash floods and landslides or mudslides in vulnerable locations.

In view of the prevailing conditions, the MeT Centre has urged people to suspend Shikara riding and boating during periods of intense rain or gusty winds, particularly on water bodies like Dal Lake and Wular Lake.

Residents of landslide-prone areas and those living near nallahs and steep slopes are advised to remain cautious. Disaster response teams have been placed on alert, and travelers are advised to exercise caution on mountainous roads, including the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway.

The Jammu and Kashmir Meteorological Department also issued a weather alert for July 22 to 25, warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated to scattered places in the Jammu Division.

A MeT official stated that on July 22 and 23, there will be intermittent spells of light to moderate rain, thunder, and gusty winds at many places, along with intense showers and heavy to very heavy rain at isolated to scattered locations in the Jammu Division.

For July 24, the weather is expected to remain generally cloudy, with intermittent spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places. Intense showers and heavy rain are also likely at isolated locations across both Jammu and Kashmir.

He further added that from July 25 to 27, the weather will turn hot and humid, with the possibility of brief showers at a few places. From July 28 to 30, fresh spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers are expected at many locations.

In an advisory, the department warned of the possibility of flash floods at some vulnerable locations, along with landslides, mudslides, shooting stones, a rise in water levels in water bodies, and waterlogging in some low-lying areas.

"Farmers are advised to suspend

farm operations from July 22 to 24," the official added.

Rainstorm Disrupts

dangerously, according to local reports. Authorities acted swiftly, with the Chief Education Officer (CEO) of Poonch ordering the closure of all government and private schools for the day. The precautionary measure was taken to ensure the safety of students and staff amid the ongoing weather emergency.

In a close call, a residential house in Panchayat Ghohrot, Ward No. 9 of Koteranka collapsed due to rain-induced structural weakness. Fortunately, the family had evacuated earlier after noticing wall cracks, preventing any casualties. Locals have urged the administration to provide compensation and temporary relief.

In Rajouri town, a boundary wall of a nearby Army camp collapsed near the main bus stand due to soil erosion. The falling debris damaged two parked vehicles but caused no injuries. Panic spread briefly in the bustling market area following the incident.

The heavy downpour also led to a blockade on the backside road of the ALG ground in Rajouri as multiple trees and electric poles were uprooted. With electricity wires scattered across the road, residents raised concerns over commuter safety. Restoration teams are working to clear the area and restore power.

In Poonch's Kalai area, a massive landslide completely blocked the Jammu-Poonch National Highway, stranding vehicles on both sides. Authorities have deployed machinery and teams to expedite clearance and restore vehicular movement.

In response to the unfolding crisis, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Poonch, Dr. Parvaiz Ahmed Khan, issued an emergency circular directing all healthcare institutions to remain functional 24x7. Sub Health Centres, Block Medical Units, and the District Hospital have been asked to ensure full attendance of staff, with no leaves to be granted during the period. Ambulances have been put on standby to handle any emergencies.

Officials have urged residents to avoid unnecessary travel and remain cautious near vulnerable structures, hillsides, and water bodies. Disaster response and health teams remain on high alert as the administration continues to monitor the situation closely.

No Link Between

24 hours of hospitalisation or showed no signs of illness within the previous 24 hours. None had known co-morbidities.

Researchers assessed participants' COVID-19 vaccination status, history of infection, post-COVID conditions, family history of sudden death, and lifestyle habits such as alcohol use, smoking, drug use, and intense physical activity.

The study concluded that COVID-19 vaccination did not increase the risk of sudden, unexplained death in this age group. However, other factors such as previous COVID-19-related hospitalisation, family history of sudden death, and certain lifestyle behaviours were linked to higher risk.

The government also highlighted steps being taken under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD). These include screening people over 30 years of age for diabetes, hypertension, and other NCDs that could lead to cardiovascular issues.

Additionally, it mentioned initiatives like Ayushman Arogya Mandir, public awareness campaigns, and promotion of fitness and yoga through the Fit India Movement and Ministry of AYUSH programmes to encourage healthier lifestyles. (inputs from KNO)

2 Convicted In Acid

brief moment, they threw acid on his body," the official said.

