

## 2 Terrorists Killed In Kulgam Encounter

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Two terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district on Saturday, officials said.

The overnight encounter began after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in a forest area at Akhal in the south Kashmir district, following specific intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists there.

After an initial exchange of fire between the two sides on Friday evening, the operation was halted for the night, the officials said.

The cordon was strengthened, and additional reinforcements were rushed to the area.

Firing resumed on Saturday morning, during which two terrorists were killed, the officials said.

The identity and group affiliation of the slain terrorists are being ascertained, they added, noting that the operation is still underway.

Sources said that both slain terrorists are reportedly locals who had joined terrorist ranks two years | [More on P6](#)

## Centre Blocks 1,500+ Online Gaming Sites

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Union government has taken strong steps to regulate online gaming and tackle associated risks such as addiction, financial fraud, and money laundering. Over 1,500 gaming, betting, and gambling websites have been blocked across India in the last three years.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada said 1,524 such websites were blocked between 2022 and June 2025 under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act. These measures are part of a broader legal and enforcement framework aimed at making online | [More on P6](#)

## DHSK Transfers 31 Doctors

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Health Department on Saturday ordered the transfer and posting of 31 doctors across various hospitals and health centres in the Union Territory.

According to Government Order No. 706-JK(HME) of 2025, dated August 2, the reshuffle includes consultants and medical officers from various specialties including ENT, gynecology, medicine, surgery, anaesthesia, dermatology, cardiology, and pediatrics.

Doctors posted at major institutions such as SMHS, DH Pulwama, | [More on P6](#)

## Pahalgam Attack Fallout Deported Pak Woman To Get Visitor's Visa: MHA

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has informed the Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh High Court that it has decided to grant a visitor's visa to Rakshanda Rashid, a Pakistani woman who was deported from Jammu after the Pahalgam terror attack, prompting the court to dismiss her petition seeking nod to return to her family here.

The court, however, stated that the MHA order should not constitute a precedent in any manner.

Rashid (62), a Pakistani citizen who married Sheikh Zahoar Ahmed 35 years ago in Jammu, was deported as part of

the decision taken by the Indian government to deport Pakistani nationals staying in India in the aftermath of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the home ministry, informed the court that after considerable deliberation and in light of the peculiar circumstances of this case, an in-principle decision had been made to grant a visitor visa to Rashid.

The division bench comprising Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal acknowledged this in its order.

The bench further noted that Rashid can pursue the two | [More on P6](#)

# Rewrite 'Distorted' History: LG Tells Writers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday called upon writers to think about rewriting history to correct facts that, he said, were distorted in the past. Speaking at the Chinara Book Festival organised by the National Book Trust of India in Srinagar, the LG stressed the importance of making the new generation aware of India's rich civilizational legacy.

"The new generation must be made aware that our civilization was economically prosperous and was also the global centre of literature, science, and spirituality. Ancient India was the engine of world civilization and culture. We gave the gift of science, mathematics, and medicines to the world," the LG said.

He added that "the roots of our knowledge and science have always been immense" and emphasised the need to "liberate ourselves from the colonial mindset."

"The new generation must



## WE HAVE TO REVIVE OUR ancient knowledge system and make it a part of mainstream education"

be told that our heritage has been leading the world, and the gift of science that we have given to humanity is incomparable," he said.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also attended the inaugural event of the festival, which saw participation from writers,

scholars, students, and literary enthusiasts.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is witnessing economic, cultural and scientific renaissance, simultaneously. He said, in order to strengthen the nation's

spiritual, social, and emotional unity, the unique contributions of writers and thinkers are essential.

Congratulating the Ministry of Education and the National Book Trust for organising the literary event, LG Sinha said, "Books open the window to the world." | [More on P6](#)

- Stresses need to shed the colonial mindset

- Seeks translation of Rajatarangini, Nilamat Purana, Kathasaritsagara

- Promotes showcasing J&K literature internationally

- Push for translations in Kashmiri, Dogri, Gojri, Urdu, and more

- Describes books as windows to the world

- Winners of Amrit Kaal Story Competition announced

- First national Sharada script exhibition inaugurated

- Festival attended by Union Education Minister

## Amarnath Yatra Suspended A Week Early

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Authorities have suspended this year's annual Amarnath Yatra, just a week before its scheduled conclusion, due to the need for maintenance on the tracks that were damaged by recent heavy rainfall, officials said on Saturday.

The yatra, which began on July 3, was scheduled to conclude on August 9 on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. However, authorities decided to shorten it by a week, citing "critical repair and maintenance works" to be undertaken in the wake of the heavy rainfall.

"Due to recent heavy rainfall and the need for track maintenance along both the Baltal and Pahalgam axes of the Shri Amarnathji Yatra route, the yatra movement has been closed on both the tracks," Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, said here.

"It has been observed that due to the continued deployment of men and machinery on the tracks from tomorrow, we would not be able to resume the yatra. The yatra will therefore remain suspended from 3rd August onwards from both the routes," he explained further.

More than 6,000 pilgrims paid obeisance to Lord Shiva at the holy cave shrine on the final day of this year's annual Amarnath Yatra, taking the total number of yatis to 4.14 lakh, officials said.

Last year saw more than 5.10 lakh pilgrims pay their respects at the shrine.

A total of | [More on P6](#)

## 10 J&K Residents Deported From US This Year



KO WEB DESK

Srinagar: Ten residents of Jammu and Kashmir are among the 1,703 Indian nationals deported by the United States so far in 2025, the Ministry of External Affairs informed Parliament on Friday.

The data presented in a written response by Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh shared the state-wise figures for deportees, according to which 620 of the 1,703 Indian nationals deported in this period (January 20 to July 22, 2025),

belonged to Punjab, 604 hailed from Haryana, 245 from Gujarat and 10 from Jammu and Kashmir, among states, while six were placed in the "unknown" state category.

The deportations took place between January 20 and July 22, 2025.

DMK MP Kanimozhi, in a query to the Ministry of External Affairs, asked whether the government maintains data regarding Indian citizens who have been deported from the US since January 2025

In his response, the number of Indian nationals | [More on P6](#)

## THE MINISTRY HAS STRONGLY REGISTERED ITS CONCERNS WITH THE US AUTHORITIES on the treatment of deportees, particularly with respect to the use of shackles, especially on women and children."

## Rs 34 Lakh Property Fraud After 17 Yrs, Two Convicted For Cheating Foreign National

Agencies

Srinagar: Bringing closure to a 17-year-long legal battle, the Court of City Judge Srinagar, Abdul Bari, convicted two individuals for defrauding a foreign national of Rs 34 lakh in a meticulously crafted property scam dating back to 2008.

The convicted individuals, identified as Mukhtar Ahmad Guroo and Nazir Ahmad Guroo, sons of Gulla Guroo, residents of Abi Karpura, Nehru Park, Dalgate, Srinagar, were found guilty of orchestrating a fraudulent property deal

by deceiving a foreign lady into believing she could legally own property in Kashmir.

The case traces back to June 26, 2010, when the Crime Branch registered an FIR based on a complaint filed by the foreign woman. According to the complainant, she had paid Mukhtar Ahmad Guroo an amount of Rs 34 lakh for purchasing a house and land in the Gulab Bagh area of Srinagar. However, Mukhtar, concealing the legal fact that a foreign national is barred from owning | [More on P6](#)



## THE INDIAN NAVY

### INVITES APPLICATION FOR SHORT SERVICE COMMISSION IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (EXECUTIVE BRANCH) – JAN 26 COURSE

Applications are invited from unmarried eligible men & women candidates for grant of Short Service Commission (SSC) in Information Technology ( Executive Branch ) of Indian Navy under Special Naval Orientation Course for course commencing Jan 2026 onwards at Indian Naval Academy (INA) Ezhimala, Kerala. Candidates must fulfil conditions of nationality as laid down by the Government of India.

QUALIFICATION	VACANCY	GENDER	AGE
A candidate must have minimum 60% marks in English in class X or XII and one of the undermentioned educational qualification with minimum 60% overall qualifying marks, in either or a combination of the following: -  (a) MSc / BE / B Tech / M Tech (Computer Science / Computer Science & Engineering / Computer Engineering / Information Technology / Software Systems / Cyber Security / System Administration & Networking / Computer Systems & Networking / Data Analytics / Artificial Intelligence). OR  (b) MCA with BCA / BSc (Computer Science / Information Technology).	15	Men & Women	Born Between 02 Jan 2001 to 01 Jul 2006 (both dates inclusive)

For more details visit - [www.joinindiannavy.gov.in](http://www.joinindiannavy.gov.in) and Employment News dated 02 Aug 2025

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02 Aug to 17 Aug 2025



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## Scholarships This Week

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

### Scholarship Name 1: Legrand Empowering Scholarship Program 2025-26

Description: Legrand invites applications from meritorious girls, differently-abled girls, LGBTQ+ students, Covid-affected students and students with single parents or orphans pursuing B.Tech., B.E., B.Arch., or other undergraduate degrees in Finance or Science (such as B.Sc, B.Com, B.B.A., etc.) across India. The scholarship is meant to support meritorious students to pursue a career in Engineering, Architecture, Finance and Sciences.

Eligibility: The scholarship is open to meritorious girls, differently-abled girls, LGBTQ+ students, Covid-affected students and students with single parents or those who are orphans across India.

Applicants must have secured admission in B.Tech., B.E., B.Arch., B.B.A., B.Com., or B.Sc. degrees in India. Applicants must have passed Class 12 in the year 2024-25.

Girl students must have secured a minimum of 70% and above marks in Classes 10 and 12 examinations. Special category\* students must have secured 60% marks in Classes 10 and 12 examinations. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The applicant's annual family income from all sources must be less than or equal to INR 5,00,000

Preference will be given to special category\* students.

\*Special category: Differently-abled girl students, LGBTQ+ students, Covid-affected students, and students with single parents or those who are orphans

Prizes & Rewards: Girl students are awarded 60% course fees up to INR 60,000 per year till the completion of the course based on academic performance.



Students in the special category\* will be awarded 80% fees up to INR 1,00,000 per year till the completion of the course based on academic performance.

\*Special category: Differently-abled girl students, LGBTQ+ students, Covid-affected students, and students with single parents or those who are orphans.

- Last Date to Apply: 08-09-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/LFLS12](http://www.b4s.in/observer/LFLS12)
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/2025-261753707831.png>

### Scholarship Name 2: Unnati 2-Towards a Better Future Scholarship

Description: CNH Industrial (India) Private Limited invites applications from students who are currently studying in Class 8 to 10 or in first-year ITI/Diploma courses in Gurgaon, Delhi, and Noida.

Eligibility: The school-level scholarship is for applicants studying in Classes 8 to 10, who have scored at least 60% in the previous academic year.

- For the ITI/Diploma level scholarship, the student must be studying in the first year of the course.
- Students from Gurgaon, Delhi, or Noida whose total family income does not exceed 5 lakh are eligible to apply.
- Children of Buddy4Study and CNH Industrial (India) Private Limited employees are not eligible to participate.
- Prizes & Rewards: Scholarships up to 12,000 per year for up to three years for school students.
- Scholarship up to 18,000 per year for two years for Diploma/ITI students.
- Last Date to Apply: 17-08-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: [www.b4s.in/observer/UTBF3](http://www.b4s.in/observer/UTBF3)
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/unnati-2-towards-a-better-future-scholarship1752509043.png>

## NOTICE

I, want to correct my name, in my Rc (Registration Certificate) bearing RC No:- JK01S6887 from Mohammad Sharief Khan S/o Ghulam Hassan Khan To Mohammad Sharief Khan S/o Ghulam Hussain Khan as per Aadhar. Regarding this, if anybody is having any objection he/she may file the same to the RTO Office Kashmir within a week's time after that no objection shall be entertained.

20250724

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Minhaaj Ur Rabb, S/o Nazir Ahmad Khan, R/o Tangwari, Trehgam, Kupwara, hereby state that my name and date of birth have been mistakenly recorded as Minhaaj Ul Rub, 24/07/2005 in my passport.

The correct details as per my Aadhaar & school records are: Name: Minhaaj Ur Rabb Date of Birth: 24/07/2006

Now, I want to rectify the details.

