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2

Study Finds People In Poorer Nations Might Be Paying More For Same Essential Drugs, Compared To Rich Countries

Press Trust Of India

An analysis of prices of about 550 medicines across 72 countries in 2022 has found that people in low- and middle-income nations could be paying more compared to wealthier ones for the same essential drugs, thereby placing a disproportionate cost burden on patients in poorer nations. Researchers from the US' Brown University and London School of Economics and Political Science (UK) said that 'nominal price' or the price stated on a medicine was higher in richer countries. However, upon accounting for purchasing power in the local currency, actual prices were found to be higher in poorer countries. They estimated that the typical number of doses of essential medicines consumed per person in 2022 was highest in Europe (634)

and lowest in Southeast Asia (143). The results, published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Health Forum, indicate that poorer countries face a higher burden of medicine costs, the authors said. For example, they added, while prices in India were low in nominal terms (fourth lowest of the 72 markets analysed), the prices were toward the middle of the range after purchasing power was taken into account (29th of 72 markets). They also noted that while nominal prices were the lowest in Pakistan, actual prices were closer to those in Germany upon accounting for purchasing power. Drug prices were also found to vary between countries by disease that the drug is used for treating. For most countries, the highest-priced drugs tended to be those used for treating mental and behavioural disorders and car-



diovascular conditions, while the lowest-priced products were those to treat hepatitis B and C, the authors said. The team further looked at eight essential medicines, used for treating major causes of death and disability the world over, including the antibiotic 'amoxicillin' (used to treat community-acquired pneumonia), escita-

lopram (depression) and ibuprofen (pain). Affordability for the drugs was assessed based on number of days' minimum wages required for purchasing the drugs. People in India would need to work the most number of days at minimum wage -- about 10 days -- to pay for a monthly regimen of tenofovir disoproxil (used for treating Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS) out of pocket, the team said. Affordability was found to be typically highest in Europe and the Western Pacific, and lowest in Africa and southeast Asia. "Our results show that while drugs may have a lower nominal price in low- and middle-income countries, they may still be less affordable when considering the relative purchasing power of local currencies," the authors wrote. "This indicates that some poorer countries face a higher burden of medication costs," they added.

Planting Trees In Tropics May Provide Strongest Returns In Cooling Planet: Study

Press Trust Of India

Planting trees in the tropics, rather than in higher latitudes, could be more rewarding in terms of cooling the planet, according to a new study on regional effects of afforestation. Researchers, including those from the University of California Riverside, US, said that planting trees provides an overall positive effect for the world's climate by pulling out warming carbon from the atmosphere. However, local effects on temperature not related to carbon varied significantly by region. For instance, trees at higher latitudes could have a slight heating effect, while the opposite is true in the tropics, they said. "Our study found there is more cooling from planting trees in warm, wet regions, where they grow year-round. Tropical trees not only pull carbon dioxide from the air, they also cool while releasing water vapour," first author James Gomez, a graduate student at the University of California Riverside, said. Using global climate models, the team found that adding trees yield weak global mean cooling of 0.01 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 17.77 degrees Celsius), which translate to a significant cooling of about 0.1 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 17.72 degrees Celsius) in the tropics. Regions, such as those in central Africa, can experience a cooling of up to 0.8 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 17.33 degrees Celsius), the team said. "It's not that planting elsewhere doesn't help. It does, but the tropics offer the strongest returns per tree," Gomez said. In a previous research, the team had looked at chemical effects resulting from trees interacting with the atmosphere and found that planting trees could cool the surface of the planet more than expected. This study, published in the journal 'npj Climate and Atmospheric Sci-

ence', helps understand the physical effects of tree planting which include evapotranspiration -- or tree sweating -- similar to how humans sweat to cool their body, the authors said. Roots of a tree pull out water from soil, which then travels up through the trunk and into the leaves. Pores of the leaves open up so the tree can take in carbon dioxide for photosynthesis, and that is when part of the water

pulled up from the soil evaporates into the air, they explained. "It's just like the way sweating cools your body. In the tropics, there is constantly water available for trees, and that increases transpiration," Gomez said. The researchers said trees can also lower the amount of sunlight reaching the planet's surface. Trees give off water vapour and make



We find cooling is primarily from increased evapotranspiration and decreased downwelling solar radiation related to clouds and aerosols

the air more humid. More humidity can mean more clouds, and water vapour itself can soak up some sun, thereby reducing sunlight reaching the ground and providing a cooling effect, they said. The researchers also found that, in some cases, trees can have a fire suppression effect. "In tropical savannahs, and in other places around the world, trees are much more fire resistant than grasses," Gomez said. "We find cooling is primarily from increased evapotranspiration and decreased downwelling solar radiation related to clouds and aerosols," the authors wrote.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name of the electricity connection bearing Consumer ID number 0204040016262 from Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat to Hilal Ahmad Zargar S/o Mohammad Amin Zargar resident of Wasi Masjid Umer Colony, Lal Bazar Srinagar. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she should intimate the Assistant Executive Engineer Sub Division Hawal within the stipulated time of one week from the date of publication of the notice in this newspaper. After the expiry of the timeline no objection would be entertained by the concerned authorities.

With regards,

Hilal Ahmad Zargar
S/o Mohammad Amin Zargar
R/o Wasi Masjid Umer Colony,
Lal Bazar Srinagar
Mobile: 9419085558

mkz

PUBLIC NOTICE

My father's name has been wrongly written in my JK Police service records as Ab Subhan while his correct name is Abdul Subhan Malik. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Police Station within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Abdul waheed Malik
S/o Abdul Subhan Malik
R/O Panchal Masjidpora Pogalpristan Ramban

FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from Old name Mohammad Yaqoob Son Of . Mohammad Shaban Labroo To New Name Mohammad Yaqoob Labroo S/O Mohammad Shaban Labroo . In future I will be known as Mohammad Yaqoob Labroo S/O Mohammad Shaban Labroo . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the Passport Office Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Yaqoob Labroo
S/O Mohammad Shaban Labroo
R/o: Hilalabada Qamarwari, Srinagar Karanagar

FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public that I intend to change the name on my aadhaar card bearing no 393582916440 from MOHAMMAD LATEEF to MOHD LATIF SHEIKH S/O GH MOHD SHEIKH R/O LANILAB BUDGAM PIN CODE 191111. In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same which concerned Aadhaar Department within a period of 7 days from the date of publications of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER RAMBAN

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-1420100012210 issued in favour of HASSAN DIN MALIK Parentage ASDULLAH MALIK

Whereas an application has been recieved by one HASSAN DIN MALIK Parentage ASDULLAH MALIK wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as HASSAN DIN Which needs to be changed as HASSAN DIN MALIK.

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

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Ramban

mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in my passport bearing No N6930175 the Spouse name is entered as SHANI BHAT while her actual name is SHANI RASHID. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Regional Passport Officer Srinagar with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

SHOWKAT AHMAD BHAT
S/O NOOR MOHAMMAD BHAT
R/o SIR SYED ABAD WANBAL RAWALPORA
SRINAGAR PIN190005

mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) SHANI BHAT to (New name) SHANI RASHID . In future I will be known as (new Name) SHANI RASHID. If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

SHANI RASHID
W/O SHOWKAT AHMAD BHAT
R/O SIR SYED ABAD WANABAL RAWALPORA SRINAGAR.

mcb

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0420100010147 issued in favour of MOHAMMAD SHAFI KAWOSA Parentage MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL KAWOSA

Whereas an application has been recieved by one MOHAMMAD SHAFI KAWOSA Parentage MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL KAWOSA wherein he claimed that the Name and Address has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as MOHD SHAFI Parentage MOHD MAQBOOL Address New Airport Road Humhama Budgam Which needs to be changed as MOHAMMAD SHAFI KAWOSA Parentage MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL KAWOSA Address 38, Rehmat Abad New Airport Road Hyderpora Srinagar 190014

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

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

MCB

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0420240000482 issued in favour of SYED IRSHAD Parentage SYED HUSSAIN SHAH

Whereas an application has been recieved by one SYED IRSHAD Parentage SYED HUSSAIN SHAH wherein he claimed that the Fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as SYED HUSAIN SHAH Which needs to be changed as SYED HUSSAIN SHAH.

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

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

MCB

اثر نیات یومی زینگیر

عنوان :- درخواست منجانب منل نذیر گوہری ولد مرحوم نذیر احمد گوہری ساکن نزد الورہ میرا ادا جرائی ڈیپنڈنٹ فرٹیکٹیت بحق خود

اشہار ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بغرض ڈیپنڈنٹ فرٹیکٹیت پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن کا والد نذیر احمد گوہری مورخہ 01-04-2024 کو فوت ہوا ہے اور متوفی کے دارالثان جائزہ بیل ہے

مسماہ منفورہ بیگم بیوہ نذیر احمد گھریلو کام 42 سال بیوہ متوفی

منل نذیر احمد گوہری زیر تعلیم 19 سال پسر متوفی

میشتر نذیر پسر -- 14 سال --

نقوی نذیر دختر نذیر احمد -- 17 سال دختر متوفی

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی دیگر دارالثان موجود نہیں ہے اور اب ساکن اپنے حق میں ڈیپنڈنٹ فرٹیکٹیت تحت Labour Card حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے۔ فرٹیکٹیت زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذریا عارض ہو تو بعد مشہور اجناسا رسا دت کے کندرا دتہ ہے عذریا عارض عدالت حد کو دفتر ایذاقت کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد رز سے بیجا کوئی عذریا عارض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

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CITY

Exhibition On Quran, Karbala & Devotion Held At KU

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: The Tebyan Quranic Research Institute on Thursday organised an art exhibition titled "The Art of Devotion, Love & Ashura" at Gandhi Bhawan, University of Kashmir. The exhibition brought together more than a hundred paintings and calligraphic works created by both budding and senior artists, all revolving around themes of Quran, Karbala, spirituality, and devotion.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Registrar of Kashmir University, Prof. Naseer Iqbal, and drew hundreds of students, faculty members, children and art lovers who thronged the Gandhi Bhawan hall to witness the unique amalgamation of faith and artistic expression.

