

## Kashmir's Postponed Feasts

# Reopened Highway Revives Hope

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Nazir Ahmad had imagined his daughter's wedding for months. The troupe was ready, the waza booked well in advance, and relatives had flown in from across India to celebrate in Anantnag. September 7 was meant to be a day of laughter and reunion.

The house was still. The wedding was postponed. The culprit was the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, closed after flash floods and landslides stranded hundreds of trucks.

Among them, over a hundred carried livestock destined for Kashmir's kitchens. Without mutton, the centerpiece of a traditional wazwan feast, the celebration could not proceed. | [More on P6](#)



**AROUND 300 SHEEP HAD TO BE TREKKED** over 20 kilometers through mud and mountains, Families received only a few sheep for nikahs. Wazwan feasts had to be cancelled."



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

## Devout Throng Hazratbal On Friday Following Eid-e-Milad

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Thousands of devotees on Friday thronged the revered Dargah Hazratbal shrine on the banks of Dal Lake to offer congregational prayers and witness the display of the holy relic of Prophet Muhammad

(SAW) on the Friday following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

The biggest gathering of the week was seen at Hazratbal, where worshippers from across the Valley came to catch a glimpse of the Moi-e-Muqaddas, widely believed to be a hair strand of the Prophet

(SAW). The shrine reverberated with emotional prayers as the head priest displayed the relic, drawing cries of "Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah" from the sea of devotees.

With tears rolling down their cheeks and hands raised in devotion, men, women,

and children stood shoulder to shoulder, reciting Quranic verses and praying for personal well-being, their families, and lasting peace in the region.

"I have been coming here since childhood. Every time I see the holy relic, my heart trembles with | [More on P6](#)

## JKBOSE Exams To Resume From September 13

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The ongoing examination of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education for class 10th (SSE) and 11th (HSP-12th) session Biannual/Annual Private 2025 shall resume from tomorrow on September 13 as per notified date sheet.

The examinees (candidates) are advised to carry their admit cards along with them for identification and display it to the authorities in case there are restrictions in place anywhere.

The Incharge superintendents of the examination centers shall ensure safe and smooth conduct of the examination.

JKBOSE had earlier announced the postponement of the Bi-Annual Examination 2025 for Classes 10 and 11 in view of the recent cloudburst and adverse weather conditions across Jammu and Kashmir as well as the Union Territory of Ladakh. The board highlighted that this step has been taken in the interest of student safety.

## Vaishno Devi Yatra To Resume From Sunday

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir will resume from Sunday after remaining suspended for 19 days, officials said.

The yatra was suspended following a landslide on August 26 that claimed 34 lives and left 20 others injured.

"Jai Mata Di! The Vaishno Devi Yatra will resume from September 14 (Sunday), subject to favourable weather conditions. For details and bookings, please visit www.maaishno Devi.org," the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDB) announced on X.

The Board further stated that the temporary suspension | [More on P6](#)

## Uneasy Calm Prevails In Doda

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Security was heightened in Doda district on Friday, even as an uneasy calm prevailed over the mountainous region after authorities clamped prohibitory restrictions for the fourth consecutive day.

Several people have been detained in Doda following violent clashes between security forces and protestors agitating against the arrest of Aam Aadmi Party MLA Mehraj Malik under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) earlier this week. The Doda MLA, who was arrested for disturbing the public order, was later lodged in Kathua jail.

On Wednesday evening, police had held | [More on P6](#)

## 35-Yr Legal Battle

# HC Directs Pak Couple To Leave Srinagar

Agencies

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has dismissed a 35-year long legal battle of a Pakistani couple to allow them to stay in Srinagar and has directed them to leave the country forthwith.

According to the details, an 80-year-old man, Mohammad Khalil Qazi, and his 61-year-old wife, Arifa were residing in Srinagar since 1988 on Pakistani passports. They had challenged a 1989 deportation order, claiming Indian

citizenship and rights to ancestral property.

The High Court ruled that the couple had concealed facts to extend their stay in India and must leave the country immediately.