If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact the Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 Days no objection will be accepted.

Contact: 9596556098

ANKO

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on the electricity bill bearing ID No.: 0206050002383 from Abdul Rheem Bhat, S/o Asad Bhat, R/o Astaan Mohalla, Yarigund, Khowsa to Manzoor Ahmad Rather, S/o Late Ghulam Mohammad Rather, R/o Astaan Mohalla, Yarigund, Khowsa. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file them in the office of the PDD Sub Division, Lawapora within seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Manzoor Ahmad Rather S/o Late Ghulam Mohammad Rather, R/o Astaan Mohalla, Yarigund, Khowsa

bmj\_r

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my school records as Mumin Rashid Dar while my correct name is Momin Rashid Dar. I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Al Noor Model School Dhoibwan within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Momin Rashid Dar S/O Abdul Rashid Dar R/O Pinjoora Tehsil Kwarhama

fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Faisal Fayaz Mir, S/o Fayaz Ahmad Mir, R/o Delina, Baramulla, have lost my wallet while traveling from Delina to Pattan. The wallet contained cash, my Driving Licence, PAN Card, Aadhaar Card, and other important documents. Anyone who finds it or has any information regarding the same is kindly requested to contact me at 8825007348. A reward will be offered as a token of gratitude.

Faisal Fayaz Mir

jm

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Department of Information

## OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT INFORMATION OFFICER, BUDGAM

Phone No/Fax:-01951-350151

Email Id:dicbudgam@gmail.com

### DASTI QUOTATION

On behalf of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor J&K, Sealed quotations are invited from Authorized-registered Cultural Organisations of J&K UT for performance of Cultural Programme during the Trianga Concert to be organised in the District Budgam between August 09 to 12th of August 2025.

The quotations shall reach the office of the undersigned by or before 7th of Aug. 2025 up to 02.00 P.M.

#### Terms & Conditions

1. The price quoted shall be inclusive of GST.
2. The bid shall be opened in the next working day on completion of stipulated time i.e. on 8th Aug. 2025.
3. The undersigned reserves the right to cancel the quotation without assigning any person thereof.

More information can be obtained from the Office of District Information Officer, Budgam during office hours.

DIPK-4719/25  
DATED: 02-08-2025

Sd/-  
District Information Officer  
Budgam

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حماد میڈیکل کارپوریشن  
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● Noora Hospital Zainakote, HMT  
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GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

E-mail ddkashmir@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR KASHMIR HORTICULTURE (P&M)  
RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

FRESH e-Nit AUC Notice540F 2025-26 Dated:01-08-2025

Outsourcing of Gate Entry Contract with respect to F & V Market Prichoo Pulwama

For and on behalf of Market Administrative Committee (MAC) Fruit Mandi Prichoo Pulwama, e-bids, accompanied with CDR worth Rs.32,487/- (Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Seven only) pledged to Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Prichoo Pulwama as Earnest Money and Demand Draft for an amount of Rs 500/- pledged to Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi Prichoo Pulwama as tender processing fee are invited from the interested parties/ persons having valid GST Registration for outsourcing of collection of Gate Entry fee at F&V Market Prichoo Pulwama for the year 2025-26 (w.e.f 15-08-2025 to 31.03.2026). The minimum reserve bid amount is fixed at Rs.10,82,902/- (Rupees Ten Lacs Eighty-Two Thousand Nine Hundred Two only). The tender documents can be downloaded from <http://jketenders.gov.in> The Tenders/bids shall be opened online in the Office of the Deputy Director Kashmir/Chairperson MAC on bid opening date.

Name of work	Minimum Reserve Bid	Earnest Money in the shape of CDR/FDR	Cost of Tender Document	Period of Contract
Collection of Gate Entry Fee of Fruit and Vegetable Market Prichoo Pulwama for the year 2025-26 (w.e.f. from 00.00 hrs. of 15-08-2025 and shall terminate at 24.00 hrs. of the intervening night of 31.03.2026 and 01.04.2026)	Rs.10,82,902 + GST /	Rs. 32,487/- 3% of the Minimum Reserve bid Amount in favor of Market Administrative Committee (MAC/APM-CPrichoo Pulwama).	Rs.500/- (Non-Refundable Demand Draft (in favor of Market Administrative Committee Prichoo Pulwama )	(w.e.f 15-08-2025 To 31.03.2026)

Critical Dates Table.

1	Publishing Date	01-08-2025
2	Document Download/Sale Date	01-08-2025
3	Bid Submission start Date	01-08-2025
4	Bid Submission Closing Date	11-08-2025 (Up to 4:00 PM)
5	Bid Submission Opening Date	12-08-2025 (At 11:00 AM) at Deputy Director (K) office Rajbagh Srinagar

The Gate Entry Fee for each type of vehicle (loaded/unloaded)/entering/leaving Fruit and Vegetable Market Prichoo Pulwama shall be as under:

S. No.	Type of Vehicle	Entry Fee Per Trip for 2025-26
1	10 Tyre/12 Tyre/14 Tyre/18 Tyre/20 Tyre Trolley	Rs. 220/-
2	10 Tyre/12 Tyre trucks/Trolley	Rs. 190/-
3	Truck/Bus	Rs. 120/-
4	Tata Mobile/Sumo/Tractor/Matador/Jonga/Mini Bus	Rs. 40/-
5	Auto/Load Carrier/ Redha/Tanga/Horse Cart	Rs. 10/-

The committee will comprise of the following members:-

1.	Deputy Director Horticulture (P&M) Kashmir	: Chairman
2.	Accounts Officer Horticulture (P&M) J&K	: Member
3.	Member-Secretary MAC /Area Marketing Officer Prichoo Pulwama	: Member
4.	Assistant Grading and Marketing Officer Prichoo Pulwama or Grading and Marketing Inspector	: Member

The other terms & conditions are as under:-

The Successful bidders shall have to enter into an agreement with the Member Secretary MAC Fruit Mandi, PRICHOO PULWAMA. The other terms and conditions are as under:-

1. The offer shall be super scribed as gate entry Tender Document of Fruit and Vegetable Market PRICHOO PULWAMA.
2. The Entry fee shall be charged by the successful Bidder every time on entry into the Fruit & Vegetable Market PRICHOO PULWAMA as per the above prescribed fee structure.
3. The successful bidder shall have to enter into an agreement with Member secretary MAC Prichoo Pulwama before taking over of gate.
4. The successful bidder shall have to deposit 75% of the bid amount before taking over the gate and rest 25% after two months from the date of taking over of the gate.
5. The Agreement shall be executed within 2 weeks after allotment of contract.
6. The defaulters of the MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA are not eligible unless they clear their previous outstanding if any.
7. The Successful bidder is bound to maintain a register regarding outflow of trucks (destination wise) as per the format provided by Member Secretary /Grading/ Marketing Inspector or any other official of the Department for record and reference of this office.
8. The Successful bidder shall have to maintain the weighing Bridge and the equipment provided by MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA in proper condition and in case of any technical fault or any other damage the successful bidder shall have to make arrangement for making good the damages and maintenance of weighing bridge and equipment of his own and no compensation shall be entertained on this account.
9. The successful bidders shall have to utilize the room available with the weighing bridge for collection of weighing fee and cannot raise any other structure for any purpose in the Mandi premises during the contract period.
10. The Successful bidder shall have to abide by all laws and regulations governing the operation of the facility, especially labour laws as applicable from time to time.
11. The offered highest bid shall be the Net amount that the highest bidder is expected to deposit with the Member Secretary-MAC and all taxes and levies, liabilities due to any local laws shall be borne by the successful highest bidders.
12. The specimen of the receipt to be used by the successful bidder shall be provided by the Member Secretary Market Administrative Committee
13. In case of any dispute between the parties the matter shall be referred to the Director Horticulture Planning & Marketing and his decision shall be final and binding upon both the parties.
14. The MAC F&V Market PRICHOO PULWAMA shall not be responsible for less or nil dispatches in the market due to Curfew /Hartals / Strikes or for any other reason.
15. The earnest money shall be released only after the facility is certified and taken over by MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA after the expiry of the contract period.
16. The Member Secretary MAC F&V Market PRICHOO PULWAMA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.
17. The workers engaged by the contractor for the purpose of collection Of the gate entry fee shall wear proper uniform as shall be prescribed by the MAC PRICHOO PULWAMA.
18. The bid amount offered in the tender shall be mentioned in words as well as in figures and tenders with over writing/cuttings shall be rejected outrightly.
19. The successful Bidder shall have no right to sublet the contract during the contract period/agreement. The main entry gates of F&V Market PRICHOO PULWAMA and service roads shall remain open on Sundays as well and after 3.00 P.M. onwards the vehicles shall be allowed to proceed towards Mandi blocks on Sundays.
20. The successful bidder shall install computer system and other necessary equipment's on his own for collection of fee/data entry purposes. Manual data collection shall not be entertained.

Clause on Arbitration issued by Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary affairs UT of J&K under Circular no.: 16-jk(LD) of 2023: dated: 28-12-2023 shall be applicable.

Sd/-  
Deputy Director (K),  
Horticulture (P&M),  
Srinagar

No:- 142-III/MAC/DDK/HPM/2025/1099-1103  
DIPK-4701/25  
Dated:- 02-08-2025

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## Over 45 Manhole Covers Stolen In City; SSCL Raises Alarm

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a worrying trend, more than 45 manhole covers have been stolen from Srinagar in recent months, triggering serious safety concerns, officials said.

They said the latest incident captured on CCTV, shows a man in a passenger auto stealing a few covers in the early hours of July 31 along the busy residency road stretch, from SBI Bank to Abi Guzar Srinagar.

Officials from Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that these thefts have been taking place since December 2024, when 24 covers were stolen from Linz Restaurant to Polo View.

He said more recently over five manhole covers have also gone missing between Press Enclave and Clock Tower. "This is not just theft and it directly endangers pedestrians and motorists. These covers are essential for safety, especially in high-footfall areas like Lal Chowk," said a senior official from Smart City Srinagar SSCL.

He said SSCL engineers had to personally restore multiple manholes in the past two days to prevent any mishaps. "A day before the recent incident, our three Junior Engineers manually fixed two open manholes and they were again out repairing more after the July 31 theft," the official said.

Meanwhile, following the latest incident, SSCL has written to the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar and SHO Kothibagh, requesting immediate registration of an FIR and review of CCTV footage to trace and arrest the culprits.

Moreover, the letter also called for strict legal action and permanent measures to secure these manholes. "The stolen covers must be restored and efforts must be made to prevent future thefts," it stated.

Additionally, with the frequency of such incidents increasing and including a similar case recently reported from Bemina, the Smart City officials have stressed the urgency of safeguarding vital urban infrastructure and ensuring citizen safety—(KNO)

## Startup Kashmir Hosts Open Mentorship Session To Support Young Entrepreneurs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Startup Kashmir organized its weekly mentorship session this Saturday, bringing together young entrepreneurs, students, and early-stage startups from across the region. The theme for this week's session was "Let's Talk Entrepreneurship and Startups", and it offered a relaxed, open environment for participants to share ideas, learn from one another, and seek guidance.

The session saw aspiring entrepreneurs openly discuss their startup ideas, share the challenges they face—especially around funding and product development—and receive advice from experienced mentors. These mentors included professionals who have worked in business development, investment, and digital innovation.

Speaking at the event, Shahid Ansari, founder of Startup Kashmir, emphasized how important mentorship is in a place like Kashmir. "We don't have easy access to venture capital or startup support systems here. That's why these sessions matter—they help young people learn, grow, and feel supported," he said.

## Man Battling For Life After Stray Dog Chase

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A man was left critically injured in Bemina on Saturday after his motorcycle skidded off the road while he was being chased by a pack of stray dogs, once again highlighting the growing threat posed by the stray dog population in the city.

The victim, identified as Naseer Ahmed Khan, a resident of MIG Colony Bemina, was on his way through the area when a group of stray dogs began pursuing him. In an attempt to flee, Khan reportedly lost control of his two-wheeler, which skidded off the road, throwing him onto the pavement.