Senior Kashmiri artist Arshid Sauleh, who also had his works displayed in the exhibition, said the event provided an opportunity for young artists to attempt calligraphy and figurative art. "Two of my paintings were present in the exhibition. I do Quran with landscape, and I use Quranic verses in contemporary world

art. I don't do traditional calligraphy; this is calligraphy in form with a universal touch. It includes calligraphy as a form using different objects in a cosmic form," he explained.

He added that since the exhibition was themed on Imam Hussain (A.S.), he used verses of the Quran because Imam Hussain (A.S) is the practical manifestation of the Quran. "Quran and Ahlulbayt (A.S) are together and they cannot be separated," he said. Sauleh also stressed that budding artists need to learn more about materials, space division and technical aspects to refine their creative expressions.

Aga Syed Abid Hussaini of Tebyan Quranic Research Institute, highlighted the importance of connecting the message of Karbala with the teachings of the Quran.

"We had done one exhibition on the Quran earlier, but this one relates the Quran with Karbala which is important to understand. The kind of paintings which came forth are worth more than the lecture of many minutes. They carry very deep meaning and expression," he said.

Polluted Water Supply to 7 Lakh City Residents

Lawmakers Inspect Doodh Ganga Treatment Plant

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: A team of lawmakers Thursday morning visited the Doodh Ganga water treatment plant in Kralpora, a facility meant to supply drinking water to nearly seven lakh residents of Srinagar's uptown neighbourhoods.

What they found there has unsettled both politicians and citizens: a system struggling to provide clean water, weighed down by shortages, poor planning, and a river increasingly choked with waste.

The J&K Legislative House Committee on Environment, headed by veteran legislator M.Y. Tarigami had come with questions.

Alongside him were lawmakers Dr. Sajjad Shafi from Uri, Mushtaq Guroo from Chanapora, Irshad Rasool Kar from Sopore, Peerzada Feroz from Devsar, and local MLA Ali Mohammad Dar of Chadoora.

Waiting for them were engineers from the Jal Shakti Department, officials of the Pollution Control Committee, and a group of anxious residents who said they have been forced to drink murky, untreated water for weeks.

Tarigami told the officials that clean water is a fundamental right and that any lapse in treatment would carry consequences.

Citizens from Malik Bagh, Kralpora, Gopalpora, and adjoining localities stepped forward with

“**Assembly panel confronts engineers after residents report weeks of contaminated supply in Srinagar neighbourhoods.**”

their stories.

Among them, Dr. Rouf Malik proposed a public awareness drive that would enlist local imams to spread messages on water safety.

Another resident, Dr. Showkat Dar, who heads the Markazi Aulfaq Committee at Jamia Masjid Dharambug, alleged that entire neighborhoods have been receiving polluted water whenever alum, a chemical used to reduce turbidity, runs out of stock.

Lawmakers Guroo and Dar pressed officials about repeated shortages of alum this summer. Without it, the water flowing from taps in Baghat, Rambagh, Natipora, Chanapora, Hyderpora, Rawalpura, and Humhama often carries

visible impurities.

Activist Raja Muzaffar Bhat, who has fought a long legal battle on Doodh Ganga pollution before the National Green Tribunal (NGT), said the problem runs deeper than chemicals.

"For months, there has been no alum supply. The government failed to procure it in time, and people suffered," he said. "Untreated sewage is being discharged into Doodh Ganga every day. This river is feeding homes, yet it is also carrying waste."

In 2021, the government approved a 140 crore project to install sewage treatment plants along Doodh Ganga on the NGT's orders. Of this, 67 crore has already been released to the Urban Environmental Engineering Department. Still, work has stalled. "I have all the documents," Bhat told the committee, offering to share them so the Assembly can hold officials accountable.

The record of penalties paints a troubling picture. The NGT has already fined the Chadoora Municipal Committee, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, and Budgam's District Mineral Office with penalties of 1 crore each for failing to check untreated sewage and waste dumping into the river.

In 2023 alone, the Chadoora body was slapped with another 1.5 crore in environmental compensation in the case Raja Muzaffar Bhat vs. Government of J&K.

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- Mughal Road - (Open)
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	ASR	5: 17
	Magrib	7:16
	ISHA	8: 41

This Day In History

- 1942 - Brazil declares war on Germany, Japan & Italy
- 1943 - Soviet troops free Karkov
- 1944 - Adolf Hitler orders Paris to be destroyed
- 1953 - Shah of Iran returns to Tehran
- 1956 - US President Eisenhower and VP Richard Nixon renominated by Republican convention in San Francisco.
- 1958 - Great Britain performs atmospheric nuclear test at Christmas Island.
- 1962 - Failed assassination attempt on French president Charles de Gaulle
- 1962 - USSR performs nuclear test at Novaya Zemlya USSR
- 1963 - NASA civilian test pilot Joe Walker in the X-15 rocket plane achieves a world record altitude of 354,200 feet (107,960 m, 67 miles)
- 1964 - Guinea, Liberia & Ivory Coast form joint market
- 1968 - The Society of Labour Lawyers (SLL) publishes an 'interim report' about alleged discrimination in Northern Ireland; the report is heavily criticised by unionists.
- 1971 - Approximately 130 non-Unionist councillors announce their withdrawal from participation on district councils across Northern Ireland in protest against Internment (allowing suspected terrorists to be indefinitely detained without trial)
- 1972 - Rhodesia is expelled by the International Olympic Committee for its racist policies.
- 1982 - Israeli General Ariel Sharon urges Palestinians to discuss peaceful coexistence
- 1984 - The United Democratic Front, an internal coalition of anti-apartheid groups in South Africa, organizes a highly successful boycotts of the Colored and Indian elections to parliament.
- 1985 - Airtours Boeing-737 crashes at Manchester airport, 55 killed
- 1986 - Gas from Volcano Chamberoen kills 1,734 (Cameroon)

From KO Archives

Gunmen loot Budgam village

Mushtaq Aftab

CHADURA (BUDGAM)- Police are on the lookout for some unidentified gunmen who 'raided' several houses in a village here to extort money. They decamped with the booty ranging between Rs five and Rs 2,000. In another case, where a shopkeeper was relieved of Rs 8,800, an FIR No 2472 was lodged with the police on Friday.

According to reports, unidentified 'gunmen swooped on Chil Yech village in this district at about 8 p.m. on Sunday. They forced their entry into several residential houses asking the inmates not to leave their premises. Then they went on relieving them of whatever they had in cash on gunpoint. Reports identified the victims as Muhammad. Yousuf Wani, Muhammad Shafi, Abdur Rahman Dar, Jahangir Alam, Jalal-ud-din Paul, Fayaz Ahmad Sofi, Nazir Ahmad Paray, Ghulam Rasool Guiri, Amma Paray and Abdul Rasheed Gujri. The gunmen managed their escape under the cover of darkness. Villagers lodged a complaint with the police who launched a manhunt to nab the gunmen.

Earlier, on Friday, some unidentified gunmen waylaid Abdul Ahad Sheikh, of Danchera, when he was on his way back home from Utligam in Beerwah area. They relieved him of Rs 8,800. An FIR was lodged with police at Beerwah on the same day. However, no arrest has been made so far. Unidentified gunmen also snatched Rs 400 from a shopkeeper of Utligam on the same day.

(Kashmir Observer, August 22, 2000)

Awareness Prog On Anti-Human Trafficking Held



Observer News Service

Srinagar: To strengthen the existing framework and address the pitfalls of Human Trafficking in the digital era, Crime Branch Headquarters J&K in collaboration with MHA, GOI conducted a UT level conference on Anti Human Trafficking at Tagore Hall, Srinagar. The aim of the conference was to make students in particular and the public in general aware about the danger of Human trafficking and its social impact.

S.J.M Gillani- IPS Special DG Coordination PHQ J&K was the Chief Guest who in his address impressed upon the participants/ stakeholders to come together to curb the menace of Human Trafficking. He said that human trafficking is a serious threat not only to individual victims but

also to the security, dignity, and social fabric of the nation, and addressing it requires a shift in focus from traditional notions to human security. He emphasized that protecting vulnerable persons and communities from exploitation is essential for the nation and called for collective action against the root causes of trafficking.

Alok Kumar, ADG, Director Fire & Emergency Services, J&K, in his address, highlighted the importance of awareness in combating this heinous organised crime. He stressed on the need for community involvement and emphasised the use of social media platforms to spread awareness on a large scale. He also emphasized the significance of exemplary investigations to ensure that the guilty are brought to justice.

Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan Cultural Unit DIPR Organizes Awareness Prog

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As part of the ongoing 'Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan,' Cultural Unit Srinagar, Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) organized multiple impactful awareness programmes on Thursday in collaboration with various government and private schools of Srinagar including Linton Hall Rajbagh, Bonvivant School

Eidgah, GBHS Dara Harwan, GBHS New Theed Harwan and GBSS Rangteng Nawakadal Srinagar.

The highlight of the programmes were short plays presented by local Artist groups carrying a strong social message against drug abuse, which received wide appreciation from students, teachers, and participants for its powerful delivery.

The events also featured a pledge ceremony and an inspiring speech by the Cultural Officer Sri-

nagar, urging the youth to lead disciplined, healthy lives and to stand united against the menace of drugs.