The court examined records, including a school certificate indicating that Qazi attended a Srinagar school from 1955 to 1957. This contradicted the couple's claim that he was stranded in Pakistan after the 1948 India-Pakistan war.

The division bench, led by Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh | [More on P6](#)

## HC Upholds Mother's Custody Rights Under Muslim Law

Agencies

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has reaffirmed that under Muslim Personal Law, a mother has the first claim to the custody of her minor children, which cannot be taken away unless she is legally disqualified. The Court emphasized that the welfare and stability of the children must guide all custody decisions.

The ruling, delivered by Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, came while hearing an appeal against an order by the 4th Additional District Judge Srinagar, which had granted custody of two minors to



their father.

The dispute arose following a divorce. The mother had previously been granted custody by a court in Qatar, with the father allowed visitation rights. After relocating to Kashmir with her children in

2022, the mother faced new custody proceedings initiated by the father, who sought to take the children abroad.

The Court distinguished between guardianship and custody, noting that while a father is recognised as the natural guardian, custody pertains to day-to-day care, affection, and upbringing. Justice Wani described custody as a right of the child rather than a privilege of either parent, highlighting that Islamic jurisprudence prioritizes the mother during a child's formative years.

Examining the facts, the Court observed that the children were | [More on P6](#)

## Efforts Underway To Predict Cloudbursts: Minister

Observer News Service

Jammu: Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh on Friday highlighted the challenges in accurately forecasting earthquakes and cloudbursts, and said efforts are underway to study the factors that trigger cloudbursts in order to provide early warnings.

"There is no precise forecasting capability for earthquakes and cloudbursts yet, but we are studying the contributing factors. Typically, when humidity and heat accumulate in a specific area, it can become explosive, triggering cloudbursts. If we can identify these factors, we can at least issue possible early

warnings," Singh told reporters at a Vartalap programme organised by PIB.

He added that initiatives such as the Himalayan Ecology Mission have been launched to better understand these phenomena.

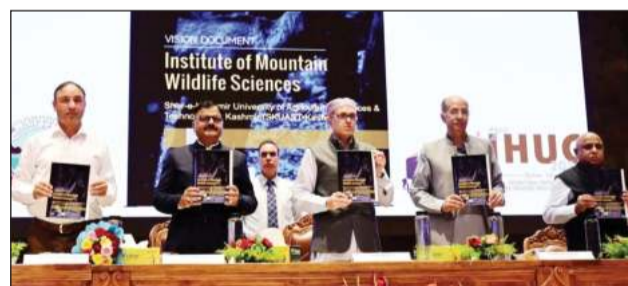
On improving weather forecasting in the Union Territory, Dr Singh said plans are underway to establish a full-fledged IMD regional centre in Jammu, along with four additional weather radars.

Speaking on lithium exploration in Reasi district, he said the process will be restarted after a poor response during the initial tendering stage. "Once exploration is carried out, | [More on P6](#)

## 'Research-Action Synergy Key To Wildlife Conservation' CM Pledges Swift Action to Boost Hangul, Markhor Numbers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday underscored the urgent need for coordination between academic research and government action to protect the Hangul, Markhor, and other threatened Himalayan species. Speaking at the valedictory session of the Second International Conference on Hangul Protection and Other Threatened Ungulates Conservation (2IHUC-25) at Sher-e-Kashmir University



of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), he pledged swift implementation of the conference recommendations.

"Unless there is synergy between academic research and government implementation, we risk losing magnificent animals like | [More on P6](#)

## Show-cause Notice Over SM Post 'Speaker Must Speak In Defence Of Legislators'

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Waheed-ur-Rahman Para on Friday said as the custodian of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, the speaker must speak in defence of the legislators to protect the "institution of MLA".

The remarks of Para, the MLA from Pulwama, came after Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Wednesday issued a show-cause notice to him for his social media post claiming the Assembly Secretariat endorsed

the detention of AAP MLA Mehraj Malik under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

"If the speaker's office doesn't defend an elected member, it sets a dangerous precedent," Para told PTI.