The attack resulted in complete loss of eyesight for Nazir. His wife, who rushed to help him, also suffered serious burns. The couple's life took a traumatic turn as they battled physical disability, emotional scars, and a slow-moving justice system.

Despite the odds, Nazir's wife pursued the case relentlessly—attending court hearings, filing documents, and following up with officials. "Her resilience kept the case alive," a member of the prosecution team said. "Even when others gave up hope, she stood firm. Without her efforts, we would not have reached this verdict."

The acid attack in 2010 sparked brief outrage in the region, but the case soon faded from public attention. For the victims, however, the trauma and struggle never stopped.

Arguments on the quantum of punishment are expected to be heard in the coming days. The detailed order of conviction is likely to be made public on Tuesday.

For the survivor couple, Monday's verdict is more than a legal win—it marks the end of a long, painful chapter, and a quiet affirmation of justice delayed, but not denied.

LG Launches Portal

new web portal to ensure that every grievance or claim is officially recorded and promptly acted upon.

To oversee implementation, special monitoring cells have also been established in the offices of the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police. These cells will review both pending and resolved cases, identify bottlenecks, and coordinate with concerned departments for timely redressal.

The launch follows the Lieutenant Governor's visit to Baramulla on July 13, where he handed over appointment letters to the next of kin of 40 terror victims. On that occasion, he had reiterated the government's commitment to supporting victim families and asserted that the era of family members of terrorists receiving government jobs was over.

'Amarnath Yatra

devotees.

During his visit to the Nunwan Base Camp in the Pahalgam area, Sinha said that feedback from pilgrims indicates over 96% of them are satisfied with the arrangements made by the administration and associated organisations.

"I visited Baltal recently, and I can confidently say that both security and facilities for the yatis have improved significantly year after year. The officials and volunteers involved are doing their duty with utmost devotion," he said.

Sinha said the administration aims to ensure pilgrims return with pleasant memories, adding that the yatra route currently reflects a festive atmosphere.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed satisfaction over the growing number of pilgrims participating in the yatra this year and anticipated a further increase in footfall in the coming days.

"As I mentioned earlier, the success of this year's Amarnath Yatra will have a positive impact on tourism in Kashmir. So far, around 3.45 lakh devotees have had darshan, and we are hopeful that many more will join in the days ahead," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the dedication, passion and commitment of Camp directors, officials of Shrine Board, Civil and police administration, security forces, service providers, volunteers and every-one involved in the holy yatra for ensuring a pleasant and memorable pilgrimage for the devotees.

The Lieutenant Governor interacted with the pilgrims, service providers, langer sevadars, sanitation workers, medical staff, and administrative, Police and security officials deputed for the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

He took stock of department-wise

arrangements, logistics, lodging, disaster management, healthcare and other facilities that have been put in place on travel route and Yatra base camps at Pahalgam axis.

The Lieutenant Governor directed health officials to conduct an in-depth analysis of patterns and causes for the health-related incidents among pilgrims, and take precautionary measures to improve overall health outcomes for the devotees.

He also reviewed the Yatra feedback system and directed for incorporating traffic feedback option for better traffic management and to facilitate the smooth movement of the pilgrims.

ED Exposes

officials, the accused diverted the loan amounts for personal enrichment, violating the terms and purpose of the loans. The agency noted that public funds were systematically looted through forged documents, inflated invoices, and fake credentials.

A special court in Srinagar has taken cognisance of the ED's complaint and further proceedings are expected in the coming weeks. Investigations into money trails and possible involvement of other officials are ongoing, the ED said.

Jailed Rashid

Rashid's counsel, Vikhyat Oberoi, said the parole was granted subject to the payment of travel expenses.

The Baramulla MP, who defeated Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, had sought either interim bail or custody parole to fulfill his parliamentary duties.

While Rashid's lawyer requested that he be allowed to attend the session without having to bear travel costs, the NIA opposed interim bail and insisted custody parole be granted only if travel expenses were paid.

Rashid is facing trial in a terror funding case, with allegations of financing separatist and terrorist groups in Jammu and Kashmir. His name allegedly emerged during the interrogation of co-accused businessman Zahoor Watali, according to the NIA FIR.