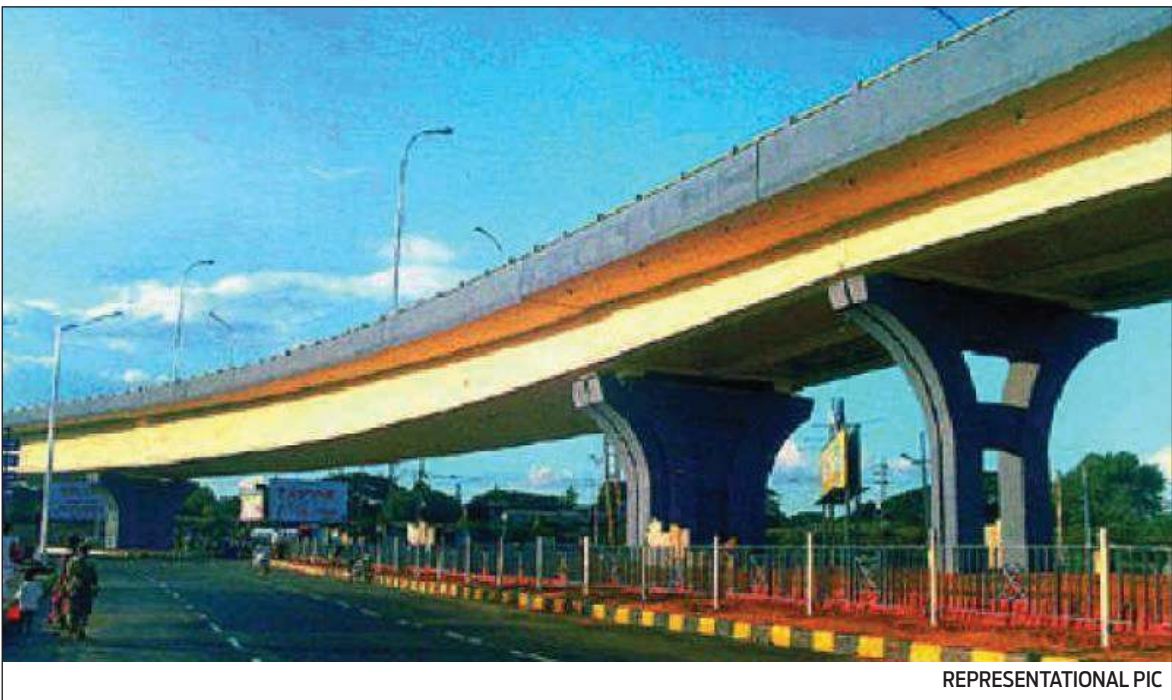
Eyewitnesses said the scene unfolded in a matter of seconds. "He was speeding up to escape the dogs

when his bike slipped. We saw him fall hard and rushed to help," said one local resident who witnessed the incident.

Khan was immediately shifted to JVC Hospital Bemina, where doctors confirmed he had suffered a severe head injury. His condition remains critical.

The incident has reignited public anger over the unchecked rise of stray dogs in Srinagar. Locals say this is not the first such case and have reiterated their demand for swift and effective action from the municipal authorities.

"Every day, people—especially children and elderly—live in fear. How many more lives will it take for the administration to wake up?" said another resident, expressing the community's frustration.



REPRESENTATIONAL PIC

## Despite Announcements, Major Flyover Projects Still In Limbo

4 Lakh Vehicles Ply On City Roads Each Day, Traffic Snarls Leave People Exasperated

Agencies

Srinagar: Despite recent government announcements of a massive infrastructure push — including new flyovers and construction projects worth nearly Rs 10,000 crore — most of the promised developments in Srinagar remain limited to papers, fuelling public frustration amid worsening traffic congestion.

One of the centerpiece projects is the proposed flyover from Jehangir Chowk to Pantha Chowk, projected as a game changer for the city's notorious traffic jams. "The Jehangir Chowk-Pantha Chowk flyover is part of our broader initiative to decongest Srinagar and modernize urban mobility," a senior official from the Jammu and Kashmir Public Works Department said.

He said that the department has secured significant funding and is committed to seeing these projects through.

However, Srinagar residents say they have been hearing similar promises for years. "It's not the first time we have heard about

“The persistent delays are particularly troubling for commuters and business owners in traffic prone localities including Jehangir Chowk, Batmaloo, Qamarwari, Rambagh, Baghat, Natipora, and Umarabad

new flyovers or intersection expansions. We welcome the announcements, but unless work actually starts, these remain empty promises," said Farooq Ahmad, a local shopkeeper near Qamarwari.

According to official sources, the government's plans also include major flyovers from Dalgate to Jehangir Chowk and at other bottlenecks. "Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and other necessary documentation have already been prepared for several of these projects," said a senior PWD engineer.

"But, due to a variety of administrative and logistical challenges, physical work has not yet commenced on many sites," he added.

The persistent delays are particularly troubling for commuters and business owners in traffic prone localities including Jehangir Chowk, Batmaloo, Qamarwari, Rambagh, Baghat, Natipora, and Umarabad. "Every day, we get stuck in traffic for up to an hour just to travel a few kilometers. It's affecting our livelihoods," said Mushtaq Lone, a businessman from Natipora.

Official statistics highlight the scale of the problem: approximately four lakh vehicles ply on Srinagar roads each day. With traffic volumes continuing to rise and no significant new infrastructure yet in place, congestion is now a daily ordeal for the city's residents. "We understand the public's concerns and are working to expedite project clearances. The government remains committed to improving urban infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir," said a senior PWD Official—(KNO)

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- BUIBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## HIJRI CALENDAR

08 Safar  
1447

### PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 08
ZUHR	12:37
ASR	5: 30
Magrib	7:34
ISHA	9: 06

## This Day In History

- 1940 - Lithuanian SSR is accepted into USSR
- 1941 - German troops conquer Roslavl USSR
- 1944 - Allied troops under Lt-Gen Joseph Stilwell take Myitkyina, Burma
- 1960 - Niger gains independence from France
- 1967 - 45,000 US soldiers sent to Vietnam
- 1970 - Hurricane "Celia" becomes most expensive Gulf storm in history
- 1972 - British premier Edward Heath proclaims emergency crisis due to dock strike
- 1972 - U.S. Senate ratifies the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.
- 1973 - Flash fire kills 51 at amusement park (Isle of Man, UK)
- 1975 - 500 drown when 2 river boats collide & sink in China's West River
- 1975 - Louisiana Superdome is dedicated
- 1981 - 13,000 Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO) begin their strike; US President Ronald Reagan offers ultimatum to workers: 'if they do not report for work within 48 hours, they have forfeited their jobs and will be terminated'
- 1984 - Bomb attack on Madras India airport, 32 killed
- 1985 - Train crash at Flaujac, France: 35 killed
- 1987 - Discovery in Orbital Processing Facility is powered up for STS-26
- 1990 - Radio Kuwait resigns air, due to Iraqi invasion
- 1990 - US announces commitment of Naval forces to Gulf regions
- 1994 - 1st Jordanian plane to fly over Israeli airspace (King Hussein pilot)
- 2001 - US President George W. Bush signs into law the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) Extension Act of 2001

From KO Archives

## Leave Constitution, Talk Humanitarian: PM

Observer News Service

Srinagar - The prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, today asked all the militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir to come forward for talks with the Centre. While rejecting the possibility of Pakistan's involvement in the peace process initiated with the Hizbul Mujahideen, he, however, made a significant departure from the oft-imposed rider of holding talks within the frame work of Indian constitution.

"Our doors are open. I appeal to all militant groups and organisations, which believe in peace, to join the centre's efforts for peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue," Vajpayee told media persons here after leading a delegation of major political parties at Pahalgam.

Asked whether Pakistan would be invited to form part of the peace process, Vajpayee said, there is no question of Pakistan's involvement." Holding Islamabad responsible for the killings, he said the absence of unequivocal condemnation by Pakistan makes it all the more a suspect Pakistan must come clean as its silence on the massacres would further affect the bilateral dialogue process.

Asked whether the talks would be strictly within the framework of the constitution, Vajpayee said, "Leave the constitution. Talks should be held on humanitarian considerations that violence is stopped and no more blood is shed."

To a question whether lapses in security led to the killings, he said the government would order an internal inquiry to find out the reasons behind the orgy of violence. Vajpayee was accompanied by union ministers George Fernandes and Mamata Banerjee, Congress President Sonia Gandhi and her party colleague Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mulayam Singh Yadav (Samajwadi Party), Somnath Chatterjee (CPI-M), K Yerran Naidu (TDP) and Kanshi Ram (BSP). Vajpayee, who was accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir governor G.C. Saxena and chief minister Farooq Abdullah, termed as ridiculous allegation by Pakistan about the involvement of Indian security forces in the killing and rejected the possibility of instituting a judicial inquiry on the issue. The involvement of Pakistan-based Lashker-e-Taiba have been proved beyond doubt other than Hizb-ul-Mujahideen being unhappy over the peace process initiated by the centre.

Maintaining that Islamabad must unequivocally condemn the massacres, Vajpayee made it clear that violence and peace talks cannot go together. Nothing can be achieved through killings. He said if General Musharraf continued to maintain silence, then the future of resumption of bilateral parleys would become even more difficult. To a question on the issue of autonomy, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, who was present the Vajpayee's press conference, said we are talking with the centre on the issue.

(Kashmir Observer, August 03, 2000)



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KO VIEW

Ramp Up Raids

People across Kashmir are angry, and they have every right to be. The discovery of 1,200 kilograms of rotten meat at a cold storage unit in Zakura has shaken households across the valley. What made it worse was the revelation that most of the meat came from outside and had already entered the local market.

It's not just a scandal. It's a violation. Playing with public health in this way is criminal, and those responsible deserve more than a slap on the wrist. This calls for exemplary punishment. When food safety is compromised, everything else starts to rot along with it.

The outrage isn't just about spoiled meat. It's about what this says about the systems meant to protect us. Families now wonder what they've unknowingly served their children, guests, and themselves. People have lost trust, and rebuilding that trust won't happen through statements and photo ops.

This can't end with the Zakura raid. That raid should be a beginning. The Food Safety Department must step up in ways people can see and feel. Kashmir needs more than one warehouse raid. It needs a wave of strong, transparent inspections. It needs accountability at every level: from those who move the shipments, to those who store them, to those who sell them.

Most past raids have stopped at the small fish: roadside vendors, local butchers. But it's the big suppliers who run the network. They're the ones importing meat from other states, storing it in poor conditions, and distributing it across the valley with little to no checks. That's where the focus must go now.

We already have laws to handle this. The Food Safety and Standards Act lays it out clearly. What's missing is enforcement with urgency and intention. Random checks, surprise raids, and public reporting of violations could go a long way in restoring some faith.

People shouldn't have to live in fear of what's on their plate. Meat is more than a meal in Kashmir. It's part of how we celebrate, share, and live.

The only way forward is to act decisively. Criminal carelessness with food must end. Public trust must be earned back. And that begins by cleaning up the system.

Endocrine Emergency

Farmers, families, and frontline workers are showing signs of exposure to toxic chemicals.

Dr. Waseem Ahmad

In the villages of Pulwama and Shopian, apples are a badge of pride and progress. Families have tended these orchards for generations. They know how to prune branches, read the sky for hail, and time the harvest to perfection.

But lately, a darker knowledge has taken root.

Mothers speak in hushed tones about daughters who can't conceive. Young men queue at clinics for unexplained spinal pain.

In one village of 1,400 homes, 15 cancer cases have emerged in just a few years.

I began noticing these patterns during training sessions and outreach camps held in South Kashmir. Women from orchardist households would stay behind after the formal sessions ended.

"Why are we seeing so many girls who can't get pregnant?" one woman in Shopian asked. "Our mothers never talked about this. It's something new."

They are right. It is new, and it's spreading.

In Srinagar's diagnostic labs, young radiologists are alarmed. They perform 20 to 25 scans a day, often over grueling 12-hour shifts.

Over half of their patients now come from South Kashmir, and a worrying share show early signs of spinal degeneration, liver stress, and even brain tumors.

Lab technologists, too, are seeing a surge in hormonal disorders: thyroid dysfunction, PCOD, early menopause.