The issue is not about an individual but the institution -- "the last space left to represent J-K's citizens -- he said.

"Instead of faulting my concern, the speaker should have supported it," Para added.

Describing Rather as a "fatherly figure", the PDP MLA said he holds | [More on P6](#)

## LG's Smart Housing Initiative Brings Relief to LoC Residents

Observer News Service

Jammu: Residents along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir have welcomed the Lieutenant Governor's plan to build new houses for families affected by cross-border shelling, recent floods, and terrorism.

The High-Range Rural Development Society (HRDS) India, in collaboration with the Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir, will construct over 1,500 houses for victims, officials said.

"We lived for years amid



A resident looks at damaged house after cross border shelling along line of control. (KO File Pic)

rubble and fear. The news of new houses being built feels like a sunrise after a long, dark night," said residents from frontier areas.

Fatima Bano from Poonch, whose home was damaged during shelling, said, "Hearing that new houses will be constructed gives us hope that our children can grow up without fear of the next attack."

Residents from Poonch, Uri, and Karnah Tangdar expressed similar relief. Mohammad Iqbal from Poonch said, "Finally, we will have a safe home after months

in temporary shelters. This is much-needed relief for those who lost their homes."

Mehar Bano from Uri added, "This project gives us hope that we can start afresh without fear of the past returning." Rashid Ahmad from Karnah Tangdar said, "No compensation was provided earlier, so this initiative will help us rebuild our lives with dignity."

Suhail Ahmad from Poonch highlighted the added benefits, saying, "Monthly health check-ups and digital connectivity will improve our standard of living. | [More on P6](#)

## Transparency In Politics

# SC Notices Centre, ECI On Plea To Frame Party Rules

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine a plea seeking a direction to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to frame rules for registration and regulation of political parties to promote secularism, transparency and political justice.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi issued notice to the Centre, ECI and the Law Commission of India on a plea filed by

petitioner in-person Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Justice Kant while inclined to issue notice, pointed out no political party was impleaded in the petition.

"They will say that you're asking something to regulate them and they were not here," the bench told Upadhyay and asked him to implead all the national parties registered with the poll panel.

Upadhyay's plea alleged "bogus political parties" not only posed a | [More on P6](#)



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## '44% Diabetics Undiagnosed In 2023; Underdiagnosis A Challenge In Poor Countries'

Press Trust Of India

About 44 per cent of the world's diabetics were undiagnosed in 2023, while underdiagnosis and sub-optimal management of glycaemic index continue to pose major challenges in low- and middle-income countries, according to an analysis. Estimates published in The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology journal show that 43.6 per cent of India's diabetic population were diagnosed with the condition in 2023, an increase of about 14 per cent in diagnosis rates seen in 2000. Over 97 per cent of those diagnosed were under treatment in 2023, an international team of researchers forming the 'Global Burden of Disease' (GBD) study found. More than 55 per cent of people aged 15 and above around the world were diagnosed with diabetes, the analysis of data collected during 2000-2023 from across 204 countries and territories revealed.



"By 2050, 1.3 billion people are expected to be living with diabetes, and if nearly half don't know they have a serious and potentially deadly health condition, it could easily become a silent epidemic," said first author Lauryn Stafford, a researcher at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the US' University of Washington, which coordinates the GBD study. The team also included researchers from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. The highest rates of diagnoses were seen in North America and the highest rates of treatment among the diagnosed were in high-income Asia Pacific (Japan, South Korea and other countries). Southern Latin America, including Chile and Argentina, was found to have recorded the highest rates of optimal glycaemic levels among those receiving diabetes treatment. Central sub-Saharan Africa faced the largest gaps in diagnosis, with under 20 per cent of people with diabetes being aware of the condition, researchers said. Given the rapid pace of rise in cases, an investment in screening programmes among the youth is urgently needed, they said, highlighting that access to medicines and glucose-monitoring tools has improved, especially in underserved regions. The World Health Organisation had, in May 2022, set a target to have 80 per cent of people with diabetes clinically diagnosed by 2030. Eighty per cent of those diagnosed should have good control of glycaemia and as many must have good control over blood pressure, the WHO has said.