He was chargesheeted in October 2019, and in March 2022, a special NIA court framed charges under Sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 121 (waging war against the government), and 124A (sedition) of the IPC, as well as provisions under the UAPA related to terrorist acts and terror funding.

J&K Cong Holds

week written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to press for a legislation in the Monsoon session to grant full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

In their joint letter to Modi, Kharge and Gandhi had said that for the past five years, the people of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir have consistently called for the restoration of full statehood.

This demand is both legitimate and firmly grounded in their constitutional and democratic rights, they had said.

They Never Sought

first who raised this demand and brought a resolution in this regard. If they need our support, let them talk to us," CM said speaking to reporters in Ganderbal.

Responding to a query about Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation, he said this is the first time that the resignation has come in such a way.

Notably, CM Omar visited the residence of the woman, who was allegedly raped and murdered in Safapora last week. "Police have already registered a case. The government will provide every possible assistance to the bereaved family," he said while responding to query about government support to the victim family

Showroom Blacklisted

The Kashmir Art Bazaar, located in Konchipora, Tangmarg. The seller had

provided a certificate and QR code claiming GI certification. However, upon verification, IICF confirmed that the label was forged and not issued by the institute.

Following the complaint, the Quality Control wing of the department conducted an inspection, seized the carpet, and served a show-cause notice to the proprietor. Despite denying wrongdoing, the seller's explanation was contradicted by photographic evidence and IICF's expert verification, which confirmed the label had been pasted on a machine-made carpet.

"The Department found the reply misleading and concluded the act was a deliberate attempt to cheat the buyer by exploiting the GI certification of Kashmiri crafts," a departmental spokesman said. "The seller had deliberately created and affixed a fake QR label that resembled the genuine GI label issued by IICF," he added.

Citing violations under Sections 6 and 7 of the J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act, 1978, the Directorate ordered immediate blacklisting and deregistration of the seller. A formal complaint has also been directed to be filed with the office of the SSP, Tourism Enforcement, to initiate legal action under the GI Act and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The order also noted that the seller tried to remove the fake label once he realised the fraud had been detected, but photographic proof and expert validation confirmed the deception.

Calling the act "a direct assault on the trust consumers place in Kashmiri handmade products," the spokesman warned all stakeholders against misbranding or passing off machine-made items as handmade. "Such malpractices threaten the credibility of our craft sector and endanger the livelihoods of thousands of artisans and weavers," he said.

The department also appealed to tourists and buyers to report any such fraudulent transactions and assured strict action against those involved in tarnishing the legacy of Kashmir's rich handicraft heritage.

Death Toll Rises

toll from the crash rose to 31, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) – the media wing of the military.

Earlier, Chief Adviser's special adviser, Saidur Rahman, told reporters that at least 25 deceased were children and many of them under the age of 12 who succumbed to extensive burn injuries. Authorities fear the toll could further rise.

Sharing the details, the ISPR said that 16 people died at the Combined Military Hospital, 10 at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, two at Lubana General Hospital, and one each at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Uttara Adhunik Medical College Hospital, and United Hospital.

It added that 165 of the injured are undergoing treatment at 10 hospitals in Dhaka.

Wails of despair and pain reverberate at hospitals where patients were treated with burn injuries

Twenty deaths were reported initially, and seven died of their injuries overnight.

The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Mohammad Towkir Islam, was among those killed in the crash.

The government has declared a state day of mourning for Tuesday in memory of those affected by the crash.

A statement from the Chief Advisor's Office on Monday announced that the national flag will be flown at half-mast at all government, semi-government, autonomous institutions and educational institutions across the country.

Special prayers will be organised at all places of religious worship in the country for the injured and the dead.

A high-level investigation committee has been formed by the Bangladesh Air Force to determine the cause of the accident.



J&K Bank Hosts Mission YUVA Events To Empower Youth

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In line with J&K Government's flagship initiative Mission YUVA (Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan) aimed at empowering youth through entrepreneurship and self-employment, J&K Bank today organized the weekly login day events titled 'Udyami YUVA Day' at its Zonal Office Jammu and "Roz-e-Yuva" at Zonal Office Baramulla.