Principals and Heads of the institutions lauded the efforts of the Cultural Unit Srinagar and praised the keen commitment of Burhan Hussain, Cultural officer at JDI-K in steering the campaign with dedication, ensuring that awareness reaches every section of society and strengthening the collective resolve to make Srinagar a drug-free city.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Notice Inviting Tender
Sr.DEE/TR/JAT acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the works as under: Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date **12.09.2025 at 15.00 Hrs.** only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall not be considered.
Tender No. : 754-TRD-JAT-2025-26
Name of work : Provision of additional fitting arrangement for Cantilever assemblies at Curve locations in Tunnel between Jammu Tawi (JAT) - Katra (SVDK) section in Phase-II over Jammu division
App. Cost (Rs.) : 2,22,27,534.31
Cost of Tender form (Rs.) : NIL
Date & time for submission of tender : Up to 12.09.2025, 15:00 Hrs.
Earnest Money # (Rs.) : 2,61,100/-
Completion Period : Eight (08) Months
Opening of tender : 12.09.2025 after 15:00 Hrs.
Website Particulars : www.ireps.gov.in
Note: # Tenderer(s) may please note that offers received without Bid Security either in cash through e-payment gateway or as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents (as per Annexure-21) valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period, will be considered as incomplete & invalid offer and for which contractor shall have no claim on Railway.
No. : 754-TRD-JAT-2025-26 **Dated: 20.08.2025** **2545/2025**
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KURPAL FAMILY
BEREAVED
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the demise of our mother, **Mrs. Mohammad Abdullah Kurpal** R/o H.No. 33, Lane No. 4, Shaheen Colony Wanabal, Rawalpura, Srinagar who departed on **19th August 2025 (Tuesday)**. May Almighty Allah grant Jannat-Ul-Firdous to the departed soul. The Congregational Fateha Khawani prayer will be held on **22nd August, 2025 (Friday)** at our ancestral graveyard Tujgari Mohalla, Mallakha, Nowhatta, Srinagar at **02.40 PM**. Following this, a condolence gathering will be held at our residence H.No. 33, Lane No. 4, Shaheen Colony Wanabal, Rawalpura, Srinagar. **Note: Ladies are requested not to bring anykind of eatables with them.**
BEREAVED FAMILY
LATIEF AHMAD KURPAL (SON)
ZAHOR AHMAD KURPAL (SON)
MOHAMMAD AMIN SHAH (SON IN LAW)
MUZAFFAR AHMED MIRZA (SON IN LAW)
9697965746, 6006496428

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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KO VIEW

Name And Shame

The rotten meat scandal has shaken public confidence in Kashmir’s entire food supply chain, sent shockwaves through its hospitality industry, and left honest businesses reeling. Restaurants report an 80 percent crash in footfall, home delivery services have seen orders dry up, and thousands of jobs are now at risk. In a Valley where in recent years, eating out had become part of urban culture and tourism depended on its cuisine, this is nothing short of an economic and social crisis.

The welcome part is that the scandal has been exposed. The food safety authorities have finally been forced to confront the rot, literally and figuratively, in how meat is procured and sold. But exposure alone is not enough. If the guilty remain faceless and unnamed, suspicion falls on everyone. When the public does not know who the culprits are, every butcher, poultry dealer, restaurant, and home delivery service gets painted with the same brush. That is unfair to honest traders who play by the rules and are now paying the price for the greed of a few.

This is why the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry is absolutely right to demand public naming and shaming of those involved. Transparency is not just about punishing wrongdoing, it is about protecting the innocent. So, public needs to know the names of culprits, supply chains, and methods used will reassure consumers that action is being taken against the guilty, not against the entire food industry.

The government must move beyond promises. Fast-track investigations, suspend uncertified imports of frozen chicken and meat, and ensure every stage of the food chain is traceable. An “Eat Safe Kashmir” certification programme, QR-coded hygiene records, and modern slaughterhouses under veterinary supervision are excellent steps, but only if implemented quickly and rigorously.

Accountability must go hand in hand with reform. Those who have fed the public rotten meat must face prosecution and public disgrace. Their names must be published, not hidden in files or buried under vague official statements. At the same time, honest businesses deserve public recognition so that consumer confidence can return.

Kashmir’s food and hospitality industry is too important to be left to decay. Cleaning up the system will take political will, strict enforcement, and the courage to call out the guilty by name. In doing so, the Valley can protect its vibrant eating-out culture, safeguard jobs, and ensure that what lands on our plates is food.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Debt or Discipline

Early habits of saving and investing can spare a generation from debt and give them freedom to dream bigger.

Irshad Mushtaq

The shift from student life to adulthood comes fast in the valley. One day it is pizzas, new phones, and late-night drives. The next, it is school fees, rent, and rising bills. For many, the transition is rough because money was never treated with foresight.

The thrill of spending feels harmless in youth, yet it plants habits that grow expensive. A car on loan, credit card debt, and pressure to keep up appearances create chains that tighten by the 40s. Families then struggle to juggle mortgages, children’s education, and daily costs. By the 50s, the burden grows heavier, just as retirement nears.

There is another path. If young Kashmiris save and invest even a quarter of their earnings, they build a cushion. Compound growth turns small amounts into real wealth over time. Starting early makes all the difference.

The lesson is old but urgent: cut your coat according to your cloth. Saving is not about denying life’s pleasures, it is about securing tomorrow’s freedom. Every rupee set aside buys choice and stability later.

For Kashmiri youth, financial wisdom is the key to living without debt, raising families without fear, and building a future strong enough to weather uncertainty.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



Why Kashmir’s Grand Projects Keep Vanishing

From Sawalkote to Chenani-Nashri, a wave of cancelled tenders has stalled J&K’s infrastructure and left citizens disheartened while investors lose faith.

Peerzada Mohsin Shafi

Development in Kashmir usually starts with big promises. A new tunnel through the Pir Panjal, a road to boost tourism, or a hydropower project to fix winter blackouts is announced with excitement.

Tenders are issued, companies line up, and people begin to hope. Then, without warning, the projects disappear.

This cycle has hardened into a troubling pattern.

In recent months, the Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project, a massive 1,856 megawatt venture on the Chenab that could have transformed the region’s energy security, was abruptly withdrawn just weeks after its tender was announced.

The cancellation sent a clear signal: even flagship projects are not immune to disappearing before they take shape.

The Sawalkote project was meant to be a turning point.

Jammu and Kashmir, despite its immense hydropower potential of more than 20,000 MW, continues to face winter power cuts that leave homes cold and businesses stalled. A project of this scale would have created jobs, generated much-needed electricity, and attracted investors.

Instead, its abrupt cancellation reinforced a sense of drift in the region’s development agenda.

Sawalkote is not alone. The Singpora-Vailloo Tunnel, long awaited to connect Kashmir with the Chenab valley, saw its tender scrapped.

The Sudhmahadev and Dranga tunnels, designed to ease traffic and reduce accidents, were cancelled too. Even tourism-linked

projects, such as the Khanabal-Pahalgam road upgrade, fell into the same trap.

The expansion of the Chenani-Nashri tunnel, critical for smoother movement on the Jammu-Srinagar highway, was called off without a clear reason.

Each of these cancellations leaves more than paperwork behind.

For ordinary people, a tunnel means safer travel on mountain roads where accidents claim lives each year. A road upgrade is easier access to schools, markets, and hospitals. A hydropower project is warmth in winter when outages

The Sawalkote cancellation is particularly symbolic. This project promised stability in a region where demand for electricity outpaces supply every winter. In a territory where young people queue up for scarce government jobs, it offered direct and indirect employment. Its disappearance deepens the sense of missed opportunities.

stretch for hours.

Each time a project is announced and then scrapped, trust in the government’s promises erodes further.

The economic cost is equally serious. Preparing a bid for a large infrastructure project requires months of work. Engineers are hired, feasibility studies are carried out, and financing is arranged.

When tenders are cancelled without explanation, contractors bear heavy losses. Investors, both national and international, are left wary of entering a market where rules seem uncertain.

Over time, the cycle creates

a chilling effect: fewer firms compete, less capital flows in, and the promise of development remains suspended.

Legal norms add another layer of concern. International procurement standards like those under FIDIC stress fairness and transparency. Abrupt cancellations with no justification undermine these principles.

Indian contract law gives the government space to cancel tenders, but doing so without valid reasons opens room for claims of damages. Each unexplained withdrawal chips away at institutional credibility,

particularly symbolic.

This project promised stability in a region where demand for electricity outpaces supply every winter. It offered direct and indirect employment in a place where young people queue up for scarce government jobs. Its disappearance deepens the sense of missed opportunities.

Kashmiris have learned to live with delays. Every tunnel and road here takes longer than planned. What is harder to accept is the disappearance of projects before they even begin.

The tendering process was meant to signal seriousness, a formal step toward delivery. Its repeated reversal has reduced the process itself into a ritual of disappointment.

If the government intends to change this trajectory, it must restore faith in its procurement system.

That means transparent communication about cancellations, clear timelines for re-tendering, and accountability for delays.

Investors will return only when they see predictability. Citizens will regain trust only when they see projects move from announcements to construction sites.

Kashmir does not lack ambition. What it lacks is execution. Each cancelled tender is a setback for people who measure development in roads driven, tunnels crossed, and electricity hours gained.

Until this pattern breaks, the promise of growth will remain just that: a promise.

The author is an infrastructure columnist from Anantnag, Kashmir. He writes on development, energy, and regional planning in Jammu and Kashmir.

Letter to Editor

Kashmir Is Running Out of Water

The story of water is turning into a story of loss in Kashmir. The Jhelum, once called the valley’s lifeline, is shrinking. Dal and Wular are gasping under silt, pollution, and declining inflows. Snow in the Himalayas, once so abundant that it fed streams deep into summer, now falls less and melts faster. The valley is drying in plain sight.

This past winter told the telling tale. Meadows in Gulmarg and Pahalgam, once buried under snow, stood exposed. Springs that generations relied on for drinking water are running low. Farmers across South Kashmir speak of cracked fields where rain-fed crops no longer thrive. The promise of steady snow-melt and gentle rains, nature’s old rhythm, has broken.