## 'Majority Of Women In Tech Sector Believe AI Can Help Them Access Better Opportunities'

Press Trust Of India

A majority of women working in the technology sector are ready to embrace AI as a real driver of equal opportunity, with 78 per cent of the respondents believing it can help them access better and in-demand opportunities, a report said on Friday. The report by jobs and career platform apna.co is based on inputs from over 11,300 women working in the technology sector across the country. There is a decisive shift toward workplace equity, with 78 per cent of women in the technology sector believing that AI can help them access better and in-demand opportunities, the report said. The maximum respondents (52 per cent) were Gen Z (under 25 years), nearly 60 per cent of them hailing from tier II-III cities, and two-thirds studied at non-elite colleges. Further, the report revealed that women in the tech sector are actively preparing for an AI-driven future, with 58 per cent of the respondents already pursuing AI/ML training through jobs, formal programmes, or self-learning, while another 24 per cent planning to start soon. The intent is strongest among GenZ

respondents (62 per cent) and those from non-elite tier II-III colleges (70 per cent), it added. It also found that nearly half of the respondents aim to become AI software developers, followed by 19 per cent targeting data science and ML roles, 14 per cent product management, and 10 per

follow," Apna.co founder and CEO Nirmith Parikh said. Meanwhile, the report found that nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of women in tech revealed that AI expertise now matters more than graduating from an elite college. The belief was strongest among Gen Z respondents (62 per cent of those



**This shows that women in tech are ready to embrace AI - not as a buzzword, but as a real driver of equal opportunity. It's inspiring to see that 58 per cent are already using AI at work or actively learning it, and many more are preparing to follow**

cent research. The trend points to women prioritising industry-facing, high-demand roles. "This shows that women in tech are ready to embrace AI - not as a buzzword, but as a real driver of equal opportunity. It's inspiring to see that 58 per cent are already using AI at work or actively learning it, and many more are preparing to

aged 22-25 years) and women from tier II-III cities (74 per cent compared to 66 per cent in metros). When asked about their biggest challenges in pursuing AI opportunities, 42 per cent of respondents stressed the need for better access to quality opportunities, 27 per cent pointed out stronger mentorship, and 19 per cent called for advanced training options.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the change of name in the electricity bill bearing Consumer ID No. 0213040014483 from my grandfather's name Rahman Yatoo to my name Ghulam Hussain Yatoo. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same in the office of the PDD Sub Division Pattan within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.  
**Ghulam Hussain Yatoo**  
 S/o Mohammad Qasim Yatoo  
 R/o Sultanpora, Pattan fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Riyaz Ahmad to (new name) Riyaz Ahmad Mir. In future I will be known as my (new name) Riyaz Ahmad Mir. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office Srinagar, within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.  
Media line advt

### Child Nurture and Relief Kashmir

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

No: CK/REC/1130 Date: 12-09-2025

Notice is hereby given that the Registered Office of Child Nurture and Relief Kashmir (CHINAR Kashmir) has been shifted FROM: CURRENT ADDRESS: Guru Lane opposite Ply Emporium Barzulla Srinagar 190005 TO: NEW ADDRESS: Khanpora, I.T.I Road near JNV School, Budgam. Change of address will be effective from 01-10-2025. Any person having any objection to the said change may kindly intimate the same in writing to the Registrar of Societies within 21 days of publication of this notice.

Sd/-  
 Nazir Ahmad Qureshi  
 President

Child Nurture and Relief Kashmir  
 (CHINAR Kashmir)

inf

### From Office of the Advocate Ishfaq Rasool & Associates

In the case of  
 Ghulam Rasool sheikh S/o: Abdul Ganie sheikh R/O: Tantraypora Palhallan pattan Baramulla (Caveator)

V/s  
 Public at large

In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap- peal, Suit or any other type of proceeding before the Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story and may seed in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irrepa- rable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that caveators be given an opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble court before passing any order.  
 fko Sd/advocate



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## Srinagar Police Cracks Down On Sale Of Rotten Meat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Acting swiftly on the reports of the sale of rotten and unhygienic meat in the district, Srinagar Police, in coordination with Civil Administration and the Department of Food Safety, has launched a dedicated operation to curb the menace.