The Bank's Executive Director (ED) Sudhir Gupta, who was the chief guest on the occasion, chaired the Jammu event in presence of special guest ACR (Jammu) Rajesh Kumar, General Manager & Divisional Head (Jammu) Sunit Kumar, Zonal Head (Jammu) Rajesh Dubey, Deputy Director (Employment) Sunaina Saini amid an enthusiastic gathering of aspiring entrepreneurs along with senior officials of the Government and the Bank. Deputy Commissioner (Baramulla) Minga Sherpa (IAS) was the chief guest at Baramulla event, which was attended by Zonal Head (Baramulla) Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat, Additional DC (Sopore) S A Raina, DGM & Cluster Head Baramulla Tanveer Ahmad Najar, Asstt. Director Employment Rahil Amin, Lead District Manager, Baramulla Manzoor Ahmad and other senior officials.

During the two functions, 73 sanction letters were distributed among Mission YUVA-registered applicants. Additionally, keys of commercial vehicles were handed over to selected young entrepreneurs in Jammu, marking another step forward in promoting a culture of self-reliance and enterprise.

Speaking at the Jammu event, Executive Director Sudhir Gupta said, "Our youth are full of ideas and energy, and Mission

YUVA provides the perfect platform to transform those ideas into enterprises. At J&K Bank, we believe that empowering youth through entrepreneurship is key to creating a sustainable economic ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir."

"I urge all our teams to expedite the disposal of all Mission YUVA cases so that maximum benefits reach the youth swiftly", he added.

Earlier, in his opening remarks, GM & Divisional Head (Jammu) Sunit Kumar said, "Mission YUVA is not just a scheme but a powerful movement to shape a generation of job creators in J&K. By extending timely credit support and mentoring, J&K Bank is playing its part in building a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem that will drive inclusive economic growth in the region."

Expressing their thoughts on the occasion, both ACR Jammu and Dy. Director (Employment) lauded the collaboration between the Bank and the Government in implementing Mission YUVA. "It is heartening to see that events like 'Udyami YUVA Day' not only provide platform for extending financial support to aspirants but also instil confidence among our youth to pursue entrepreneurship as a viable career path", they said.

At the Baramulla event, Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa appreciated the efforts of J&K Bank and emphasised the importance of Government's Mission Yuva initiative for addressing unemployment issues and creating an enterprise ecosystem. He also stressed upon coordinated efforts between J&K Bank and Govt. agencies for successful implementation of the scheme.

CM Omar Calls For Holistic Implementation Of NEP



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday advocated for a holistic implementation of the National Education Policy, and urged educators to empower learners.

The chief minister was addressing a one-day conference on NEP-2020 themed 'Empowering Education Leaders for Holistic Education' in Srinagar. Abdullah underscored the need for comprehensive, inclusive and locally adaptable implementation of the NEP 2020, calling it a visionary document whose success depends entirely on its understanding and execution at the grassroots level.

Emphasising the importance of reflection and course correction, the chief minister said, "The New Education Policy is now five years old. This is the time to evaluate where we have succeeded, where we

have fallen short, and what more can be done to implement it better".

A policy is only as effective as its application and understanding, he said.

Terming the NEP-2020 a "magnificent and far-reaching" framework, Abdullah stressed that the real change will come only when the policy is understood in its true spirit and implemented with sensitivity to local needs and realities.

Pointing to gaps in subject availability and staff, the chief minister said that many government schools and colleges are unable to offer a wide range of subjects due to faculty shortages.

"In Jammu, only a few schools offer Urdu; in Kashmir, a few offer Hindi. Even regional languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, or Punjabi are taught in a very limited number of institutions. These gaps need to be filled gradually, within our available resources," he said.

He also addressed frequent comparisons between government and private schools, highlighting that government institutions operate in areas where private schools often do not venture.

"Setting up a school in Srinagar is easy. Try opening one in Gurez, Tangdhar, or Machil. Our teachers work in extreme conditions, away from the spotlight, and deserve recognition," he said.

Abdullah also emphasized the importance of inclusivity in education. "Every child -- regardless of physical or learning challenges -- deserves a chance to learn. Are our schools truly inclusive and accessible to all? This workshop is a good step in that direction," he said.