These complaints form a pattern, and all arrows point back to the orchards.

What changed?  
Ten years ago, an average orchardist used just three or four sprays a year, mostly harmless horticultural oil and occasional antifungals.

Today, farmers apply up to 20 chemical treatments per season, and the sprays are no longer benign.

Systemic pesticides, synthetic fungicides, and a newer, more dangerous entrant, Plant Growth Regulators (PGRs), have transformed apple farming.

These are not your grandfather's sprays. PGRs are powerful synthetic chemicals designed to force larger fruit, earlier blooming, and higher yields.

They also come with a well-documented risk: they disrupt human endocrine systems.

According to Dr. Ghulam Hassan Mir, one of Kashmir's most respected plant pathologists, many of these PGRs are not meant for widespread use in residential areas.



Representational Photo

What's happening in South Kashmir is a warning, for any region that believes economic success can be separated from ecological balance.

"The chemicals being sprayed now are strong, systemic, and often unregulated," he told me. "Some of them interfere directly with hormones. And we're using them in orchards that are just steps from homes."

The science is clear.

Exposure to certain PGRs and systemic pesticides is associated with reduced fertility, hormonal imbalances, and an elevated risk of cancers.

In farming communities where these chemicals are used heavily, the consequences are showing up in medical records, if anyone bothers to look.

The problem is, almost no one is looking.

There is no health registry that tracks environmental exposure in South Kashmir. There is no centralized data on the rising incidence of endocrine disorders, cancers, or fertility problems in orchard districts. Public health departments are slow to respond, and agriculture departments often avoid confronting the pesticide lobby.

And so, the burden falls on women undergoing invasive fertility treatments, on men too young to need spinal scans, and on children growing up surrounded by toxins they cannot see.

This is a systemic failure.

We cannot separate agriculture from health. What we grow, how

we grow it, and what chemicals we allow into our soil and water will always show up, first in test tubes, then in hospital beds.

Right now, South Kashmir's apple economy is thriving on paper. But in its villages, the cost is becoming unbearable.

So what can we do?

First, we need regulation, with teeth. The government must urgently audit and limit the sale and use of PGRs and systemic pesticides, especially in high-density farming zones near homes and schools.

Second, we need information. A region-wide health surveillance program should be launched immediately to track disease clusters and correlate them with occupational exposure, soil residue, and groundwater toxicity.

Third, we need education. Farmers are not villains. They're victims of a system that rewards short-term yield over long-term sustainability.

Most orchardists I meet are unaware of what exactly they're spraying, or the cumulative health risks it brings.

Outreach campaigns must be launched for local health workers, Panchayat leaders, and district officials.

Fourth, we must invest in

safer alternatives. Integrated pest management, organic farming incentives, and crop diversification may not offer quick profits, but they are the only path forward if we want our people to thrive alongside our apples.

Finally, we must talk. Health workers, environmental scientists, farmers, and policymakers must begin meeting regularly to share data, concerns, and solutions. No one sector can fix this alone.

What's happening in South Kashmir is a warning, for any region that believes economic success can be separated from ecological balance.

If we continue to prioritize fruit size over family health, market yield over medical ethics, we risk destroying the very communities that sustain this valley's economy.

The orchard is Kashmir's pride. But if the price of that pride is rising illness, shrinking fertility, and early death, we must stop and ask: What are we really cultivating?

*The author is an agricultural scientist from South Kashmir.*

*He can be reached at waseembhatspn@yahoo.com.*

*Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.*

Sycophancy Over Scholarship

Ego wars and sycophancy are undermining education in Kashmir colleges and universities. A local academic shares what he saw, and what needs to change.

Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

We don't need more pitches about transformation. We need cultural repair. And it starts with basic steps: creating space for professionals to talk, disagree, and reconcile.

It began with a cup of tea in a college office.

I had dropped by to meet a senior academic I've known for years. We were discussing plans to organize a lecture series, something simple that could bring departments together and invite students into deeper conversations.

As we talked through the logistics, I casually suggested reaching out to another colleague on campus, someone equally senior and respected.

Without looking up, he said, "We're not on talking terms."

It was a plain, practiced statement, as if this type of professional cold war were no big deal. Then he sipped his tea.

I've started to notice the long silences between colleagues, the polite nods that cover real tension, and the way meetings end with nothing real being said.

I've seen professors refuse to share a panel, department heads skip each other's events, and committees dissolve because two people couldn't sit at the same table.

This ego war is ruining our institutions.

It shows up in how people introduce themselves, emphasize their titles, and hold grudges longer than memories.

The work suffers, but somehow, the pride remains intact.

Ego on its own is difficult enough. In an educational space, it becomes dangerous.

These places are meant to teach humility, curiosity, and service. And yet, time and again, I've seen that hierarchy and status, what should matter the least, often matter the most.

And where ego flourishes, chamchagiri isn't far behind.

Chamchagiri, or sycophancy, is no

longer a joke among friends. It's become a structure. In some institutions, people move up because they say the right things to the right people, not because of what they've done.

I've seen talented scholars left behind because they didn't clap loud enough in meetings. I've seen projects stall because someone spoke the truth when it was inconvenient.

When flattery becomes a skill, honesty becomes a threat.

This doesn't just harm individuals. It shapes a whole institutional culture. Decisions get made based on relationships, not merit. Committees become echo chambers. Meetings become performances. Staff and students start choosing silence over engagement, because that feels safer.

Students notice everything. They watch how professors treat one another. They see who gets invited, ignored, and rewarded. And over time, they learn the rules.

If ego wins, they'll follow it. If chamchagiri gets you ahead, they'll practice it. If truth leads to trouble, they'll avoid it.

We like to say we're building the future

old grudges, it's like trying to think with only half a brain.

You move, but nothing connects. Eventually, the system collapses under its own disconnection.

We don't need more pitches about transformation. We need cultural repair. And it starts with basic steps: creating space for professionals to talk, disagree, and reconcile.

Promotions should be based on merit, not networks. Every department should model collaboration. Ethical codes should be reviewed as seriously as financial audits. And leaders must be trained, to lead and listen.

A proverb from Africa says: when elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. In our case, the grass is made of students, ideas, hopes.

Educational institutions don't run on furniture and funding. They run on relationships, trust, and shared goals. When those break, nothing else can hold the place together.

If we want to change education in Kashmir, we need to change the way we treat each other inside our own institutions.

Talk to the colleague you've avoided. Praise the person you usually ignore. Share credit, learn to forgive, and choose professionalism over pride.

That's how the healing begins. And that's how students learn what leadership really looks like.

*The author is a teacher and researcher based in Gowhar Pora, Chadoora, Jammu & Kashmir.*



# The Man Who Made Tolstoy Speak Kashmiri

Muzaffar Aazim's life was an act of literary revolution, carried out in poems, translations, and invisible code.

Fiza Masoodi

War and Peace rests on a shelf in a Srinagar study. The cover is plain, the title in flowing Nastalik script, almost too shy to call attention to itself.

But what lies inside is something rare. It is Tolstoy, speaking Kashmiri.

This is no ordinary translation. It's a bridge across continents, centuries, and alphabets.

And behind it was a man who believed his mother tongue was worthy of the world's grandest stories.

Muzaffar Aazim translated Tolstoy alone, in his thirties, with the faith that Kashmiri deserved its place on the global literary shelf.

Born in 1934 in Tangmarg, Aazim grew up surrounded by snow, silence, and story. Oral traditions were part of the air.

As a boy, he listened more than he spoke. And later, when he wrote, his words carried that attention.

He studied at Sri Pratap College, taught briefly at Amar Singh College, and went on to become Director of Sericulture in the Jammu and Kashmir government.

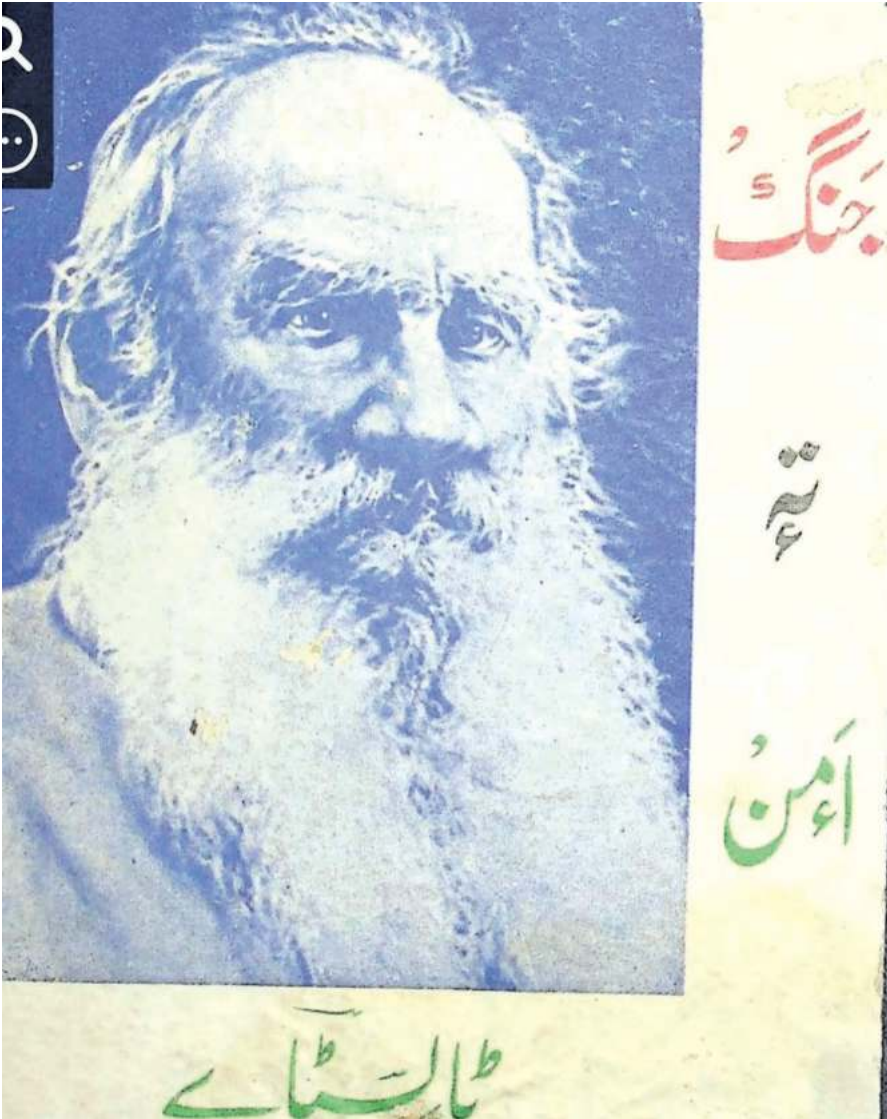


**Long before smartphones came to the valley, Aazim was asking a simple question: How will Kashmiris write their language online?**

The job took him across the valley, but no title ever pulled him away from poetry.

His first collection, Zolana (The Fetters), came out in 1963. At the time, Kashmiri literature was still carving out its modern voice. Aazim gave it form: disciplined, lyrical, rooted in metaphor but never lost in abstraction.

He redefined the rules of the ghazal, gently stretching the form until it fit Kashmir's own shape.



Literary icon Rehman Rahi once called him "a dexterous craftsman," whose poems would "outlast the moment".

That same love of structure, of doing things properly and beautifully, guided Aazim into an unlikely second act: technology.

Long before smartphones came to the valley, Aazim was asking a simple question: How will Kashmiris write their language online?

He taught himself font design and created Narqalam and Gulmarg Nastalik, the first digital Kashmiri fonts that felt real, not stiff or clunky like the ones people used before.

Aazim worked on Unicode submissions, and exchanged long emails with experts in Silicon Valley, offering insights from a language spoken in mountain villages.

He argued, gently but firmly, for the dignity of Nastalik, and its right to exist in the future. One of his colleagues called his work "a

gift that brought Kashmiri back into the digital world." That might sound technical, but it isn't.