The changes are neither abstract nor far-off. Climate change has

turned Kashmir into a case study of fragility. Glaciers retreat year after year. Annual rainfall has fallen, while unpredictable cloudbursts bring sudden floods that devastate villages and cities alike.

The agriculture sector, which supports the majority of rural households, is most exposed. Food production has already dipped, threatening both livelihoods and nutrition.

Water is not just about crops. It underpins health, power, and survival. Shrinking rivers cut hydropower output. Stagnant pools, born from erratic rains, are breeding grounds for malaria and dengue. Cholera and diarrheal diseases rise when clean water turns scarce. Higher temperatures worsen respiratory illnesses.

Climate change is no longer about the environment in the valley. It is reshaping the way people live and die.

The causes are layered. Global warming drives the big shifts: melting glaciers, rising temperatures, and erratic rains. Local choices worsen them. Unplanned urban sprawl has choked wetlands. Encroachments strangle riverbanks. Reckless extraction of groundwater drains aquifers faster than they can refill. Deforestation cuts into natural recharge zones. The result is a valley where natural buffers are gone and resilience is wearing thin.

Solutions are known, yet rarely pursued with urgency. Rainwater harvesting could ease pressure on rivers. Smarter irrigation, especially in apple orchards and paddy fields, would save millions of liters. Wastewater reuse in towns and cities could offset demand. Wetland restoration and reforestation would allow the land to store and filter water again. Stronger policies, from regulating

urban growth to protecting recharge zones, are essential.

What Kashmir needs as much as policy is participation. Awareness must spread beyond conferences and reports. Public campaigns, schools, mosques, and media can teach the value of every drop. Communities must see themselves as custodians, not consumers, of their water.

The crisis is already here. If Kashmir loses its waters, it loses its agriculture, health, energy, and way of life.

The valley’s future depends on whether its people and leaders can treat water as the treasure it has always been, before it disappears.

Sincerely

Mohammad Hanief
m.hanief@gmail.com

Cop Turned Coach

Once a maverick officer known across Kashmir for his ‘poet policing’ and controversial actions, Basant Rath now steps into classrooms, offering free coaching to civil service aspirants from J&K, Ladakh, and the Northeast.

Faizaan Bashir

Life has come full circle for the man students call Book Baba.

Once a top cop patrolling Srinagar's crowded streets, remembered for his fines, confrontations, and sudden intensity, he is now preparing to face a classroom.

Next month in Noida, Rath will welcome his first batch of students to Rank 62 Academy, a coaching institute for IAS and IPS aspirants.

The academy's name carries his own mark of achievement: Rank 62 in the 2000 UPSC Civil Services Examination.

The former IPS officer of the J&K cadre has promised that aspirants from Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and the northeastern states will attend without paying a fee. Others will be charged Rs. 2.4 lakh for an eight-month program. Applicants must clear a walk-in interview and an essay test to be admitted.

For Rath, the initiative is rooted in his early police years in Poonch, where he trained under IGP P. L. Gupta. “My mentor inspired me to

treat people as people, not numbers in files,” he recalled. “From my training days, I knew I must do something for students of J&K and Ladakh.”

The move is not his first outreach to students. During his tenure in Kashmir, Rath often gifted books and gadgets to underprivileged aspirants. His approach was blunt. To qualify, candidates had to write clear, well-reasoned emails. Sentimental appeals never worked. He wanted to instill a culture of merit and rigour among young Kashmiris who dreamed of competing in India's most grueling exam.

That bluntness defined his policing career as well.

In 2018, when Rath was posted as IGP traffic in J&K, the streets of Srinagar witnessed a rare order. The rules applied equally to a businessman's son, a politician's aide, or an ordinary driver.

Traffic violators were fined, vehicles impounded, and excuses brushed aside. At intersections like Lalchowk and Qamarwari, his presence carried the force of authority. He became a household name,



admired by some, resented by others.

The very traits that won him attention on the streets brought him into conflict with the system. He confronted colleagues, took on seniors, and accused powerful figures of corruption.

His confrontations spilled on the road, in offices, and on social media. He slapped a motorist in broad daylight, sparred with Srinagar's mayor on Twitter, and mocked his superiors with the same directness he used against drivers.

The state responded with suspensions, transfers to low-profile posts, and eventually, in August 2023, premature retirement.

The Ministry of Home Affairs declared him “not fit to be retained in service in public interest.” Rath contested the decision, accusing the former J&K police chief of corruption, though he offered no evidence.

For his critics, his downfall was the inevitable result of indiscipline. For his supporters, it was punishment for honesty in a system intolerant to dissent.

Even after his exit from uniform, Rath retained an unusual public presence. His social media posts veered from sharp commentary on governance to videos of himself singing and dancing to ghazals. He spoke of cricket as often as he spoke of public

welfare.

Eccentric to some, charismatic to others, he remained a figure who refused to blend into static silence.

His new classroom project signals an attempt to redirect that energy into something enduring.

Rank 62 Academy is both an institution and a personal statement. He insists that if a student gives him “5,000 hours and four serious attempts,” he will secure them a rank higher than his own.

If not, he has pledged to return their fees with 6 percent compound interest.

With few opportunities in Kashmir, Rath's academy is giving students, who can't afford or travel to elite coaching

centers in Delhi or Hyderabad, a chance to get free guidance.

According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), Jammu and Kashmir's unemployment rate hovers between 15 and 20 percent, nearly double the national average.

Every year, thousands of

pline is not a class privilege,” he once told a motorist.

The same conviction now guides his classroom. For him, the academy is about creating order in futures.

But his story remains complicated. Admirers remember a cop who refused to bend before power and enforced rules without bias. Critics recall an officer who disregarded norms and provoked unnecessary clashes.

In between lies the figure of a man who struggled against a system he could neither change nor accept.

In Noida, as he prepares lesson plans and schedules, Rath seems to have found a second life in education. For students from Kashmir and the Northeast, the man once seen pacing Srinagar's traffic crossings will soon be pacing before whiteboards and exam mock papers.

Whether Rath's new path will bring a different kind of order remains to be seen. What is certain is that he has chosen to trade the whistle for chalk, the road for a classroom, and the fight for systemic reform for the slow discipline of teaching.

For a man shaped by both confrontation and conviction, the gamble lies in whether his students will carry forward the change he could not complete in uniform.

—Hailing from Srinagar, the author holds a master's degree in History.

His story remains complicated. Admirers remember a cop who refused to bend before power and who enforced rules without bias. Critics recall an officer who disregarded norms and provoked unnecessary clashes

When Delhi Met Kashmir Over Lunch

Two Kashmiri friends on a birthday outing cross paths with a group of women travellers, discovering how small talk can bloom into big reflections.

Aisha Hasnain

The rain had settled over the city that morning, the kind that makes you want to stay indoors and watch the day go by. It was my friend's birthday, and she kept wavering over my invitation to lunch at her favourite new place. I thought she might not come at all.

Then, just as the clouds thickened, she arrived at my door. She borrowed one of my dresses, I called for a cab, and off we went: two friends.

This small restaurant is barely two months old, located at a stunningly beautiful place. I assume the owners must have needed a special permission from the government to get this restaurant built at that particular location. Construction at such a site where nature offers itself with grace will simply be a felony. But one small place does not hurt, which feels like needed for a fresh breath after a tiring weekend.

As I got down the cab, I could see a woman with a pixie haircut, most probably in her 40s, looking at me through the big window pane from inside the restaurant. My friend and I entered and I let her decide the table for us. We sat on a table right in front of the big couch on the ground floor where a group of four non-Kashmiri friends along with an elderly woman were having a good time.

This particular woman in her 40s was also a part of the same group. As I was making myself comfortable in my chair, I could feel her still looking behind her chair at me, observing something. I looked up, met her gaze, smiled and whispered a hello. She returned the greeting as warmly.

Suddenly my friend called me, “Hey, she's asking about your handbag.” I looked in front of myself where my friend was hinting towards. Another lady from the same group, almost in her 50s, was pointing towards my friend, “The shirt! It is a very beautiful shirt. Where did you get it from? I like it!” My friend pointed towards me, gesturing that it belonged to me.

“Oh, that's my shirt and she borrowed it in a hurry. It's her birthday,” I said jovially as jovial

this bevy of ladies was. In my 50s, I wish to be with my girlfriends in the same togetherness having a warm meal. Hopefully, the AI will not have taken over everything and we will not be surviving merely on universal basic income.

“Oh, wow, it's her birthday,” said another lady, and they sang for my friend. We had a little chit-chat while I sat by the side of the lady asking about my dress. I showed it to her on the internet for reference.

“What do you do?” She asked me.

“I . . . I do nothing,” I replied, cool as a cucumber.

“She does nothing!” The lady repeated after me to her friends.



They were so happy with my response that it felt as if it was the best thing they had heard that day. They looked like some nice hard-working and dedicated ladies who needed a break from everything.

“So how does it feel here?” I enquired.

“We are enjoying the warmth and the hospitality of the people here,” she said warmly. “I'm happy to hear that. May I ask where you are from?” I asked. “We are from Delhi,” she replied.

“So, Aisha, how old are you?” The lady in the red dress asked.

“I'm 27.”

“So are you getting married?”

“Hopefully,” I shrugged.

“It will be among your own kin, right? Like that's how you

get married.”

This belief came across as strange to me.

“No, not necessarily. As for me, I am not going to marry anyone in my family or among the friends.”

“Will a marriage of your choice be entertained?” She investigated further.

“Of course! I'll have a say. I'm a free soul. What I say will matter in my family!”

If only she knew that I was going to discuss with my Baba the confusions she had. And why do I have this liberty to choose? Because Baba is a protective but open-minded father who knows well that I will not force them to get me married to a guy they will not deem fit for me and simulta-

neously, I will not allow anyone to force or manipulate me into marrying a guy I do not want to. It is simple and fair as that.