According to PTI, the chief minister expressed hope that such engagements will continue to inspire a positive change across the educational landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY IS NOW FIVE YEARS OLD. This is the time to evaluate where we have succeeded, where we have fallen short, and what more can be done to implement it better".

Amit Shah To Unveil National Cooperative Policy 2025

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperative Amit Shah will unveil the National Cooperative Policy 2025 on Thursday (July 24).

According to KNO, the event will be organized at Atal Akshay Urja Bhawan, officials said.

Members of the drafting committee of the National Cooperative Policy, Chairman and Managing Directors of all National Cooperative Unions, senior officials of the Ministry, senior officials of National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), National Council of Cooperative Training (NCCCT) and Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAM-NICOM) will be present on the occasion, officials said.

They said the new cooperative policy will prove to be a milestone in the cooperative



movement of India for the next two decades from 2025-45. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the able guidance of Union Home Minister and Cooperative Minister Amit Shah, the new cooperative policy 2025 aims to revive and modernize the cooperative sector as well as realize the vision of prosperity through cooperation by creating a roadmap at the grassroots level," they added.

"Earlier in the year 2002, the country's first National Cooper-

ative Policy was issued, which gave a basic framework for better management of the economic activities of cooperative institutions. In the last 20 years, many major changes have taken place in the society, country and the world due to globalization and technological advancement. Keeping these changes in mind, it became necessary to formulate a new policy, so that cooperative institutions can be made more active and useful in the current economic scenario and the role of the cooperative sector can be strengthened in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047," they said.

"The objective of the National Cooperative Policy is to make cooperative institutions inclusive, manage them professionally, prepare them for the future and be able to create large scale employment and livelihood opportunities especially in rural India."

Carry Independent Verification Of Rural Waste Management Infra: CS

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Tuesday reviewed the progress of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)-II (SBM-G Phase-II), highlighting significant achievements in rural sanitation and outlining ambitious plans for the future.

The review meeting besides Commissioner Secretary, RDD was attended by MD, Rural Sanitation; COO, Himayat and others to take appraisal of the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status and enhancing Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) in rural areas.

During the review meeting, the Chief Secretary laid strong emphasis on furnishing a detailed report on the door-to-door waste collection status in rural areas. He directed that a sample survey be conducted through the Economics & Statistics (E&S) offices in each district to assess the actual implementation and progress of this initiative at the village level.

Dulloo further called for a comprehensive audit of assets created by the Department. He underscored the importance of



verifying the dashboard data with the ground realities, ensuring both are aligned. Highlighting the purpose behind these infrastructural investments, he stated that the ultimate goal is to enhance cleanliness, and to make villages more liveable and environmentally ambient.

The MD, Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra while speaking of the progress and achievements made out that since its initiation in February 2020, SBM-G Phase-II has made substantial strides in J&K. She elaborated that 18,29,495 Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) have been constructed including 8,450 Community Compost Pits, 1,69,158 Individual Compost Pits for waste management in rural areas.

For Grey Water Management she mentioned that 7,334 Com-

munity Soak Pits, 3,56,458 Individual Soak Pits 4,89,250 Individual Kitchen Gardens have been developed by the Department.

Moreover about the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) 2024-25 it was said that significant achievements were noted against planned targets, including the construction of 43,280 IHHLs against a target of 36,000, and 740 CSCs against a target of 1,000.

With respect to 2025-26 the meeting was informed that an AIP of Rs 405 Cr has been approved for SBM(G) in J&K out of which Rs 61.25 Cr as 1st instalment of Central share for 2025-26 was sanctioned on June 27, 2025. Similarly, the corresponding UT share of approximately ₹700.00 lakhs has been released, the meeting was informed.

DIPR Announces Online Competitions To Celebrate Independence Day

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In connection with the upcoming Independence Day 2025 celebrations, the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Jammu & Kashmir, has launched three online competitions to encourage citizens—particularly students and youth—to participate in creative and patriotic exercises.

Participants are encouraged to take part in the National Anthem Singing Competition, where they can showcase their love for the nation by submitting their renditions of the National Anthem. The best entries will be awarded cash prizes. Entries can be submitted through the link: <https://forms.gle/qrn6auoUu9tNHzR7>.