In the ongoing crack-down, a police spokesman in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer said six cases (FIRs) have been registered against individuals and establishments found selling rotten meat in violation of public health and safety regulations, which include case FIRs No. 45/2025 under section 271,275 BNS of PS Lal Bazar, 90/2025 under section 272,275 BNS of PS Bemina, 67/2025 under section 271,275 BNS, 51 Food Safety Act of PS Batamalo, 102/2025 under section 271, 280 BNS of PS Safakadal, 73/2025 under section 271, 275 BNS of PS Ram Munshi

Bagh and 48/2025 under section 61, 271,275 BNS of PS Zakura.

A Flying Squad comprising of officials from the District Police, Civil Administration and the Food Safety Department has been constituted to carry out surprise inspections across the city. During these inspections, significant recoveries of rotten meat have been made and the items have been confiscated and destroyed as per protocol, police said.

J&K Police reiterated its commitment to safeguarding public health and ensuring that no individual or business indulges in activities that endanger the lives of citizens. Strict legal action will be taken against violators under relevant provisions of the law.

The general public is also requested to remain vigilant and report any such malpractices to the nearest police station or via helpline numbers.

## 'New Criminal Laws Exhibition' Enters Its 2nd Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The ongoing "New Criminal Laws Exhibition", organized by the Economic Offences Wing (Crime Branch Kashmir) at JK Police Public School, Bemina, entered its second day with continued zeal and enthusiastic participation from the public.

As per a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, the three-day exhibition, which was inaugurated by the Lieutenant Governor of J&K on 11th September, aims to raise public awareness and understanding of the newly introduced criminal laws: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya

Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.

Following an overwhelming response on Day 1 with over 4,000 students and civil society members attending, today on Day 2 saw an additional 1,500 visitors from various walks of life, including concerned citizens. The exhibition continues to serve as an effective platform for engaging the public with vital legal reforms, promoting legal literacy, and fostering informed civic participation.

The closing ceremony of the event is scheduled for Saturday, 13th September 2025, and the general public is cordially invited to attend.

## All India J&K Bank Officers Organization Calls Upon MD & CEO



Observer News Service

Srinagar: A delegation of All India Jammu And Kashmir Bank Officers Organization called upon the MD & CEO of J&K Bank at bank's corporate headquarters situated at Srinagar, Kashmir and congratulated him for bringing in progressive changes in administrative set up of the bank under Bank 2.0 initiative whereby new clusters have been opened in the bank and decentralization has been done in the reorganizational drive for better delivery system to the valuable clientele of the bank.

The delegation requested the bank management to contribute towards the flood relief fund of the UT administration out of the bank's CSR fund and bank staff's voluntary contributions. The delegation apprised the MD that J&K bank had risen to a similar situation in Kerala in 2018 when Rs. 11 Crores were donated by bank after collecting the same from employees, management dignitaries and Corporate

Social Responsibility fund. Further the delegation requested that when a bank could positively respond to a similar situation in Kerala, it is highly expected from our bank in such challenging times of our own clientele population.

The delegation further requested the bank management for fresh recruitment in the bank. It said that last recruitment for Probationary officers in the bank was held in 2021, whereafter bank has expanded by opening new branches and offices all over the country and due to no recruitment in the bank for so long, a strain upon working staff strength across the hierarchy and length breadth of the bank is being felt by AUKBOO as responsible union of officers of the bank.

MD & CEO has given a positive response for the genuine demands raised by ALJKBOO and assured the delegation of a positive outcome of the meeting. The delegation comprised of Mr. Raghuvir Singh Jamwal, Mukesh Kumar, Shabir Ahmad Khan, Zubair Anjum Khan and others.