“Do you know where I can find the best Kashmiri tilla-work shoes here?” The shirt lady asked for my assistance.

I do not know of any such shoe-making business in the valley but I told her that I would try to get it confirmed and revert. I let them be and went back to join my friend.

I called a journalist friend for help. “You alive?” was the first thing he asked. Another friend asked the same thing early morning over a phone call a few days ago. I feel mortified to tell them that sometimes I can disappear like that. The journalist

friend could not help. Hence, I called my mother's friend who is acquainted with such things. We enjoyed the food but the hummus I told my friend that I guess I make better. That is because of a friend's secret recipe. I had a little chit-chat with the manager as well who came to our table. I asked him how the recent food crisis has affected the business. “Not much. We get the meat fresh every day from the local market. We do not buy any frozen stuff from outside the valley,” he said. He himself is from Lucknow.

As these ladies left, I informed the one who had inquired about the shoes, “The craftsmen used to make these handmade shoes in Basant Bagh, Gowkadal. My friend is not sure if they still make those shoes but that's where you can look.”

She hugged me before she left, followed by another lady who said, “Just throw your anxiety issues into the river,” while she looked at River Jhelum behind us. “I want to do that,” I reassured her.

When I got to say goodbye to the lady with the pixie haircut, I asked her if I could know what she did for a job.

“I work with clothing and textiles industries, with board of directors of luxury brands,” she told me.

Then I understood that maybe it was the professional in her examining my formal cum informal attire of cotton chikankari frock, formal trousers over a formal pair of shoes and livid printed georgette scarf, and a handbag that matched my trousers.

What the lady thought about the marriage system in Kashmir was interesting. She was right only up-to a certain extent. My prince charming or non-charming won't come via force and conflict, or necessarily acquaintanceship. Who knows, he could as well have been planning to come to the same restaurant that afternoon, but could not make it because he was getting late for his flight to Delhi.

—The author writes under the pen name Aisha Hasnain and can be reached at aishahasnaino2@gmail.com.

Tears Behind Screens

The law exists, yet enforcement falters. Protecting young lives online must become a collective priority.

Javid Ahmad Zargar

Cyberbullying has become one of the most insidious threats facing children in Kashmir. It slips into homes through glowing screens, disguised as entertainment or education.

What begins as a forwarded meme or a playful taunt can snowball into humiliation that feels permanent.

The classroom no longer sets the limits of cruelty. Phones now extend it into bedrooms, where children should feel most safe.

Digital life has expanded rapidly in the valley. Students depend on smartphones to attend online classes. Teenagers sustain friendships on WhatsApp and Instagram. Parents rely on social media for news and to stay in touch with relatives abroad.

Yet the very tools that hold families together are also eroding the well-being of the young.

The methods of bullying are varied, but the pain is constant.

Rumours spread at the speed of a click. Children impersonate peers to circulate falsehoods. Private images or



nights, secretive behaviour, and sudden anger have become familiar patterns.

Some children abandon studies, others lash out in delinquency or substance use. In the most tragic cases, cyberbullying has been linked to suicidal thoughts.

Kashmir's cultural fabric is built on trust, dignity, and respect. Cyberbullying erodes these values silently, leaving scars that may never heal.

videos, often filmed in corridors or homes, are shared without consent. Passwords are stolen, online profiles hijacked.

Even gaming platforms, where children should simply play, become arenas of ridicule and threats.

The psychological toll is evident.

A survey by the Cyber Peace Foundation in 2023 found that over 37 percent of Indian teenagers reported experiencing cyberbullying.

Counselors in Kashmir note a troubling rise in anxiety, depression, and withdrawal among students. Sleepless

India's Information Technology Act, 2000, criminalizes online harassment, defamation, and identity theft. Yet in Kashmir, enforcement is fraught with obstacles.

Many families hesitate to report, fearing stigma. Schools rarely have clear policies for handling such complaints. The gap between law and lived reality leaves children exposed.

Solutions are within reach, if pursued with urgency.

Parents must engage directly, teaching digital caution and setting boundaries on device use. Schools should embed cyber safety in curri-

cula, offer secure reporting systems, and provide counseling support.

Community-driven awareness campaigns can destigmatize speaking out. Law enforcement agencies, for their part, need better training to handle cybercrime sensitively and swiftly.

Kashmir's cultural fabric is built on trust, dignity, and respect. Cyberbullying erodes these values silently, leaving scars that may never heal.

Every forwarded message that shames, and every hacked profile that mocks, chips away at the foundations of a society that prides itself on honour.

Addressing this crisis requires collective resolve, from homes to schools, and from the street to the courtroom.

Our children deserve screens that connect, not screens that wound.

Protecting them online is the test of whether we can safeguard their dignity in a world where cruelty travels faster than compassion.

—The author holds an LLB in Cyber Law and works as a Senior Manager at J&K Bank.

Govt In RS: Terror Perpetrators Not Same As Victims

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- The Indian government has made it clear that Pakistan, the perpetrator of terrorism, “cannot be equated” with India, the victim of cross-border terrorism, the Centre told Parliament on Thursday. Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said this in a written response to queries in the Rajya Sabha. The Ministry of External Affairs was asked how the government has countered claims of “India-Pakistan hyphenation

in global diplomacy” and the diplomatic measures taken by the government to address “China’s growing influence over Pakistan” in terms of intelligence and military cooperation. “The government of India has made it clear that the perpetrator of terrorism, i.e., Pakistan, cannot be equated with the victim of cross-border terrorism, i.e., India. This unequivocal message was consistently reiterated during interactions with interlocutors in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor,” Singh said.



The seven all-party delegations, which visited various global capitals in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, also “emphatically conveyed” the above message while demonstrating India’s strong national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, the MoS said. “The issue of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism, was taken up with the Chinese Foreign Minister during his recent visit to India,” he

added. The MEA was also asked how the government plans to strengthen India’s foreign policy narrative in 2025-2026. “The global community widely acknowledges India’s robust democracy, economic progress, military might, technological prowess, civilisational heritage, and its contribution in addressing global issues,” Singh said. The government’s engagement with various stakeholders, including think-tanks and academic and research institutions,

serves to highlight India’s foreign policy achievements and priorities, he said. “Government undertakes a series of targeted public diplomacy initiatives to carry forward India’s message to the world and continues to make all endeavours to further strengthen India’s voice in global affairs. “It also constantly monitors all developments having a bearing on India’s security and national interest and takes all required steps in this regard,” Singh said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

RS Adopts Motion

issue of bills being sent to the Joint Committee, but the Chair did not allow saying he can speak on the new bill seeking to ban online gaming, which was being taken up by the House at the time. The Opposition MPs also sought to raise the SIR issue, but were disallowed by the Chair. “That this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that this House do join in the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill further to amend the Constitution of India; the Bill further to amend the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 and the Bill further to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 and resolves that ten Members of this House be nominated by the Deputy Chairman to serve on the said Joint Committee,” the motion read out by Shah said. Shah had introduced the three bills in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, which was adopted with a voice vote. The Lower House had adopted the resolution to refer the bills to a Joint Committee of Parliament comprising 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha. The committee has been mandated to submit its report to the House in the Winter Session, which is likely to be convened in third week of November. Shah introduced in Lok Sabha the three bills, drawing fierce protests from Opposition MPs who tore up copies of the draft law and marched close to his seat shouting slogans. In a charged atmosphere in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, several Opposition MPs spoke against the introduction of the bills, claiming they violated constitutional principles, targeted federalism, turned the jurisprudence ‘innocent until proven guilty’ on its head, were open to misuse for political reasons and threatened to turn the country into a police state.

Online Gaming

for money laundering and supporting terror activities against India. Vaishnav also said that the government will act against “big people” trying to influence through media and social media. Earlier in the day, he emphasised the government’s efforts over the past 3 years when they were “deeply engaged” with the gaming industry. Speaking to ANI, Vaishnav explained that the Bill’s objective is to “promote and encourage the good parts” of online gaming, focusing on making India a hub of game development through institutions such as the Indian Institute of Creative Technologies (IICT). The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The Bill aims to promote esports and online gaming, while outlawing online money gaming.

The Bill prohibits harmful online money gaming services, ads, and financial transactions related to them. It also aims to completely ban offering, operating or facilitating online money games, irrespective of whether based on skill, chance or both. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the NDA meeting that the Monsoon session was productive as several important bills were passed. Singling out the Online Gaming Bill, Modi called it a reform with “far-reaching impact” that would directly impact the public. He also criticised the Opposition for staying away from debates on major legislation. “They only remained engaged in creating disruptions,” Modi said, as per sources.