To inspire thought leadership and visionary thinking, an Online Essay Writing Competition has been announced on the theme "Viksit Bharat @2047". Participants are invited to pen down their aspirations and innovative ideas for a developed India as we approach 2047, marking 100 years of independence. Entries can be submitted at: <https://forms.gle/ebK8Fe>.



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In addition, DIPR has also initiated an Online Painting Competition on the theme "Draw Your Favourite Freedom Fighter". Budding artists are encouraged to honour and depict the legacy of India's freedom fighters through colours and creativity. Entries for this competition can be submitted at: <https://forms.gle/PH4GXKVdqK6ADPLf9>.

All competitions are open to the general public and aim to instill patriotic spirit, nurture talent, and celebrate the idea of India. Attractive prizes and certificates await the winners. DIPR urges citizens across Jammu & Kashmir to participate enthusiastically and make this Independence Day truly memorable by contributing their voice, vision, and creativity.

India's Doctor-Population Ratio Improves To 1:811: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: India has significantly improved its doctor-population ratio, which now stands at approximately 1 doctor per 811 people, the Union Government informed Parliament on Tuesday. This improvement reflects the active availability of about 80% of both allopathic and AYUSH medical practitioners in the country.

Responding to a question raised by Biju Janata Dal MP Shubhashish Khuntia, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare stated that there are currently 1,386,150 registered allopathic doctors across India. In addition, the Ministry of AYUSH has 751,768 registered practitioners. Assuming that 80% of these professionals are actively engaged in practice, the overall doctor-to-population ratio has been computed at 1:811.

The minister elaborated that to address the persistent shortage of medical professionals, the government has undertaken several critical initiatives. Among the most notable is the establishment of 131 new medical colleges under a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at upgrading district and referral hospitals.

"Out of 157 approved medical colleges, 131 are now operational," he informed, adding that parallel efforts are underway to upgrade and strengthen existing state and central government medical colleges to increase the number of MBBS and postgraduate medical seats.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), the Centre has approved 75 projects for upgrading

government medical colleges, which includes the construction of super specialty blocks. Of these, 71 projects have already been completed. Furthermore, 22 new AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences) have been approved, out of which undergraduate courses have commenced in 19.

To help resolve the shortage of teaching faculty, the government has also implemented recognition of Diplomate of National Board (DNB) qualifications for faculty appointments. Moreover, the upper age limit for appointments, extensions, or re-employment of teachers, deans, principals, and directors in medical colleges has been increased to 70 years, the minister stated.

While acknowledging that the primary responsibility for filling vacancies and strengthening public health systems lies with state governments, the Centre said it is providing extensive support through the National Health Mission (NHM). This includes financial and technical assistance to states and union territories, enabling them to strengthen their health workforce. Many of these recruitments are made on a contractual basis, depending on the specific needs of the respective regions.

To encourage medical professionals to serve in rural and remote areas, various incentives are being provided under NHM. These include hard area allowances for specialist doctors, provision of residential quarters, and honorariums for gynecologists, pediatricians, anesthetists, and doctors trained in emergency obstetric care, to ensure the availability of specialists for procedures such as Cesarean sections.

Govt Cites Landmark Study:

COVID Vaccines Not Linked To Sudden Deaths In Young Adults



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant development likely to allay public concerns, the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday told Parliament that COVID-19 vaccination has no association with unexplained sudden deaths among young adults in India.

The clarification came in response to a question raised by Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi and is based on a nationwide study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research - National Institute of Epidemiology (ICMR-NIE).

The study—titled "Factors associated with unexplained sudden deaths among adults aged 18-45 years in India: A multicentric matched case-control study"—was carried out between May and August 2023 across 47 tertiary care hospitals in 19 states and Union Territories.

Focusing on the age group of 18 to 45 years, the research examined deaths that occurred suddenly—either within 24 hours of hospitalisation or in individuals who appeared healthy 24 hours before dying. Importantly, the study excluded individuals with any known co-morbidities, placing special emphasis on those who were previously considered healthy.

Investigators gathered detailed data, including each individual's COVID-19 vaccination history, prior COVID-19 infections, family history of sudden death, and a wide range of lifestyle factors—such as smoking, alcohol consumption, binge drinking, use of recreational drugs, and vigorous physical activity.