## 'We Are Ashamed To Tell People We Live Here': Bemina Residents Slam Open Drains

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Residents and shopkeepers of Bemina on Friday raised fresh alarm over an open drainage system, a pungent stench wafting from it, and the absence of pedestrian footpaths, problems they say have made daily movement hazardous and led to accidents.

Nazir Ahmad, a local businessman, pointed to the stretch between the KFC showroom and Iqbalabad and described the situation as dangerous. "From the KFC showroom to Iqbalabad the drain is open. Some days back three people fell in the drain because it is open. We request authorities to do something about it," he said.

Many residents stressed the problem is long-standing. Parvaiz Ahmad Mir, president of the Shoppers Association in Bemina, said: "From the last 25 years nothing has been done. We are

ashamed to tell people that we live here. People fall here during the day. VIPs travel on the road but they do not care about it. From 2003 I remember nothing has been done about it. The traffic is huge and there is a hospital nearby, but no one cares."

Locals also complained about the foul odour coming from the uncovered drain. "The pungent smell is unbearable," several residents told Kashmir Observer, adding that the stench makes shops and homes hard to use during parts of the day.

Ghulam Ahmad Bangroo of Iqbalabad described how the situation affects daily routines. "Open drains are all over the place. When I leave for prayers during morning and evening hours I feel it is difficult to walk on the street because of the traffic," he said.

Residents say the open channel in parts of Bemina is wide and exposed. "The drain, at least 15 to

17 feet wide, is open and locals say that some went into the drain," they said, urging authorities to "look for alternatives and construct a footpath so that the road is safe for pedestrians."

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation and CEO Smart City Limited, Faz Lul Hasseeb, acknowledged the complaints and said the issue had been taken up with the civic body. "The matter has been brought to my notice and till the next few days we will see what can be done to ease the suffering of people. We will do the best that can be done and space will be best utilized. The best solution will be carried out," he said.

Despite official assurances, residents said they want immediate, tangible action covering the drains, building a safe footpath and checking the health and safety risks posed by the foul smell and open channels rather than repeated promises.

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- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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

 <b>HIJRI</b> <b>CALENDAR</b> 19 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1447	PRAYERS		
	FAJR	4: 48	ZUHR
ASR	4: 53	Magrib	6:48
ISHA	8: 10		