Kashmir’s First

Renzu, who co-wrote the script with Niranjan Iyengar and Sunayana Kachroo, calls the story “a heartfelt tribute to a woman who dared to dream when dreaming itself was an unspoken taboo.” For Prime Video, the release represents more than just entertainment. “Songs of Paradise offers a fresh and emotional perspective rooted in Kashmir’s rich musical legacy,” said Manish Menghani, director and head of content licensing for Prime Video India. “It brings to life a lesser-known true story of resilience and independence, anchored by an extraordinary legacy and powerful performances.” Excel Entertainment’s Ritesh Sidhwani emphasised the timeless nature of the story. “It is layered with emotion, heritage, and hope,” he said. “Noor Begum’s voice made her the pride of the region, and this film carries her spirit to audiences across the globe.” The film is as much about place as it is about person. Radio Kashmir, where Raj Begum first performed publicly, was a stage for defiance and identity. Every note she sang resonated in the village, inspiring generations of women to find their own voices. In adapting her life for cinema, Renzu and his team bring that resonance to screens worldwide, translating local history into universal emotion. Prime Video has positioned itself as a global platform for such stories, combining Indian and international content across genres and languages. With originals ranging from Paatal Lok and Mirzapur to films like Shershaah and Soorai Potru, the service has built a reputation for bridging stories and audiences. Songs of Paradise joins this lineage, offering viewers a rare glimpse into Kashmir’s cultural heartbeat through the life of one remarkable artist. On the ongoing rescue operations, Omar

people how J&K has developed during the past few years. You have to tell them that there are no bandh and hartal calendars anymore; now, Khelo India calendars are issued. The voices of our youth are heard in stadiums and not in the streets. These are the changes the entire nation is proud of.” Highlighting the new sporting ecosystem that has emerged in the Union Territory, he said J&K youth, who faced immense hardships over the past three decades, are now leading from the front and excelling in every discipline at par with youngsters from across the country. LG Sinha expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Sports Minister for giving a major boost to sports in Jammu and Kashmir. “Under the leadership of PM Modi, sports have thrived in the country. J&K is a glaring example of the efforts made in the last 11 years. A vibrant sports culture has developed here with special focus on water sports and winter sports,” he said. Recalling the successful hosting of the international Legends League in Srinagar recently, he said such events reflect the immense potential of J&K in sports. “Water sports have a bright future here. The bonding between players will make this event a grand success,” the LG said. Referring to recent natural calamities, including the devastating cloudbursts in Kishtwar and Kathua districts, LG Sinha assured the affected families of full government support. “Nature has been testing us for the past few weeks. I assure the victims that all necessary help will be provided to them,” he said. He also underlined the significance of mega infrastructure projects in integrating the region with the rest of the country. “The rail project from Kashmir to Kanyakumari has completely integrated Kashmir with the nation,” he said. The LG said that over the next two days Dal Lake will remain abuzz with youthful energy and competitive spirit, showcasing the sporting excellence and cultural vibrancy of Jammu and Kashmir. Priority Is To Retrieve the need for speedy relief assistance, restoration of essential services, and long-term strategies to safeguard vulnerable areas from recurring natural calamities. “Whether it was a cloudburst or a glacial lake outburst, the fact remains that this tragedy struck at the busiest time of the year in Chashoti village. Had it occurred at any other time, the impact might have been less severe. These are lessons we must take forward,” Omar said, adding that the Meteorological Department had issued warnings, which highlighted the need for clear SOPs and guidelines in highly vulnerable regions.

noted: “Unfortunately, with 33 people still missing, it is safe to presume we may not find any of them alive. Our priority now is to retrieve dead bodies to hand them over to their families. Equally important is to rehabilitate those whose homes and livelihoods have been devastated.” He assured full government support in reconstruction of damaged homes, restoration of agricultural land, and provision of essential services. The CM also directed departments to make temporary arrangements, including deployment of generators, to restore electricity in affected areas until road connectivity is repaired. Earlier, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar briefed the CM on relief and rehabilitation activities. Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar reported that 65 people have lost their lives so far, with 33 still missing, while 66 were rescued alive. He said temporary shelters, food, medicines and health facilities are being provided, with Army, Police, NDRF, SDRF and civil administration jointly carrying out rescue operations. In Kathua, Deputy Commissioner informed that seven people died and 13 were injured, with road connectivity badly disrupted. Immediate relief has been distributed, temporary shelters set up, and efforts are underway to restore electricity, water supply and mobile services. The meeting was attended by senior officers including Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, and Divisional Commissioner Jammu, besides other senior officials. The CM directed authorities to intensify relief efforts on war footing while also preparing a long-term disaster mitigation plan for Jammu and Kashmir’s vulnerable areas. J&K Power Sector at UPERC for the payment of legacy dues and based on the direction from UPERC they will settle the payment of legacy dues,” reads the official document. The Chairperson, NRPC, informed that the matter regarding the outstanding payment of Jammu and Kashmir has already been taken up at the highest level of the Government and is currently under process and the dues will be cleared shortly. “Forum requested UP and J&K to clear their pending dues at the earliest.” The official documents further reveal that NRLDC representative apprised the forum that NRLDC is operating and maintaining the ‘Northern Region Pool Account’ for deviation charges, Reactive Energy Charges and Congestion Charges in accordance with provisions under various CERC Regulations. “As per Regulations, the payment to the statutory pool account has high priority and

the concerned utilities are required to pay the indicated amounts within 10 days of the issue of the weekly energy account by the NRPC secretariat,” it reads. The document in this regard states that the payment of deviation charges and Reactive energy charges of J&K is long pending. “Last payment received from JKPCIL in the pool account was on 09.02.2024.” Among the total outstanding dues of J&K includes DSM charges of Rs 94.56 crores, Reactive Energy Charges of Rs 0.45 crores, Pool Deficit Charges (Legacy Dues) of Rs 45.37 crores, and Pool Deficit Charges on NLDC statement as on 13.01.25 is Rs 2.92 crores J&K FDA Tightens region, said the notice. The notice applies to a wide range of Food Business Operators (FBOs), including manufacturers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, cold storage operators, transporters, and e-commerce platforms. The public notice strictly prohibits the sale of packaged food products that lack proper and complete label declarations. It defines fresh meat, chilled meat, and frozen meat based on their storage temperatures and conditions. It specifies that frozen meat and meat products must be stored and transported at a temperature of -18°C or below at all stages, from production to the point of sale. Short-term chilled storage at 4°C is permissible for a maximum of two to four days before consumption. Notice further reads that, all establishments must be equipped with calibrated temperature monitoring devices and maintain accurate records for inspections. The Notice warns that non-compliance will result in strict enforcement action under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. This includes the seizure of non-compliant stock and monetary penalties. The penalties can be as high as 5 lakh for sub-standard products, 3 lakh for misbranded products or missing label declarations, and 10 lakh for operating without an FSSAI license. The notice also clarifies that offenses involving unsafe food are punishable with imprisonment for up to six years, along with a fine of up to 5 lakh. FBOs are required to immediately upgrade their operations, ensure full compliance, maintain updated records, and remove non-compliant products from their outlets and online platforms. The notice states that failure to comply will result in swift legal action without any further notice. During the past weeks food safety departments continue checking on food items, meat and chicken items and unearthed the rotten meat scandal in which 12000kg of non standard meat was destroyed.



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Kashmir's Almond Legacy Under Threat as Orchards Make Way For Apples



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Once fondly remembered as the "land of almonds", Kashmir is now witnessing a rapid decline in its almond orchards, as farmers increasingly cut down trees to plant high-density apple varieties or sell land for construction. Growers fear that without timely intervention, the centuries-old almond heritage of the Valley could disappear altogether.

"This year's yield has been satisfactory, but the tragedy is that orchards are vanishing faster than ever," said Muneer Ahmad, an orchardist from Pulwama. "Everywhere you look, land is being taken over either by apple plantations or new buildings. If this trend continues, almonds will soon vanish from Kashmir's landscape."

Official figures from the horticulture department confirm the alarming decline. In 2006-07, almond cultivation in Kashmir spanned 16,374 hectares, but by 2019-20, it had shrunk to just 4,177 hectares. Production too fell from 15,183 tonnes to 9,898

tonnes over the same period. Despite still contributing more than 90 per cent of India's almond output, experts and farmers warn the sector is in free fall.

For many growers, the economics of almond farming no longer make sense. "Apples give us higher returns, while almonds hardly cover costs," said Nisar Ahmad Mir, a grower from Budgam. "We love almond trees, but affection alone cannot feed our families."

Another major concern is the absence of marketing infrastructure. "We have been demanding a proper dry fruit mandi for years, but authorities pay no heed," said Abdul Rasheed Reshie, a farmer. "Without an organised market and support prices, almond cultivation cannot survive."

Farmers say that unless the government steps in with strict land-use regulations and financial incentives, Kashmir's almond tradition—once celebrated in local poetry, art, and culture—risks being reduced to nothing more than a nostalgic memory. (KNO)

Highway Boost: J&K, Ladakh Get ₹28,000 Cr Projects Since 2021

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has reported major progress in highway construction and upgradation across Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh, with projects worth nearly ₹28,000 crore sanctioned over the past four years.

In a written reply to a question by Dr. M. K. Vishnu Prasad, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Jairam Gadkari said that Jammu and Kashmir accounted for the bulk of the projects during this period.

Between 2021-22 and 2024-25, a total of 43 projects were approved in J&K, covering about 653 kilometres of road length at a cumulative cost of over ₹27,800 crore. The year 2021-22 witnessed the highest approvals, with 15 projects covering 197 km sanctioned at a cost of ₹14,235 crore.

Another 15 projects were cleared in 2022-23, adding 248 km of National Highway (NH) length at a cost of ₹9,538 crore. The pace slowed in 2023-24, with eight projects covering 179 km at an estimated cost of ₹2,774 crore. In the current financial year (up to August 2024), five more projects have

been sanctioned, covering 29 km at a cost of ₹1,262 crore.

Gadkari highlighted that these developments are aligned with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, ensuring phased and prioritised execution based on connectivity needs and strategic requirements.

In Ladakh, progress has been more modest, attributed largely to the region's difficult terrain, ecological sensitivities, and limited working season. Only two projects have been sanctioned in the last four years. The first, in 2021-22, involved 27 km of highway development at a cost of ₹426 crore. After a two-year gap, another project was cleared in 2024-25, adding 11 km at a cost of ₹29 crore.

Although limited in scale, the Ministry stressed that the sanctioned works in Ladakh hold significant strategic importance, improving mobility for both civilians and defence personnel, while also enhancing access to remote areas.

"National Highway development is a continuous process, taken up on the basis of traffic density, road condition, connectivity needs, and strategic priorities," the Minister said. He added that pending proposals are under review and will be considered in line with the Gati Shakti framework.

Govt Bringing J&K Back On Development Track: Javed Dar

Agencies

SOPORE: Cabinet Minister Javed Dar on Thursday said that the government is committed to fast-tracking development across Jammu and Kashmir, promising improved roads, schools and hospitals in the coming years.