Key Finding: COVID-19 vaccination did not increase the risk of unexplained sudden death among young adults.

However, the study did identify a higher risk in cases involving previous COVID-19 hospitalisations, a family history of sudden death, and specific risky lifestyle behaviours.

To combat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that can increase cardiovascular risk, the government said it is continuing its efforts under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD). The initiative, led by the Department of Health & Family Welfare, has led to the establishment of NCD clinics and cardiac care units across the country.

Further, the government is actively involved in screening individuals over the age of 30 to identify and manage common conditions like diabetes and hypertension—both of which are known precursors to heart disease.

To promote preventive care and healthier living, community-based initiatives such as the Ayushman Arogya Mandir programme, public awareness campaigns, and digital media outreach are being deployed. These are complemented by wellness drives like the Fit India Movement, spearheaded by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), and Yoga programmes under the Ministry of AYUSH.

The government's response reiterates its focus on evidence-based public health policy and aims to debunk circulating misinformation about vaccine safety.

ENG v IND 4th Test: Injury-Hit India Take On Resilient England

Press Trust of India

MANCHESTER: An injury-plagued India is likely to go back to the Headingley template when it takes on a reinvigorated England in the fourth Test starting here on Wednesday, hoping to end a winless record at the storied Old Trafford and draw level in what has been a compelling series so far.

Following the first Test in Leeds, India had found a settled line-up by fielding three all-rounders in the playing eleven including Nitish Reddy, who has now been ruled of the series due to a knee injury.

Pacer Akash Deep was also ruled out on the eve of the Test due to a groin injury, and captain Shubman Gill said uncapped fast



bowler Anshul Kamboj is on the verge of making his debut. With Ravindra Jadeja and Wash-

ington Sundar being the two spin bowling all-rounders, India had the cushion of batting till number eight

but that may not be the case in Manchester, where the visitors are yet to win in nine attempts including four losses and five draws. England are leading 2-1 going into the penultimate game of the rubber.

Shardul Thakur, who played the series-opener, would be the direct replacement for Reddy in the playing eleven but he doesn't provide the same batting quality. If selected, he would have to up his game with the ball too as Reddy had produced timely wickets in the third Test at Lord's.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and workhorse Mohammed Siraj are two certain starters in the playing eleven.

Despite low returns in the third Test, Gill has aggregated more than

600 runs in the series and from the team's point of view, he would need to return to his heavy scoring ways.

Compared to other venues in the country, India don't play that regularly here with their last outing at Old Trafford coming in 2014. The last hundred from an Indian at this ground came from the bat of Sachin Tendulkar way back in 1990.

It has been raining regularly in Manchester for the past week or so and there is forecast for light showers for the majority of the five days.

Considering the damp weather, there would be moisture to exploit for the fast bowlers on day one.

Tempers flaring on both sides has added to the excitement of the series and Old Trafford promises to be another cracker.

England's Delaying Tactics Not Within Spirit Of The Game: Gill

India captain Shubman Gill on Tuesday slammed the delaying tactic used by the England openers towards end of day three of the Lord's Test, saying coming 90 seconds late to the crease was not within the spirit of the game.

Speaking ahead of the fourth Test in Manchester, Gill ended the customary pre-match media interaction on an explosive note when asked about the on-field tensions during the third game.

"Yes, a lot of people have been talking about it, so let me just clear the air, for once and for all, the English batsmen on that day, they had seven minutes of play left, they were 90 seconds late to come to the crease, not 10, not 20, 90 seconds late," said a combative Gill. "Yes, most of the teams they use this (delaying tactic), even if we were in a position, we would have also liked to play lesser overs, but there is a manner to do it, and we felt, yes if you get hit on your body, the physios are allowed to come on, and that is something that is fair. (PTI)

BCCI Will Be Covered In National Sports Governance Bill

The BCCI will come under the purview of the National Sports Governance Bill that is set to be introduced in Parliament on Wednesday and will be required to take recognition from the proposed National Sports Board even though it is not reliant on government funding.

This was revealed by a top Sports Ministry source on Tuesday.