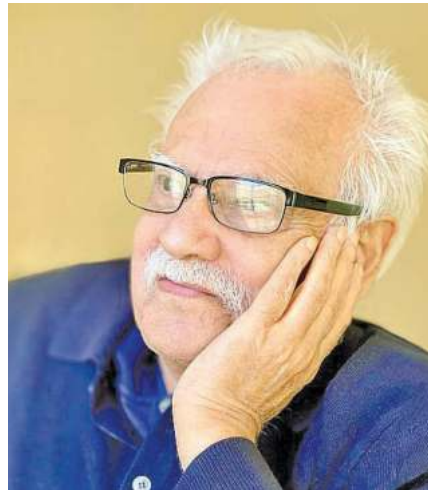
Without those fonts, Kashmiri writers might still be typing in borrowed scripts, either in Hindi or Urdu, watching their own alphabet disappear.

Aazim wouldn't allow it.

After War and Peace, he went on to translate iconic Wuthering Heights, besides an Assamese novel called Awami Raj.

Each literary project was an attempt to widen the Kashmiri bookshelf, and show that stories from other worlds could live here, too.

He also wrote songs, hundreds of them, for All India Radio Srinagar. Some were



hymns to Kashmir University, others were love letters to his wife. Many became part of the valley's everyday music, played on old radios in kitchens and classrooms.

A producer who worked with him once said, "His lyrics didn't chase trends. They chased emotion."

In his later years, Aazim moved to Virginia. But he never left the language behind. There, in his silent apartment, he began experimenting with calligraphy, mixing Kashmiri letters and digital art, layering them with symbols and ideas from Sufi thought and science fiction.

It was unexpected, but not out of character. He had always wanted to see where the language could go next.



**For his literary services, Aazim was bestowed with the Soviet Land Nehru Award, two Best Book honours from the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages. online?**

On Doordarshan's Subhai Subhai, he once spoke like a man who believed that culture must be maintained like a garden: watered, pruned, and protected.

Aazim died on July 8, 2022, at the age of 88. Poets, professors, and programmers paid their tributes, calling his contributions as a living legacy.

Today, Kashmiri is typed across phones and laptops in fonts he shaped. Diaspora writers use Unicode entries he helped draft. Students still sing the songs he once scribbled on paper scraps. His translations still sit in libraries, waiting for curious readers to open it.

For his literary services, Aazim was bestowed with the Soviet Land Nehru Award, two Best Book honours from the J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages.

In 2013, his Dastar Bandi was held, a rare literary honour in Kashmir, like being crowned with a turban of respect.

But his real award is what continues.

He once said, "A language lives only when it is spoken, written, sung, and now, typed."

Muzaffar Aazim gave his language a future it didn't yet know it needed.

And three years after his death, Kashmir still speaks in the letters he carved into time.

*The author is a Srinagar-based scribe. She can be reached at fizammasoodi2001@gmail.com*

## That Day in Gagangeer

We were newly married, full of stories and songs.

That day in Gagangeer became our own small forever.

Syed Majid Gilani

It was the first March after our wedding. Zarah and I had been married for six months. The world felt a little different already, as if colours had grown warmer and time had slowed down, just enough for us to notice the shape of our days.

One morning, we decided to drive up towards Sonmarg. It wasn't planned. We just wanted to go somewhere, anywhere.

I didn't know then that the road beyond Gagangeer usually stays closed till late April. These days, the Z-Morh tunnel keeps it open all year, but back then we were driving on hope and sunshine.

I took out my white Maruti 800 car. I had never done this before. In fact, I had never been on a real outing that wasn't about school, exams, family errands, or some distant relative's ceremony. But that day, with Zarah next to me, the air felt easier to breathe.

We drove through willow-lined roads, passing shops and fields and stories we'd never heard before. Somewhere near Kullán, we stopped at a roadside shop. I picked up a chilled bottle of Maaza, a big bag of American Lay's, and chewing gum that reminded me of childhood. There were also some fresh, oily local snacks wrapped in a crumpled newspaper. That was lunch, in a way. We laughed as we stepped back into the car, arms full like two kids sneaking treats past their parents.

She fed me chips. I wiped her fingers with my handkerchief. There was music playing, some old Kishore Kumar song that melted into a newer one she loved. Everything felt mismatched, and somehow, just right.

By the time we reached Gagangeer, the snow was everywhere. Locals told us the road



**After lunch, we took a short walk through the snow. The ground sparkled, the trees looked like sculptures, and though we hadn't reached Sonmarg, I felt like I'd arrived somewhere more important.**

to Sonmarg was shut. It didn't even feel like bad news. Gagangeer looked like a page from a storybook, and that was more than enough.

Horsemen were offering rides for a few hundred metres into the snow, but Zarah didn't feel comfortable, so I dropped the idea. Her smile meant more to me than any view.

We saw a small café run by the tourism department. Its lawn had disappeared under layers of snow, but it still looked inviting. Inside, we ordered sweet tea and sat by the window. Outside, the snow shimmered under the sun, and inside, we sat in a silence that said everything.

For lunch, we had the food Zarah had packed: fried chicken and soft rotis. I suggested we eat outside, and she said yes, without hesitation.

The café had red plastic chairs out in the snow. One chair's leg sank in, then an-

other, and the table tilted too. We tried to fix it but kept laughing as we failed. Zarah's laughter bounced around like windchimes in the air.

I remember thinking: this is what freedom feels like. Just sitting next to someone who laughs with you when the chair falls over.

We finally managed to balance things enough to eat. The chicken was spicy and perfect. The rotis were warm. We added some leftover chips and passed the Maaza bottle between us like we were teenagers again. It felt like the moment that could make you believe in a better kind of world.

After lunch, we took a short walk through the snow. The ground sparkled, the trees looked like sculptures, and though we hadn't reached Sonmarg, I felt like I'd arrived somewhere more important.

I had never experienced anything like it, where si-

lence felt full, not empty.

We started back in the late afternoon. I was nervous about driving downhill, but she trusted me. I saw it in the way she looked out the window and hummed along with the songs. That trust gave me something I didn't know I had: Confidence.

The playlist kept switching, her favourite Bollywood hits followed by my old ghazals. The music didn't match, but we did. That day may look like nothing special from the outside, but something happened in those hours that stayed with me.

I learned what it means to be understood without having to explain. I realised what it feels like when someone holds your hand without asking where you're going.

Later in life, moments weren't easy to speak of. But that day in Gagangeer, frozen in time, still lights something inside me.

It was a day of snow, tea, laughter, and love. I often return to those happy hours when I need to remember what it means to feel whole.

*The author is a government officer by profession and a storyteller by passion. He can be reached at syedmajid6676@gmail.com.*

## The Brotherhood of Twelve

Inside a forgotten corner of campus, twelve mechanical engineering students built a lifelong bond through grease, grit and grinding gears.

Dr. Sajad Hussain Deen

We were literally a dirty dozen.

In a college buzzing with bigger batches and celebrated courses, the twelve of us were tucked away in a corner. We were mechanical engineering students, half-forgotten by the larger campus, yet fully present in each other's lives.

We weren't famous, but there was something solid about our group that clicked like a well-oiled machine.

Each of us brought something different to the table. Asif Ali, for instance, had a mind like a laser, cutting through problems with precision.

There was one Mounis Malik, chased by merit. It was like marks followed him out of respect. Then there was Akhtar Rasool. That boy didn't study, he wrestled with books. Mechanics of Solids in one hand, Engineering Drawing in the other, his eyes refused to blink until the diagrams made sense.

Sameer Kaul matched him in energy, as if they were cast from the same mould. Their hunger to understand things pushed the rest of us to raise our game. That's how it worked: we lifted each other without even trying.

We bunked classes a lot. I won't lie about that. But when exams knocked, you'd find all twelve of us huddled up in a single room: our notebooks overlapping, questions flying, someone solving problems, someone else brewing tea.

We argued over equations, forgot who owned which pen, and shared everything, especially the stress.

Some of us formed tight pairs. Asrar and Bilal, Hilal, Fayaz and Tajamul moved like clockwork, always in sync, and reliable. Jehangir kept to himself mostly, comfortable in his silent rhythm.

I often teamed up with Suhail Shahzad. Depending on our moods, we'd either stay in the hostel or study at home. Wherever we were, we stayed tuned



to the same frequency: engineers-in-progress, growing into our own.

This wasn't a course we picked casually. Mechanical engineering came with sweat and smudged hands. From the SRTC workshops to dusty training at local firms, we showed up in grease-stained overalls, ready to learn.

Group tuitions in Mathematics and Drawing weren't just coaching sessions. They were daily pilgrimages. We walked, studied, and passed together.

On campus, we didn't carry much weight. We were far from the spotlight. But when it mattered, when unity was called for, we showed up. That's how we protected our space and each other.

Our teachers shaped us who we became.

Ishtiyaz Sir, our Head of Department, balanced humour and sincerity like few could. During our first-year exams, he stood outside Boni Shehjar hall as if guarding our futures.

Once, before a surprise inspection, he whispered, "The Principal, Prof. O. N. Wakhlo, is coming to check your work." I still remember Wakhlo Sir stopping at my desk, glancing over my Engineering Drawing sheet. He gave a small smile and said, "You should've taken Civil. You'll become a complete engineer."

That sentence stuck. It did something to me.

Then there was the man named Sheikh Ashraf Majid. We called him The Colonel. He walked like he owned time,

spoke like a general, and carried knowledge like armour.

Before I ever met him, seniors warned me, "Only go to his office if you must. And only if you're prepared."

His room was a living museum of machine parts - connecting rods, pistons, gears - all lined up like soldiers waiting for inspection.

The first time I knocked, I was more nervous than I'd like to admit. "Come, young man!" he boomed, sounding uncannily like Ashok Kumar from an old Hindi film. He didn't hand me a lecture or a chapter. He gave me a pencil and said, "Draw circles. Freehand. Perfect ones."

That was the beginning. From there, we moved to real parts, breaking them down, understanding their heartbeats.

He was a hard man to impress. His discipline radiated into the staffroom, the labs, even the corridors. Some of the juniors pulled tricks: stealing his tea, poking his car tires. None of it shook him. He kept marching. Every time I saw him, I saw a man stitched into his purpose.

And then came the sound: "Kuchi kuchi kuchi kuchi..."

That was our signal. The Colonel had arrived. And we were his soldiers: Tired, hopeful, oil-stained.

Years later, I can still feel that bond of twelve. It was fraternity built through bolts and bearings, lessons and laughter.

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# No Terrorist Spared, Not Even In ‘Pataal Lok’: PM On Op Sindoor

Press Trust Of India

Sriagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday invoked Lord Shiva's 'Rudra roop' (fierce form) to describe India's resolute action against terrorism, saying Operation Sindoor showcased the country's strength to the world and delivered a clear message that anyone who dares attack India will not be spared, not even in 'Pataal Lok'.

"My heart was filled with sorrow for the 26 people who lost their lives in the Pahalgam terror attack," Modi said while addressing a public meeting in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi.

"My promise to avenge 'Sindoor' of our daughters was fulfilled with blessings of Mahadev," he said, adding, "I dedicate the success of the operation at the feet of Mahadev."

The prime minister also stressed that the "unity of 140 crore countrymen" became the "strength of Operation Sindoor".

"Shiva means welfare but when terrorism raises its ugly head, Mahadev takes his 'Rudra roop'. During Operation Sindoor, the world witnessed this very form of India," the prime minister said.

Taking a dig at the Opposition, Modi alleged that while the country was celebrating the success of Operation Sindoor, "some people in our own country were troubled by it".

"Congress and its allies are unable to digest the fact that India demolished terrorist hideouts inside Pakistan," he said.

"Aren't you proud of Operation Sindoor? Aren't you proud that India destroyed

terror bases (in Pakistan)," the prime minister asked the gathering.

He added, "You all must have seen the visuals of how our drones and missiles precisely struck and reduced terrorist headquarters to rubble.

"Several air bases in Pakistan are still in ICU. While Pakistan's anguish is understandable, what's shocking is that Congress and Samajwadi Party leaders are also unable to cope with it," Modi said.

The prime minister also accused the Congress of repeatedly insulting the valour of the armed forces and even terming 'Operation Sindoor' a "tamasha" (spectacle).