Addressing locals, Dar said that J&K had lost track of development in the absence of a popular government for several years. He assured that the present administration is working to bring the region on the development track again.

"In the past, a lot was neglected. Now, people have given us a mandate and put trust on their representatives. All that is needed is patience and we will bring development back on track," he said.

The Minister assured that no village will be left behind in the



process. "Whether it is roads or any other sector, people will witness visible changes on the ground. Around 18 kilometres have already been macadamised in Zaingeer village alone," Minister informed.

He further said that in the next one to two years, villages will witness development in terms of road connectivity, hospitals and schools.

On the education and health sector, Dar stated that the government is considering the creation of new posts wherever necessary. "Wherever there is a need of sanctioned posts, it will be fulfilled," he added—(KNO)

Kashmir Educators Draft Safer Classroom Plan

WISCOMP Scholars & Kashmiri Academics Stress Accountability & Equity In Higher Education

Syed Sammar Mehdi

SRINAGAR: At a time when Kashmir campuses are facing growing pressure to create safer spaces for women, a two-day workshop at Government College for Women, M.A. Road, ended on Thursday with a call for "zero tolerance" against harassment on campuses.

The workshop, titled "Strengthening the Internal Committees for Zero Tolerance Campus," was organised by the college's Internal Committee in collaboration with WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace), New Delhi.

It brought together teachers, students, and gender champions to learn how colleges can prevent harassment, support survivors, and build redressal systems that work.

Over two days, participants attended lectures, group discussions, and case study exercises. Audio-visual presentations sparked open conversations about how harassment operates in subtle and systemic ways in educational settings.

The focus was on strengthening Internal Committees, the bodies mandated under India's Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, which serve as the first channel of redressal for complaints within institutions.

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, WISCOMP's Director and a respected scholar of peace and gender studies, led the training sessions. She reminded the audience that safe campuses cannot be reduced to paperwork and compliance.

"A zero-tolerance campus is a campus of care, compassion and solidarity," she said. "We must move beyond seeing women as victims. Once we discover agency, the journey never ends."

On the legal side, Dr. Latika Vashist, Associate Professor at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, guided participants through the POSH Act and University Grants Commission regulations.

She unpacked the complexities of workplace harassment cases and urged colleges to see



Internal Committees as not only legal obligations but also vital tools for cultural change.

The discussions gained support from Kashmir's higher education leadership.

At the valedictory session, Cluster University Srinagar's Dean of Academic Affairs, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Simnani, said workshops like this must be held regularly to strengthen awareness and accountability.

Senior academician, Prof. Parveen Pandit, added that safe, inclusive, and productive spaces are a precondition for quality education.

The host college's principal, Prof. Yasmeen Farooq, told participants that the workshop's outcomes would not remain symbolic.

She announced that follow-up audits, awareness drives, and training sessions will be held to ensure that prevention, support, and grievance redressal mechanisms are strengthened.

"Safety is essential for both students and faculty," she said. "This cannot remain a one-off exercise."

From the college's side, the programme was coordinated by Prof. Majida Maqbool, Presiding Officer of the Internal Committee. She gave a detailed presentation on gender audits and shared lessons from her work at Government De-

gree College Sumbal.

Her intervention showed how even small exercises can reveal structural gaps in institutional culture.

The valedictory session was conducted by Dr. Suhail Ahmad, with certificates distributed among participants and "gender champions" who pledged to raise awareness and assist in handling harassment complaints on their campuses.

The workshop had opened a day earlier with an inaugural ceremony attended by Cluster University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mohammad Mobin, as Chief Guest. In his address, he underlined the responsibility of universities in Kashmir to integrate accountability and equity into their teaching and administration.

Alongside Dr. Gopinath and Dr. Vashist, the WISCOMP team included Ms. Shilpi Shabditia and Ms. Akashleena Chakrabarti, who conducted breakout discussions and interactive sessions.

Together, they created a mix of formal and informal dialogue that encouraged participants to reflect on their own experiences.

By the end of the two-day programme, one message stood out clearly: safe campuses in Kashmir must become lived realities inside classrooms, staff rooms, and corridors.

A ZERO-TOLERANCE CAMPUS IS A CAMPUS OF CARE, COMPASSION AND SOLIDARITY. We must move beyond seeing women as victims. Once we discover agency, the journey never ends."

SRINAGAR BLAST

Family Wins Case After 39 Years

M Ahmad

SRINAGAR: A court here on Thursday awarded around Rs 16.60 lakhs compensation to a family from Saffa Kadal Srinagar over the death of its 20-year-old member in a blast at an exhibition centre four decades ago.

The suit had been filed by one Mohammad Yousuf Shah before the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir on 29 May 1986 and it was subsequently transferred to 2nd Additional District Judge Srinagar by virtue of the order on 14 July 1995.

In the suit, Shah, who passed away since and was subsequently represented through his legal heirs including his wife and children, had pleaded that his 20-year-old son, Avis Ahmed, died of severe injuries sustained by him in a blast at an exhibition arranged by the government at exhibition ground Srinagar in September-October 1985.

Shah had pleaded that admission to the exhibition ground was neither free nor unregulated and that the erstwhile State Government was also expected to take steps for maintenance of law and order, security and safety of all who enter the exhibition and also of those who run various stalls in the exhibition.

The state, as pleaded, was under obligation to ensure safety and security of every person in the State and also of visitors to the exhibition. On 13 October 1985, Shah had pleaded that his son was on his way inside the exhibition

ground to a place of entertainment set up by the organizers after paying the fees for entry and this place of entertainment was separately fenced and was known as 'Radha Theatre' when Avis, who was working as mechanic, became the victim of a bomb blast and suffered serious injuries, ultimately passing away on 14 October 1985 at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura, Srinagar. Police Station Shergarhi, immediately thereafter registered a case under section 307 Ranbir Panel Code and section 3 of Explosive Substances Act, wherein it was indicated that the cause of death of the plaintiff's son was due to injury caused by the blast, Shah had added.

"It is an indisputable fact that a bomb blast took place at 'Radha Theatre' in the exhibition ground on the fateful day of 13-10-1985. It is also not denied by the defendants (authorities) that the deceased sustained injuries because of the bomb blast and later succumbed to his injuries on 14-10-1985 at SKIMS, Soura," Swati Gupta, 2nd Additional District Judge, Srinagar, said.

"In fact, this fact has been admitted by the defendants (authorities) in their pleadings also. It is also nobody's case that he was involved in some terrorist or subversive activity that resulted in the loss of his

life."

The compensation in such circumstances, the court said, was not merely an act of restitution or a measure of providing damages but has to be given as a remedy intended to compensate the bereaved family enabling it to withstand the financial loss caused by the death of a young earning member of the family, although it is an undeniable truth that no amount of monetary help can ever truly compensate the loss of a beloved one.

Accordingly, the court held the victim's family entitled to Rs.3,24,000 as compensation from the authorities on account of loss of life of

Avis Ahmed Shah along with an interest at the rate of 8% per annum on the compensation amount, calculated from the date of institution of the suit, till the date of its actual payment (till date the amount, principal compensation and the interest comes to around Rs 16.60 lakhs).

"The defendants are directed to pay the compensation along with interest, as directed hereinabove, within a period of two months from the date of the present judgment," the court said, adding, "In default of payment of compensation, the defendants shall further pay interest @4% per annum over and above the interest already awarded, on the amount of compensation."

Centre Releases ₹1,000 Crore to J&K Under CRIF Since 2020

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has released detailed figures on road development under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) over the past five years, highlighting both the financial support extended to Jammu and Kashmir and the systemic limitations faced under the scheme.

Responding to a query raised by Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said the Ministry has adopted a structured mechanism to identify projects under CRIF, in alignment with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan. He explained that projects are sanctioned based on proposals submitted by States and Union Territories, which are then prioritised by the Ministry.

For Jammu and Kashmir, the data shows a clear upward trend in accruals and fund utilisation. In 2020-21, the Union Territory accrued Rs 94.51 crore, of which Rs 79.40 crore was released. The following year witnessed a major boost, with accruals of Rs 96.91 crore and releases amounting to Rs 321.18 crore — a significant rise attributed to the central government's push for infrastructure after the reorganisation of the erstwhile state.

The momentum continued in 2022-23 when accruals stood at Rs 113.61 crore and releases climbed to Rs 343.61 crore. In 2023-24 and 2024-25, annual accruals rose further to Rs 128.67 crore, though releases moderated to Rs 206.67 crore in 2023-24 and Rs 128.67 crore so

far in the current financial year.

According to the Ministry, the consistent flow of funds reflects the Centre's commitment to improving connectivity in J&K despite administrative and logistical hurdles. Under CRIF, MoRTH focuses on the development and upkeep of state roads, while execution and monitoring rest with the state or UT governments. Fund disbursements are linked to utilisation certificates submitted for earlier allocations.

Gadkari further informed the House that the Ministry of Railways, which also receives CRIF allocations, has been prioritising safety infrastructure, particularly Road Over Bridges (ROBs) and Road Under Bridges (RUBs). While no state-specific figures were shared for J&K, the national emphasis on eliminating level crossings suggests likely ongoing or proposed projects in the Union Territory as well.

The CRIF also supports rural connectivity under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), though those allocations fall under the Ministry of Rural Development.

Despite the gains, Gadkari cautioned that the scheme operates under certain fiscal constraints, particularly the Bank of Sanction (BoS) mechanism, which restricts new approvals until existing liabilities are cleared. This, he said, impacts the scope for fresh project sanctions in J&K and other states.

In total, Jammu and Kashmir has received over Rs 1,000 crore under CRIF during the last five years — funds that the government insists will continue to play a pivotal role in strengthening the Union Territory's road infrastructure.

BJP Has Earned People's Trust In Kashmir: Ashok Koul

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Ashok Koul, General Secretary (Organization), J&K BJP, chaired the twin meetings of the office bearers of Anantnag and Shopian districts at Church Lane, Srinagar.