"Like all National Sports federations (NSFs), the BCCI will have to comply with the law of the land once this Bill becomes an Act. They don't take ministry funding but an Act of Parliament applies to them," the source said.

The BCCI has become a part of the Olympic movement after cricket was included in the 2028 Los Angeles Games where it will be played in the T20 format. The long-awaited Sports Governance Bill seeks to institutionalise a strong framework for timely elections, administrative accountability, athlete welfare and reduction in litigation through a slew of measures. (PTI)

Anantnag Wins U19 Provincial Volleyball C'ship In Budgam



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam-hosted Inter-District Provincial Level Volleyball Championship for Boys Under-19 came to an end at Sports Stadium Chrar-i-Sharief. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from multiple districts across Kashmir, with Anantnag emerging victorious in the final.

Anantnag began its campaign with a dominant performance, defeating Kupwara 2-0 in the opening match. The team maintained its momentum in the group stage, registering straight-set victories against Ganderbal (2-0) and Bandipora (2-0). Despite a 1-3 setback against a strong Baramulla side,

Anantnag bounced back in the semi-finals, overpowering Shopian with a clean 2-0 win.

The second semifinal saw Kupwara defeat Kulgam.

The grand finale saw a much-anticipated rematch between Anantnag and Kupwara. Displaying superior tactics, coordination, and resilience, Anantnag clinched the championship with a decisive 3-1 win.

Anantnag captain Sahil Shameem, a seasoned player who captained the J&K team in the U-17 SGFI Nationals for two consecutive years, once again proved his mettle by guiding the team.

In the match for the third-place position, Shopian edged past Kulgam in a close contest.

J&K Police's Ravees To Compete At Asian Pencak Silat Championship

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Police on Tuesday announced that Ravees Ahmad, Coach of the J&K Police Pencak Silat Team, has been selected to represent India in the prestigious 9th Asian Pencak Silat Championship, scheduled to be held in Vietnam from July 24 to July 31.

Ravees Ahmad, a seasoned coach and accomplished athlete, has represented India in various international championships and has earned medals at the international level and well as national level showcasing his exceptional skills and dedication to the sport of Pencak Silat.

"His selection for this elite continental event is a moment of pride not only for Jammu and Kashmir Police but for the entire Union Territory. His consistent performance and commitment to excellence have set a benchmark in



the field of martial arts," the J&K Police said in a statement.

"The J&K Police Sports Department and all his colleagues extend heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Ravees Ahmad for a successful outing at the Asian Championship. We are confident that he will bring further laurels to the nation and inspire budding athletes across the region," it added.

Kashmir Super League: Aqua Avengers Defeat Athwas India 3-1

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Aqua Avengers Kashmir FC convincingly defeated Athwas India XI 3-1 in a 2025 Kashmir Super League matchup at TRC Ground here.

After a 0-0 first half, Aqua Avengers Kashmir came out strongly in the second. Adnan Ayub continued his brilliant form by giving his team the lead in minute 53. Hayat Bashir joined in on the action soon, scoring two goals in three minutes to put the tie to rest. His twin strikes,

in minute 62 and 65, had almost sealed the win as Athwas India XI pulled one back in the 90th minute via Aryan Gupta.

Hayat Bashir was named Player of the Match, while Furqaan Dar was awarded the Game Changer of the Match. The Golden Moment award went to Adnan Ayub, while Mousa Qureshi won the X-Factor Excellence award.

As per the schedule list, Greenend Heroes FC will take on New JK United FC on Wednesday. The game kicks off at 7:00 PM.



New Zealand Beat South Africa In T20 Matchup

Tim Seifert's aggressive half-century on a tricky pitch led New Zealand to a comfortable seven-wicket win over South Africa in a tri-series T20 match on Tuesday.

Opening batter Seifert, dropped in the first over before he had scored, hit an unbeaten 66 off 48 balls to guide the Black Caps to their target of 135 with more than four overs to spare.

Earlier, South Africa tinkered with its batting order but the experiment of using captain Rassie van der Dussen as an opener failed to pay off as the team could only make 134-8. Reeza Hendricks top-scored with 41 off 37 balls and George Linde stroked an unbeaten 23. (AP)

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