"Can 'Sindoor' ever be a joke? They dared to insult the sacred mark of our sisters and the valour of our soldiers," he said.

Modi also attacked the Samajwadi Party (SP) for questioning the timing of the military strikes.

"One of their leaders asked in Parliament 'why were the attackers of Pahalgam killed now'. Should I call and ask Samajwadi leaders whether to strike now or later? Should we wait and let the terrorists escape," Modi asked.

"These are the same people who during their rule in Uttar Pradesh gave clean chits to terrorists and withdrew cases against those involved in bomb blasts," Modi claimed, adding that such parties are now disturbed because terrorists are being eliminated.

"This is 'Naya Bharat' (New India), which worships Lord Shiva but turns Kaal Bhairav against its enemies when needed," the prime minister said.



## J&K CM's Gujarat Crush: Sabarmati Runs & Thali Fun

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah seems to have discovered a soft spot for Gujarat.

After a refreshing morning run along Ahmedabad's iconic

Sabarmati Riverfront — which he hailed as one of the nicest places he's ever run — Omar tucked into a hearty Gujarati thali, calling it a personal favorite.

His praise didn't go unnoticed. None other than Prime

Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged the gesture, adding a political flavor to this unexpected moment of camaraderie across party lines.

It may have just been a run and a thali — but in politics, nothing goes unnoticed.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Rewrite ‘Distorted’

They offer new ideas and fresh perspectives that change how we perceive things and promote critical thinking. The Chinar Book Festival will connect the new generation to our precious literary heritage and inspire them to preserve and promote the traditional wisdom left behind by our ancestors."

The Lieutenant Governor, in his address, emphasised on reviving India's ancient knowledge system and making it a part of mainstream education.

He called upon the National Book Trust to publish and translate the Nilamata Purana, Rajatarangini, and Kathasaritsagara into various Indian languages.

"These editions in regional language should also be prominently featured at international book festivals to introduce the world to J&K's unique literary heritage," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor further asked the National Book Trust to actively promote famous literature from Kashmiri, Pahari, Gojri, Dogri, Urdu, and Punjabi at book festivals and ensure their translation into various languages to reach a wider audience.

The event also witnessed the inauguration of 'Saradaksarani'- First National Exhibition of Sharada Alphabets, and Kashmiri Translation of book titled "Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh-through the ages". The winners of Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya Amrit Kaal Story Writing Competition were also announced.

Prof. Milind Sudhakar Marathe, Chairman, National Book Trust; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Prof. Raghuvendra Tanwar, Chairman Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR); Dr Amit Wanchoo, Chief Convener, Chinar Book Festival; Yuvraj Malik, Director, National Book Trust; Vice heads of various educational institutions, senior officials, eminent literary personalities, book lovers, youth and children in large number were present.

Notably, the 9-day annual festival aims to provide an opportunity to the readers to keep track of new ideas and perspectives and interact with eminent writers and scholars from across the country.

#### Amarnath Yatra

6,497 pilgrims had darshan at the 3,800-metre-high holy cave shrine on Saturday, the officials said.

They said the yatris included 4,586 males, 1,299 females, 62 children, 51 sadhus, five sadhvis and 494 security forces personnel.

So far, 4,14,311 yatris have visited the cave shrine since the yatra started on July 3, the officials added.

#### ‘Resolution Of Kashmir

classes, or various laws, which were not being implemented here before, are now benefiting the people of Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370," he added.

Later, speaking to reporters, Pradhan noted that before the abrogation of Article 370, local elections had not occurred in the Union Territory for several years.

"The grassroots-level representation of the people was missing; now, gradually, the democratic system is being restored in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Asserting that normalcy is returning to Kashmir, Pradhan expressed confidence that

the tourism sector in the Valley is doing well, local businesses are stabilising, and as the system moves forward, the development of the people will lead to prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pradhan announced that to enhance the library movement in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Book Trust (NBT) will implement various Central schemes in the Union Territory.

He assured that by next year's Chinar Festival, various books in the local languages of Jammu and Kashmir will be translated into other languages of the country.

Additionally, the Union minister mentioned that efforts would be made to establish the Chinar Book Festival as a permanent event.

Pradhan celebrated the success of the festival, noting that despite the prevalence of the internet, books still possess the power to engage the new generation. (PTI)

#### 2 Terrorists Killed

ago. They were categorized as 'C' category terrorists.

Sources said that two more terrorists are believed to be trapped in the area. "A clearer picture regarding their identity and status of the operation will emerge by Sunday," the sources said.

A soldier sustained injuries during the exchange of fire and has been shifted to a medical facility where his condition is said to be stable.

Army's Chinar Corps posted on X: "Intermittent and intense firefight continued through the day. Alert troops responded with calibrated fire and tightened the noose while maintaining contact. Two terrorists have been neutralised so far. Operation Akhal continues."

Officials said that the thick forest cover and rugged terrain have posed challenges, but the area remains under tight security surveillance. Additional reinforcements have been deployed to seal all possible escape routes.

Drone surveillance, night vision equipment, and thermal imaging devices are being used to track movements in the dense foliage.

The operation has been paused for the night due to poor visibility, in line with security protocols, and will resume at dawn.

J&K Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat visited the encounter site and reviewed the ongoing counter-terror operation.

Pertinently, 'Operation Akhal' is the third major anti-terror operation in Jammu and Kashmir within the past week. On Wednesday, two terrorists were killed during "Operation Shivshakti" in Poonch district near the Line of Control following an infiltration attempt. Earlier, on July 28, three Pakistani terrorists were eliminated during "Operation Mahadev" in the Lidwas forest near Harwan on the outskirts of Srinagar. Those terrorists were linked to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.(inputs from KNO, PTI)

#### Centre Blocks

gaming safer and more transparent.

Under the amended Information Technology Rules, 2021 — revised in April 2023 — online gaming intermediaries are required to register with Self-Regulatory Bodies (SRBs), which determine whether a game qualifies as a "permissible real money game."

To curb offshore and unregistered platforms, the government now allows blocking of gaming websites not registered under the GST system.

The Directorate General of GST Intelligence has been empowered to take action against such platforms, and intermediaries can be directed to restrict access to them.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, introduces stricter penalties for illegal betting and gambling, including imprisonment ranging from one to seven years.

Meanwhile, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 authorizes action against misleading advertisements, including those involving celebrities and influencers. In April 2024, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting once again cautioned media platforms and advertisers against airing such ads.

To encourage safe gaming habits among children, the Ministry of Education has issued advisories to parents and teachers. Citizens can report cases of online fraud through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal or by calling the toll-free number 1930.

#### DHSK Transfers

GMC Baramulla, CHC Keller, and SDH Chadoora have been reassigned to hospitals across districts like Rajouri, Kupwara, Budgam, Baramulla, Ganderbal, and Shopian.

"In view of the emergent nature of health services, the transferred doctors shall be deemed to have been relieved and shall join their new place of postings forthwith and without fail," the order reads.

"Besides, the concerned Chief Medical officers shall submit the compliance report with regard to joining of aforementioned doctors to this office by 04.08.2025 upto 1:00 PM."

Notably, the list includes ten doctors from District Hospital Pulwama. The move is being seen as a step towards restoring accountability and improving the quality of patient care at one of South Kashmir's major health institutions.

Officials said that the transfers were part of a broader strategy to revamp the healthcare system in the region, particularly in hospitals that have faced repeated complaints from the public.

The action comes days after J&K's former Health Minister Sakina Itoo stated that a major reshuffle of doctors was on the cards across Jammu and Kashmir to address long-standing issues in the healthcare system.

#### 10 J&K Residents

deported from the US in the last five years (2020-2024) stood at 5,541.

The number of Indian nationals deported from the UK in the last five years (2020-2024) is 311. In 2025 (till date), the number of Indians deported from the UK is 131, he said.

"The actual numbers may vary for two reasons — those illegal Indian immigrants in possession of valid travel documents are deported directly by the government of the UK. Further, the Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) issued to illegal Indian immigrants may not be fully utilised as the individuals may appeal against their deportation," the MoS said.

She had also asked about the modes of deportation used for these Indian nationals.

"Between January 20 and July 22, 2025, a total of 1,703 Indian nationals were deported by the US government to India. Of them, there were 1,562 men and 141 women," he said.

Of these 1,703 Indian nationals, 333 were deported in February in US military flights, 231 were deported in March in charter flights

operated by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations, and 300 in July through Department of Homeland Security (DHS) charter flights, as per the data shared by the government.

Also, 72 deportees arrived in India individually or in small groups via commercial flights from Panama, as and when their flight tickets were arranged. And, 767 deportees arrived in India through commercial flights from the US, and they arrived in India individually or in small groups, as and when their flight tickets were arranged, according to the data.

The MEA was also asked whether the government has taken any diplomatic steps to ensure better coordination and humane treatment of Indian nationals facing deportation from the US and other countries.

The ministry "remains engaged" with the US side to ensure the humane treatment of deportees during deportation operations, the MoS said.

He said the MEA has "strongly registered" its concerns with the US authorities on the treatment of deportees, particularly with respect to the use of shackles, especially on women and children.

Concerns with regard to religious or cultural sensitivities, including the use of turbans and dietary preferences, have also been formally taken up with the US side, the minister said.

"This ministry has not received any complaint pertaining to treatment of deportees on any flight after February 5, 2025," he added.

#### Deported Pak

applications moved by her regarding acquiring Indian citizenship as well as a long-term visa.

The court recorded the submission of the solicitor general and noted that "once an in-principle decision is taken by the competent authority, there is hardly any doubt that, post compliance of the requisite procedures and formalities, the authority would process and accord a visitor's visa to the respondent at the earliest".

The court dismissed Rashid's writ petition seeking relief from the deportation, saying that as a natural consequence, the impugned interim order loses its relevance and thus ceases to exist and operate.

On July 22, Mehta requested the court to defer the proceedings to enable him to explore whether the respondent could be helped in any manner or if it was still feasible to address her concerns.

In response, Rashid's counsel, Ankur Sharma and Himani Khajuria, submitted that she was agreeable to the course suggested by the solicitor general.

On June 6, a single-judge bench of Justice Rahul Bharti ordered the Central government to "retrieve" Rashid.

While passing the order, Justice Bharti observed, "This court is bearing in mind the background reference that the petitioner was having long-term visa (LTV) status at the relevant point of time, which per se may not have warranted her deportation, but without examining her case in a better perspective and coming up with a proper order with respect to her deportation from the authorities concerned, she came to be forced out."

Rashid was served with a Leave India Notice on April 28 under Sections 3(1), 7(1), and

## Rajnath Flays Oppn For Raising Questions On Op Sindoor In Parliament

Press Trust Of India

Patna: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday came down heavily on the Congress-led opposition for "raising questions" about Operation Sindoor "instead of paying tributes to the valour displayed by our armed forces".

Addressing a function organised by a media house here, the former BJP president also alleged that the Congress had been "soft" on insurgency while in power, and tried to "frame innocent people" by spinning the theory of "saf-ron terror" because of "vote bank" considerations.

"Recently, we had discussions in both Houses of Parliament on Operation Sindoor. Both debates lasted for 16 hours each. The opposition, which had started off on a belligerent note, was left dumbstruck," Singh claimed.

Singh said it is "regrettable" that the opposition was raising questions on Operation Sindoor, "which saw our valiant armed forces destroying so many terror hideouts".

The occasion warranted paying tributes to the country's armed forces, he said.

"This has been the tradition in the past. During the war of 1971, (when Indira Gandhi was the prime minister), our leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee had wholeheartedly supported the government of the day," Singh said.

He also acknowledged that "political and social unity" had been on display in 1999, when Vajpayee was the PM, and Kargil happened, adding, "such unity is essential to root out terror once and for all".

The defence minister also drew a contrast between the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, characterised by "decisive action against terror", and the "soft" stance of the past Congress governments, weighed down by concerns of "vote bank" and "politics of appeasement".

"People still shudder to recall the pre-2014 era, when terror attacks had become the order of the day. A series of bomb explosions were seen in this very city," said Singh, referring to the serial blasts that had rocked the Gandhi Maidan in 2013, when he was sharing the stage with Modi, then the chief minister of Gujarat and the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, during the latter's maiden rally in Bihar.