While addressing the meeting, Ashok Koul stressed the need for organizational strengthening in both the districts at the grassroots level. He said the party has succeeded in gaining the trust and respectable support of the common people in the last Assembly elections in both districts as well as across the Kashmir Valley. He added that while the decisive and people-centric governance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been appreciated across all quarters, it is the prime responsibility of the party's office bearers to ensure that the benefits of these public-oriented schemes reach the actual needy population, even in the remotest parts of the region.

He further emphasized the

responsibility of party leaders to acquaint themselves with the policies and ideology of the BJP and to convey the same effectively to the public.

Anwar Khan urged party leaders to devote as much time as possible to work for the people and the organization, noting that their actions will speak louder than words in the eyes of the masses. He asked them to remain connected with the people at the grassroots level.

Rakesh Koul and Raja Waseem Kundalan assured the senior leadership that the district units will leave no stone unturned in reaching out to the people. They expressed confidence that more and more individuals will join hands with the party to contribute to nation-building.

J&K BJP General Secretary Anwar Khan, Secretaries Mudassir Wani and Arif Raja, District President Anantnag Rakesh Koul, and District President Shopian Raja Waseem Kundalan, along with the entire district teams, attended the meeting.

Woman Dies Under Suspicious Circumstances in Shopian

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: In the Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir, a 27-year-old woman from Takibal Reban, Zainapora, died under circumstances that have raised alarm in her village. Urfi Jan, wife of Showkat Ahmad Lone, was brought to Yaripora hospital on Thursday in an unconscious state, local police said. Doctors declared her dead on arrival.

Officials said the circumstances surrounding her death are being treated as suspicious. Police at Zainapora have initiated proceedings under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, a legal provision applied in cases requir-

ing further investigation into deaths with uncertain causes.

Neighbours and relatives expressed shock at the news. "She was a young woman with a family," one resident said, requesting anonymity. "We hope the police find out what happened."

Authorities have not released details about any potential suspects or motives. Investigators have said updates will follow as the inquiry moves forward.

The case adds to a series of incidents in Kashmir that have raised concerns about community safety and the handling of sudden deaths. Residents of Shopian, like many across the region, look to authorities for swift and transparent investigations.

Rupesh Kumar Gets Addl Charge Of Director Information

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Rupesh Kumar (IAS) was on Thursday assigned the additional charge of Director Information, J&K.

An order, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer reads, Rupesh Kumar, IAS

(AGMUT:2019) and Vice Chairman of the Jammu Development Authority, has been assigned the additional charge of Director Information, J&K.

The order states that Rupesh Kumar will hold the charge of the post in addition to his current responsibilities until Nitish Rajora, IAS, resumes his duties.

Young Kashmir Kayaker Mohsin Ali Wins Gold At Water Sports Festival

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: From rowing a 'shikara' at the scenic Dal Lake to winning a bronze in kayaking at the National Games in Uttarakhand earlier this year, young Mohsin Ali Kand's success story has been a fascinating one and he achieved more glory on Thursday, winning the gold medal at the Khelo India Water Sports Festival here.

The 18-year-old made Jammu and Kashmir proud by clinching the top-podium in men's 1000m kayaking event, clocking 4:12:41 seconds. He beat Odisha's Noram James Singh (4:14.68) and Mayank of Madhya Pradesh (4:23.28) to second and third spots respectively.

Vishal Kumar of Uttar Pradesh won the gold in the canoe singles, clocking 4:30.59 seconds in the 1000m event. Krishna Jat of Madhya Pradesh (4:31.36) bagged the silver while Mohammed Hussain of Jammu & Kashmir took the bronze with a time of 4:32.83 seconds.

Mohsin, a 12th standard student, rows a 'shikara' on the Dal Lake after school hours to earn some money.

After his success on Thursday, Mohsin, the son of a lower middle-class carpenter, credited the victory to his father.

"My father was instrumental in me taking up water sports," said Mohsin.

"Water sports is my passion and I dream of representing India at the international level. To see my dreams actualise, I row a shikara and share the burden of my family."

A resident of Kand Mohalla in the Dal Lake area, Mohsin started his water sports journey as a seven-year-old.


Mohsin's achievement is noteworthy considering the fact that despite the financial constraints he was able to beat athletes with far more experience on Thursday.

"It is very difficult for me to purchase the necessary diet for participating in such events as professional water sports athletes are supposed to have a protein-rich, carbohydrate-rich, electrolyte-rich diet, which I am not able to afford due to meagre means," Mohsin said.

"The thing that keeps me going is the desire to represent the country at events like the Asian Games, World Championship and the Olympics," he said.

Mohsin believes that practising in the Dal Lake in high-altitude Kashmir helps develop better stamina, which athletes from other parts of the country lack.

"Most of them come from the plains. So I have a strong feeling that if I continue to work hard, time is not far when I will represent the country," he said.



'KIWSF Will Present Powerful Picture Of India'

The Khelo India Water Sports Festival at the Dal Lake here will present a powerful picture of India to the world, said Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya while declaring the games open on Thursday.

"Today, when athletes step into Kashmir's Dal Lake with zeal and enthusiasm to create history, the sight will not only thrill all sports lovers, but will also present to the world a powerful picture of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (One India, Great India)," Mandaviya said in a video message.

Raksha Nikhil Khadse, the Minister of State (MOS) for sports, who was present among other dignitaries at the inauguration ceremony, said KIWSF is a "great advertisement" for the country's youth.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Lieutenant Governor of J&K Manoj Sinha as the chief guest, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as the guest of honour. J&K's sports minister Satish Sharma was also present. (PTI)

District Kulgam Carrom C'ship 2025-26 From Sept 2

The District Kulgam Carrom Championship 2025-26 is scheduled to be held on September 2 and 3 at Multi-Purpose Sports Complex, Quimoh, Kulgam.

The championship is being organised by the District Kulgam Carrom Association under the aegis of the J&K Carrom Association.

"All interested players, schools, colleges & clubs are requested to send their entries through email: jkcarrom@gmail.com or on Whatsapp 9906767529 by September 1. The aim of the event is to provide a strong platform for budding carrom talent of the district to showcase their skills and to promote the game at the grassroots level," the association said in a statement.

"Entry Format: Name of Player, Father's Name, Date of Birth, Category (Cadet / Sub-Junior / Junior / Senior), Gender (Male / Female), School/Club Representing & Contact Number." (Observer News Service)

Sports Week Celebrations Begin In Budgam



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The District Youth Services and Sports Office Budgam kick-started the Sports Week Celebrations on Thursday to pay tribute to legendary hockey wizard Major Dhy-an Chand.

The week-long celebrations are being organised under the directions of DYSSO Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone, with the objective of promoting the true spirit of sportsmanship among students and youth across the district.

Various sports activities, athletic events and awareness programs will be conducted zone-wise as

District Kulgam Rugby C'ship Concludes With Thrilling Matches

Adil Khan

KULGAM: The District Kulgam Rugby Championship 2025 concluded on a high note with exhilarating matches and spirited performances by young athletes. The event, organised by the District Kulgam Rugby Association under the aegis of the J&K Rugby Association and recognised by the J&K Sports Council, was hosted at Sheikh-ul-Alam English Medium Institute, Okey Kulgam, from August 13 to 20.

The two-day championship witnessed the participation of around 15 teams, comprising nearly 150 players (boys and girls) from various schools and clubs across the district. The players displayed remarkable skill, passion, and sportsmanship throughout the competition.

The opening and closing ceremonies were graced by principals, sports officials, and community leaders, who lauded the young athletes and encouraged them to pursue the sport further.



RESULTS:

- U-14 Boys Winner: Sheikh-ul-Alam Institute
- U-14 Girls Runner-up: Kulgam Minds School
- U-17 Boys Winner: EF Institute Ashmuji
- U-17 Boys Runner-up: Sheikh-ul-Alam Institute, Okey Kulgam
- U-17 Girls Winner: Sheikh-ul-Alam English Medium Institute
- U-17 Girls Runner-up: Sports Academy Kulgam
- U-19 Boys Winner: Sheikh-ul-Alam Institute
- U-19 Boys Runner-up: Height Security School Kulgam

Baramulla Girls Shine At Zonal Volleyball & Handball Competitions



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Department of Youth Services and Sports Baramulla on Thursday started its Inter-Zonal District Level Volleyball and Handball competitions for Girls Under-14, 17 and 19.

The Volleyball competition for Girls U-14 and U-17 began at High School Khawaja Bagh, Baramulla, where as many as 36 teams from across 18 zones of the district are participating. The air was filled with energy as young girls displayed their passion, talent, and determination on the volleyball courts.

Simultaneously, the Inter-Zonal Handball competition for Girls U-14, U-17 and U-19 was inaugurated at the Indoor Stadium, Khawaja Bagh, Baramulla, with the participation of 14 spirited teams representing different zones of the district.

These tournaments aim to identify budding talent, promote teamwork, and prepare the athletes for higher-level competitions, while also providing a platform for young girls to express their potential in sports.

Cricket Team For Asia Cup Won't Be Stopped: Sports Ministry

The Sports Ministry on Thursday declared that India and Pakistan will not have any bilateral sporting ties even on neutral venues as per an unprecedented new policy but the cricket team won't be stopped from playing the Asia Cup next month as it is a multi-lateral engagement.

The ministry unveiled the new policy with regard to India's international engagements with emphasis on Pakistan. A well-placed ministry source said that the policy, which bars Indian athletes from travelling to Pakistan and likewise disallows neighbouring sportspersons from coming here for bilaterals, is effective immediately.

Asked if Indian teams will be allowed to travel to Pakistan for any multi-lateral competitions, the source said, "In that scenario, we will examine the case before deciding anything."

"India and Pakistan cannot play bilateral even if it is planned in America. No bilaterals," asserted a ministry source. (PTI)



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