"Elsewhere, like we saw in the Malegaon blast case, innocent people were framed in the name of saffron terror. The judge who delivered the judgment made the remark that terror has no religion. This is exactly what we have been saying all along," the senior BJP leader said.

All the accused in the case, including former BJP MP Pragya Thakur, were recently acquitted.

Singh, who had held the Home portfolio in the previous Narendra Modi cabinet, said, "Vote bank politics weakens the nation's fight against terror. In the last 11 years, our resolve against the menace has grown stronger. The morale of our armed forces is skyrocketing. Anything that dampens this enthusiasm is neither in national interest nor in public interest."



## CBK Carries Out Searches In Anantnag, Accused Arrested In Cheating Case

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** The Economic Offences Wing (Crime Branch Kashmir) Saturday carried out searches at several locations and arrested an accused involved in swindling crores of rupees.

The searches were carried out in connection with a case under FIR number 16/2025 under Section 318 (4) BNS 2023 and an accused person, namely Shahid Rehman Bhat S/o Ab. Rehman Bhat R/o Shangus, Nowgam District Anantnag (Proprietor of M/s AR Trading Agri Services Pvt. Ltd) involved in swindling crores of rupees has been arrested, a spokesman said in a statement.

The brief facts of the case are that the Economic Offences Wing (Crime Branch Kashmir) received multiple written complaints, wherein it was alleged that Shahid Rehman Bhat S/o Ab. Rehman Bhat R/o Shangus, Nowgam District Anantnag (Propri-

etor of M/s AR Trading Agri Services Pvt. Ltd) has cheated them on the pretext of providing them High Density Apple Plants, reads the statement.

"The complainants further alleged that the accused after receiving huge amount of money neither provided those High Density Apple Plants nor returned the money but has gone into hiding. Perusal of the bank transaction statements submitted by the complainants reveal that the accused has grabbed Crores of rupees from innocent complainants/farmers," the statement said.

"The accused filed a bail application before the Hon'ble Court of Law however, the bail application has been rejected by the Hon'ble Court of Addl. Sessions Judge Anantnag on the basis of strong objections and prima facie prosecutable evidence submitted by Crime Branch Kashmir," the statement added.

## Sakeena Lays Foundation Stone For 10 MVA Receiving Station



Observer News Service

**KULGAM:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo laid the foundation stone of 10 MVA Receiving Station at Manzgam here today with an aim to strengthen the local power infrastructure.

Addressing a large gathering on the occasion, the Minister said that the project fulfils a long-pending demand of the people of the area and is expected to significantly augment the power supply scenario, ensuring improved electricity availability and reliability for the residents. She added that it is a milestone in the ongoing efforts of the government to improve electricity distribution and meet the growing power demands of the region.

She also expressed her gratitude to Chief Minister, Omar

Abdullah for sanctioning the project, terming it a major milestone in the area's development journey.

The Minister further highlighted on the Government's focused approach towards inclusion development, especially in rural and underserved areas. She stated that this new receiving station would benefit thousands of households, ensuring stable and reliable electricity supply, boosting local industry as well as supporting educational and healthcare institutions of the area.

The Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment towards ensuring that the benefits of every scheme reach the grassroots and deserved. "Our goal is not merely to announce projects, but to ensure they translate into tangible outcomes. This receiving station is a symbol of our Government's resolve to deliver," she stated.

## FSD Steps Up Vigil After Seizure Of Rotten Meat

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** In the wake of the recent seizure of 1,200 kilograms of rotten meat from a godown in Srinagar, the Department of Food Safety Kashmir on Saturday assured the public that it is maintaining strict surveillance over the quality of food products in the region.

The department has also urged citizens to promptly report any suspected cases of adulteration or sale of substandard food items through its toll-free numbers.

Speaking about the incident, Assistant Commissioner of Food Safety, Hilal Ahmad Mir, provided details about the operation: "This happened in an industrial area in Zakura. Someone had brought in this meat and stored it improperly. The storage facility lacked the required temperature control—these products are supposed to be stored at minus 18 degrees Celsius. When we inspected, we found there was no temperature control, and the meat had completely decomposed. Given the circumstances, we immediately seized and properly disposed of the product."

Mir explained that the bulk of meat and meat products in Srinagar are imported and then distributed locally. "The problem arises when highly perishable items like meat are not kept under the right temperature conditions. If such products are consumed, they can pose serious health risks to consumers," he said.

Issuing a stern warning to dealers, Mir said, "I want to

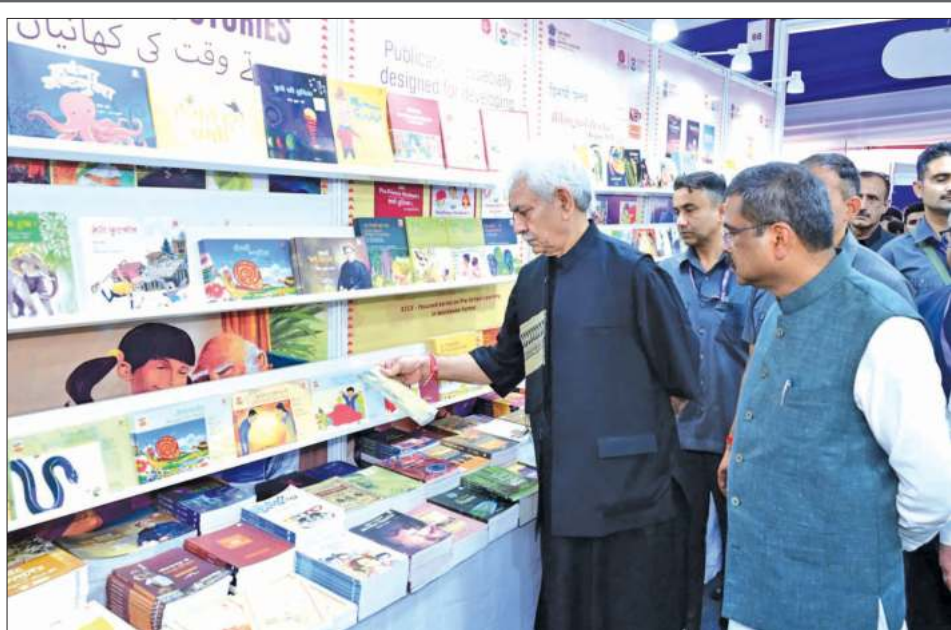
make it clear to all dealers that if they fail to maintain proper temperature control systems or handle food products correctly, they will face strict legal action. We are committed to upholding the law and will not hesitate to act against violators."

Mir also encouraged the public to be vigilant and proactive. "Our control room number is available and has been widely published in electronic media. If anyone finds lapses in food quality or has a complaint, they should contact us immediately for swift action," he said.

With high summer temperatures increasing the risk of food spoilage, the department has intensified its inspection drives. "We are actively checking other dealers too. In fact, I have just returned from an inspection. The public can be assured that we are closely monitoring all food products, especially those prone to adulteration or improper handling," Mir said.

The Assistant Commissioner said that targeted action based on public complaints is often more effective than routine checks. "When we receive a complaint, our action is focused and result-oriented. Routine inspections can alert violators and give them time to hide issues, but with complaints, we know exactly where to act," he said.

"People should be confident that the Food Safety Department is actively working to ensure the quality of all food products. Whenever there is a genuine concern, we take immediate and decisive action."—(KNO)



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MANOJ SINHA and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan browse through books at the Chinara Book Festival in Srinagar.

## CS Reviews Water Transport, Lake Conservation Measures

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant push towards sustainable urban transport and ecological conservation, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Saturday chaired a meeting to review the progress on launching of Inland Water Transport (IWT) in Srinagar besides assessing ongoing lake conservation efforts.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Secretary, Transport; Commissioner, SMC; Vice Chairman, LCMA; representatives from the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and other stakeholders.

The meeting began with an in-depth review of steps taken to operationalize the water transport on the iconic River Jhelum of the valley. The officials from IWAI and concerned departments highlighted that significant progress has been made, with crucial modalities already finalized.

Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur, informed that an MoU was signed between IWAI and the J&K Government on March 6, 2025, paving the way for systematic development of water transport facilities. She revealed that the IWAI's Srinagar office is now fully functional and working closely with the local authorities to fast-track its implementation.

She further stated that work has been awarded for seven floating concrete jetties on the



Jhelum River, with an expected completion timeline of five months from the award date of July 15, 2025. Fairway maintenance is already underway with one dredger each deployed upstream and downstream of Wular Lake, she added.

Moreover, it was divulged that a study on urban water transportation on River Jhelum is being conducted by Kochi Water Metro Limited. The stretch from Sangam to Shadipora Bridge has also been completed.

The Department of Transport has shared a Standard Request for Proposals (RFP) to engage an operator for hybrid electric cruise/boat services and is expected to be completed by December 2025.

With respect to the Dal and Nigeen Lake Conservation, the Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) presented a detailed overview of the measures taken for conservation, management and development of Dal and Nigeen Lakes.

VC, LCMA, Shahid Saleem, detailed out that demarca-

tion of the lake boundary has been completed for the first time through a survey conducted by the Survey of India. He said that the drone surveys, repeated in February 2023, have helped in controlling the illegal constructions and encroachments. A Bathymetric/Hydrographic Survey was also carried out to enable scientific de-weeding and dredging without damaging the lake's ecosystem, he added.

Expanding the conservation lens, the meeting took note of initiatives underway for Khushalsar and Gilsar Lakes. Plans for their revival and beautification were discussed, with an emphasis on enhancing tourism potential while preserving their ecological sanctity.

Chief Secretary Dulloo lauded the coordinated efforts of various departments and called for timely execution of all planned initiatives. He underscored the need for sustainable solutions that combine eco-restoration, heritage preservation and modern urban mobility.

## Pandit Seat Reservation Could Have Bridged Gap With Muslims: Mehbooba

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday said reserving two assembly seats for Kashmiri Pandits would have been the biggest confidence building measure for the displaced community before their return and rehabilitation in the valley.

The PDP president alleged that the annual Amarnath Yatra has been militarized and no one is allowed to move near the pilgrims.

"I believe the biggest CBM (confidence building measure) for (return of) Kashmiri Pandits would have been reserving two assembly seats for them in the valley instead of sending two members of the community through nomination," Mufti told reporters here.

"By reserving two seats, they would have come for votes and as a result this would have provided both Pandits and Muslims an opportunity to come close to each other. That was the best way to integrate Pandits back in Kashmir," she said.

The former chief minister criticised the BJP's policy on Kashmir and said even tourism related places and pilgrimages have been militarized.

"If you look at Kashmir, there are so many places for tourists. Amarnath Yatra, which we used to wait for and talk to the saints to feel good, has also been militarized. Even flies cannot go there. What are you doing with Jammu and Kashmir? You are destroying this region," she said.

The PDP president said there



is a need to review the agreement over power projects as "the electricity we are generating is of no benefit to us".

"That is benefiting the rest of the country. First and foremost our state should be compensated financially for these projects and free electricity should be ensured to poor residents," she added.

Reiterating her demand for an impartial inquiry into the recent killing of a Gujar youth, Pervez Ahmad, in police firing in Jammu, the former chief minister said that the government should ensure justice to his family.

"It is not only about Pervez. More than half a dozen tribal youth have died in mysterious circumstances over the past six months. Makhan Din committed suicide in Kathua after accusing police of harassment, three young men disappeared in Kulgam and it was said they drowned in river," said Mufti.

"In Bandipora, an overground worker was called to the police station and later it was claimed that he died in an encounter, while another arrested youth in Noorabad-Tangmarg (Baramulla) was claimed to have drowned while trying to escape. I see it

as a pattern rather than isolated incidents," she added.

The PDP president alleged that the lives of Gujjars have been made miserable in Jammu and Kashmir.

"They are not allowed to freely graze their cattle by police and so called (Gav) Rakshakh. They are not Rakshakh but demons who are harassing the Gujjars and forcing them out of forests. Justice should be done with Pervez, who left behind a young widow. An impartial probe should take place since police itself said that he was martyred. There should be accountability and appropriate action so that the family is given justice," she said.

As long as the PDP was in coalition with the BJP, Mufti said "We tied their hands and did not allow them to touch Article 370. I ensured a ceasefire (with militants) and revoked the FIRs of 12,000 youth during my government. (BJP leader) Arun Jaitley came in a delegation to talk to the people of Kashmir."

Thousands of people are in jails and are sick but nobody is talking about them, she pointed out. The PDP chief also trained her guns on the ruling National Conference (NC).

"We thought the (National Conference) government would talk about them. But they are only talking about restoration of statehood and a war is going on between the lieutenant governor-led administration and the NC-led government over authority to transfer. No one talks about real issues like roads, electricity, water and unemployment," she said.

## CSIR-IIIM Concludes Training Programme On Scientific Beekeeping

Observer News Service

**PULWAMA:** The CSIR Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu, concluded a five day training programme on scientific beekeeping under the CSIR Floriculture Mission at its Field Station, Bonera Pulwama. The training was aimed at imparting entrepreneurial skill and capacity building of aspiring apiarists through scientific and practical knowledge in commercial apiculture.

Dr Zabeer Ahmed, Director CSIR-IIIM while informing about the programme emphasized on the Institute's efforts to promote the economically profitable and scalable rural bio-entrepreneurship in Jammu and Kashmir. "Beekeeping present a viable opportunity, particularly for marginal farmers and women led self help groups. This initiative will bridge the knowledge gap in traditional sectors by integrating science driven training programmes," he stated. Such efforts align with our broader goal for fostering self reliant and economically empowered rural communities. A total of 25 selected participants from various districts across Jammu and Kashmir participated in the training, he added.

Dr Shahid Rasool, Nodal Scientist CSIR Floriculture Mission informed that the Institute strives for the development of the apiculture sector in the region with imparting the specialized skill to apiarists covering comprehensive modules includ-

ing basics of scientific beekeeping, seasonal management of bee colonies, queen rearing and colony division, winter management strategies, extraction and post harvest handling of honey, identification, control of bee pests and diseases, branding and marketing strategies. The training also included live demonstrations, hands-on techniques, and interaction with apiculture experts to provide participants with a real time understanding of bee-

hive operations and challenges. Traditional beekeeping practices often face limitations in colony health and honey yield. Scientific beekeeping, when properly adopted, ensures better pollination services, increased honey quality, and opens up possibilities for producing high quality honey. Our aim is to transform beekeeping into a viable micro-enterprise supported by science," he added.

Participants expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for the training content, highlighting the need for continued guidance and linkage to market based platforms. The programme also introduced the concept of integrating beekeeping with floriculture and orchard based agro-ecosystems, in line with CSIR-IIIM's trio-business model of apple-lavender-honey.

The training concluded with distribution of participation certificates and a roadmap for follow up supports, including mentorship, FPO integration, and access to scientific beekeeping equipment.

## NIFT Organizes Program To Welcome New Batch Of Students



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Srinagar held a three-day orientation programme to welcome its new batch of undergraduate design students, offering them a comprehensive introduction to campus life, academic resources, and the vibrant world of fashion and design.

Prof. (Dr.) Monika Gupta, Director of NIFT Srinagar, said, "We are delighted to welcome a fresh batch of bright minds to NIFT Srinagar. The orientation program is our first step in building their creative journey and ensuring they feel at home in this inspiring environment."

Our aim is to shape future professionals who can challenge perspectives and drive meaningful change through design and to ensure holistic development and emotional

well-being being of our students further added Prof. (Dr.) Monika.

The programme aimed to familiarize students with NIFT's academic environment, institutional values, support systems, and student-driven initiatives.

Over the course of the orientation, students were introduced to various aspects of academic and campus life — including studio-based learning, craft cluster initiatives, student clubs, industry engagement opportunities, and interaction with different departments and support staff.

The sessions also included overviews of workshops, group projects, fieldwork, and industry visits.

The orientation program culminated with a City tour helping students experience the rich cultural and natural beauty of Kashmir.

## Centre Must Initiate CBMs In J&K: Bukhari

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Saturday urged the central government to implement Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in Jammu and Kashmir, in response to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's recent call to bridge the "dil ki doori" (emotional disconnect) between New Delhi and the people of the region.

Bukhari welcomed the appeal made by the Mirwaiz during his Friday sermon at Srinagar's historic Jamia Masjid, where the religious and political leader urged the Centre to make sincere efforts to heal the longstanding disconnect.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Bukhari said, "Mirwaiz's call for the Centre to address the 'dil ki doori' between New Delhi and J&K is a significant



and meaningful appeal. It reflects his realisation and acknowledgment of the fact that the resolution of all issues concerning J&K lies solely with the Government of India."

He further said the Centre must respond positively to this outreach and initiate steps toward reconciliation. "The Centre should respond to his appeal positively by initiating much-needed CBMs to bridge the 'dil ki doori' — a commitment also made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister @narendramodi," Bukhari wrote.



# Kashmir Super League 2025 Grand Finale Set For Today

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The grand finale of the Khyber Cement Kashmir Super League 2025, powered by Athwas Hyundai, is all set to electrify the valley as United Elegant FC takes on Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC. The game promises to be a thrilling culmination to this pioneering franchise-based football league.

The championship match will be held on Sunday, August 3, at 7:00 PM at the Synthetic Turf TRC Ground, with thousands of fans expected to fill the stands and millions watching the action unfold across digital platforms. The organisers have also kept a dedicated section reserved for female fans. After weeks of intense com-



petition, these two formidable teams have emerged as the finalists—United Elegant FC, known for their consistency and tactical discipline, will face the relentless offensive firepower of Aqua

Kashmir Avengers FC, who have dazzled spectators with their dynamic style and attacking flair. United Elegant has talented players like forward Aakif Reshi and midfield powerhouse

### MATCH DETAILS:

- Date: Sunday, August 3, 2025
- Time: 7:00 PM
- Venue: Synthetic Turf TRC Ground, Srinagar
- Final Match: United Elegant FC vs. Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC

Shahnawaz Bashir leading them. Meanwhile, Aqua Kashmir Avengers have players like mid-field maestro Adnan Ayoub and Burhan Sarwar on the team.

United Elegant won the league phase of Kashmir Super League 2025, and are thus the favourites to win Sunday's game. They have already beaten Aqua Avengers Kashmir earlier in the play-off phase. Aakif Reshi scored a hat trick as

United Elegant ran out 3-1 winners and booked their spot in the final.

"The Khyber Cement Kashmir Super League 2025, now firmly established as a landmark sporting initiative in Jammu & Kashmir, has brought together over 132+ local talents, professional setups and six corporate-backed teams in a festival of football that has redefined the sporting landscape of the region," the organisers said.

"With the stage set for a historic night, all eyes will be on who lifts the coveted trophy and etches their name in Kashmir football history," they added.

"Come witness the spirit, the rivalry, and the passion — this is more than just a game. This is Kashmir's Game-Changer," the organisers said.

## DPS Srinagar U-17 Team Wins Amira Kadal Cricket Tournament



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Delhi Public School Srinagar Under-17 cricket team emerged victorious in a spirited and highly competitive tournament organised by the Youth Services and Sports, Zone Amira Kadal. Held at SP College Ground in Srinagar, the event witnessed participation from 27 teams, offering young cricketers a valuable platform to display their talent, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Throughout the tournament, DPS Srinagar stood out with their consistent performances and strategic brilliance on the field. The team sailed through tough matches against reputed schools such as Burn Hall, Oasis, and Linton Hall, securing their place in the highly anticipated final.

The grand finale saw DPS Sri-

nagar take on Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Jawahar Nagar. Opting to bat first after winning the toss, DPS Srinagar set a formidable total of 140 runs for 5 wickets in 15 overs. This score was boosted by strong innings from Syed Anhar (Class-10), scoring 37 runs, and Hashir Majeed (Class 8) top-scored with 45 runs, showcasing composure and aggressive stroke play under pressure.

Defending the total, DPS bowlers delivered with precision and strategy. Syed Ali (Class-9) led the attack with 3 wickets, while Sayan Ramzan (Class-11) and Mohammad Rafid (Class-8) each picked up 2 wickets, restricting the opposition to just 72 runs in 13 overs. Their clinical bowling ensured a thumping 68-run victory and captured the attention of onlookers and fellow competitors alike.

## Martial Arts Events For Boys & Girls Begin In Srinagar

Younis Paray

**SRINAGAR:** An Inter Zonal District Level girls and boys category martial arts events, including Wushu, Judo, Kick-boxing and Karate competitions started at Indoor Hall Polo Ground in Srinagar on Saturday.

Organised by the Department of Youth Services & Sports, all groups of boys and girls actively participated in the events. These events were organised in the presence of District Officer Ghulam Hassan Lone, the in-charge activity also took the

lead in organizing the games.

Many students in the boys and girls category won medals at Indoor Hall and were appreciated in the presence of senior officials of the department. On this occasion, the Special Guest was Additional Deputy Commissioner Adil Fareed.

District Sports Officer Ghulam Hassan Lone gave detailed information to the special guest about the ongoing tournaments in the district. Speaking towards promoting sports, he said that the Youth Services Department is busy in providing sports to children.



## Zone Beerwah Hosts U-14 Athletic Meet At DIET Ground



Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** Inter-School Zonal Level competitions continue to energize the sporting spirit across Budgam. The Department of Youth Services and Sports, Zone Beerwah, organised an Athletic Meet for boys under the age group of 14 at the DIET Ground Beerwah.

The event was officially inaugurated by Mohd Yaseen Jan, Activity Incharge ZPEO Beerwah, in the presence of senior officials and field staff. The meet was conducted under the directions of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various institutions, promoting physical fitness, team spirit, and healthy competition among budding athletes.

## SMI Arwani Wins ZPEO Bijbehara ZL U-17 Cricket

**S**MI Arwani clinched the title of Zonal Level Inter school Cricket Tournament 2025 organised by ZPEO Bijbehara at Jablipora and BHSS Bijbehara venues. The SMI Arwani defeated HSS Arwani in the final match by 23 runs on Saturday at BMHSS Bijbehara Ground.

Earlier, District Activity Incharge Mohammad Abbas Dar interacted with the players on opening ceremony and later Principal BHSS Bijbehara, HSS Arwani and Principal SMI Arwani graced the final award ceremony as guests and handed over the trophies and medals to both teams and players.

Almost every High and Higher Secondary schools falling under Zone Bijbehara participated in the tournament, with around 600 students showcasing their cricketing skills. (Observer News Service)

## Asia Cup: India-Pakistan Matches Will Be In Dubai

**T**he two marquee India versus Pakistan games will be held in Dubai during the upcoming Asia Cup which is scheduled to start in the UAE from September 9, the ACC announced on Saturday. India and Pakistan will square off on September 14 in Dubai and one more time, potentially on September 21, at the same venue. The final on September 29 will also be held in Dubai.

The tournament will be held in T20I format keeping in mind the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka early next year. While the fixtures were announced on July 26, the ACC had not announce the venues. Out of 19 games in the tournament, 11 will be held in Dubai and eight in Abu Dhabi.

India will play two of their league games on September 10 (vs UAE) and September 14 (vs Pakistan) at Dubai while the final league game against Oman will be held at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on September 19. In Super Six games, only one game is scheduled in Abu Dhabi. (PTI)

## India Set 374-Run Target For England In 5th Test

**Y**ashasvi Jaiswal's 118 and half-centuries from Akash Deep (66), Ravindra Jadeja (53) and Washington Sundar (53) helped India set a stiff 374-run target against England, on the third day of the fifth Test here on Saturday.

Resuming at 75 for two, India were bolstered by a second ton of the series for Jaiswal who made 118 off 164 balls with 14 fours and two sixes, while Akash Deep smacked his maiden half-century to end with 66 off 94 balls with 12 fours. One of the most consistent performers of the series, Jadeja then propped up the score with another vital fifty as he made 53 off 77 balls with five fours. This was his fifth half century of the series apart from a hundred scored in previous Test. Towards the end, Sundar smacked four sixes and four fours to make a quickfire 53 off 46 balls, putting on 39 runs for the last wicket with Prasidh Krishna, to take India's lead beyond the 350-run mark. (PTI)

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