## This Day In History

- 533 - General Belisarius of the Byzantine Empire defeats Gellimer and the Vandals at the Battle of Ad Decimium, near Carthage, North Africa
- 604- Sabianin begins his reign as Pope replacing Pope Gregory the Great
- 1224 - Francis of Assisi is afflicted with stigmata after a vision praying on Mount Verna
- 1500 - Pedro Álvares Cabral and his Portuguese expedition arrive in Calicut, India
- 1515- First day of two-day Battle of Marignano: Francis I's French army defeats Swiss army force near Milan
- 1574 - Turkish fleet recaptures Tunis
- 1579 - Breda forms Union of Utrecht
- 1743 - Great Britain, Austria and Savoye-Sardinia sign Treaty of Worms
- 1751-Britain signs Austrian & Russian alliance
- 1759- British beat French forces at the battle of Plains of Abraham near Quebec - kills both leading generals Wolfe and Montcalm
- 1782- The Grand Assault on Gibraltar by the allied French and Spanish fleets including ten floating batteries and land forces is heavily defeated by the British garrison with all of the floating batteries destroyed and allied casualties of 1,473 compared to only 83 for the British
- 1787 - Prussian army moves into Netherlands
- 1791- France's King Louis XVI accepts constitution
- 1800- Curacao in British hands (until Jan 1803)
- 1808- Finnish War: In the Battle of Jutas, Swedish forces under Lieutenant General Georg Carl von Döbeln beat the Russians, making von Döbeln a Swedish war hero.
- 1845- English chemist Michael Faraday discovers the 'Faraday effect', the influence of a magnetic field on polarized light
- 1850 - The main-belt asteroid "12 Victoria" is discovered by J R Hind
- 1861- 1st naval battle of Civil War, Union frigate "Colorado" sinks privateer "Judah" off Pensacola, Fla
- 1867- General Edward Canby orders South Carolina courts to impanel blacks jurors
- 1882 - Battle of Count el-Kebir: British troops defeat Egyptian force in the decisive battle of the Anglo-Egyptian War
- 1898- 20,000 Paris construction workers go on strike
- 1906- 1st airplane flight in Europe, Brazilian Alberto Santos-Dumont test flies his hybrid 14-bis plane (attached to a hydrogen balloon for take-off), at Bagatelle, France
- 1923- Miguel Primo de Rivera leads a military coup with the support of King Alfonso XIII to become Prime Minister of Spain
- 1925- 1st US University for African Americans, Xavier University, opens in New Orleans
- 1933- Elizabeth McCombs becomes the first New Zealand female Member of Parliament
- 1940 - Buckingham Palace damaged by German bombs
- 1940 - Italian troops under Marshal Graziani attack Egypt
- 1942 - Battle of Edson's Ridge (2nd Japanese assault) at Guadalcanal
- 1942- German forces attack Stalingrad
- 1943- German counter attack at Salerno
- 1944- Great Atlantic hurricane reaches peak intensity as a Category 4 storm, goes on to kill 300-400 along the US East Coast
- 1966- Johannes Balthazar Vorster sworn in as premier of South Africa
- 1968- Albania leaves Warsaw pact
- 1970 - Palestine guerillas conquer Irbid Jordania
- 1971- Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet premier, buried in Moscow
- 1971- World Hockey Association forms
- 1973- ABC announces it obtained TV rights for 1976 Olympics
- 1973 - Syrian/Israeli dogfight over Mediterranean Sea
- 1974 - OPEC instructs its Secretary General to "carry out a study of supply and demand in relation to possible production controls"

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of  
 Imtiyaz Begum (W/o Late S. Mohammad Anwar Khan, D/o Late Col. S. Peer Mohammad Khan, Ustad-Mohalla, Jammu) who passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2025 in Toronto, Canada.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاغِبُونَ

May Almighty Allah (SWT) grant her Jannat-ul-Firdous. Ameen.

Fateha Khawani for the departed soul will be held on Sunday, 14th September, 2025 at the residence of Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain (Son-in-Law), Friends Colony, Opposite Mosque, Near Harwan Garden, Harwan, Srinagar at 10:00 AM.

Bereaved Family  
 9419000991  
 9419009882

## KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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# Kashmir's Sheep Problem

Local sheep breeds in Kashmir remain underused, as Rajasthan imports take center stage. It's a missed chance to strengthen farmers, economy, and tradition



Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

tion of around 3.2 million. This number has been growing steadily. Local breeds such as Marino, Bakerwali, Karnahi, and Gurezi are well-suited for our terrain and climate. These sheep are also known for producing high-quality wool, yet their meat remains overlooked. The government recently imported over 400 Australian Merino rams, a positive development. But it is not enough. What we need is a strategy: scien-

are preferred because they have lower fat content, making them ideal for wazwan. I challenge that assumption. Why has no focused research attempted to breed Marino sheep with a leaner profile? Why isn't the Sheep Husbandry Department, SKUAST Kashmir, or SKUAST Jammu taking steps toward this goal? If wazas can be sensitized to embrace local breeds, demand for

This shift will take effort. Research must study the right breeding practices. Pastures must be managed scientifically. And public awareness campaigns must showcase the quality and potential of local breeds. The stakes are more than economic. Reducing reliance on imported sheep cuts environmental costs. Transporting sheep over long distances increases pollution and adds strain to fragile roads



### KO VIEW

## Valley's 'Complex' Situation

In towns across Kashmir, shopping complexes are rising at an alarming rate. From Srinagar's expanding suburbs to newly developing townships, glass-and-concrete structures are replacing small shops, old markets, and farmland. They promise modern convenience: a decentralized model where offices, eateries, and retail stores co-exist under one roof. On paper, this looks like progress. In reality, it is a growing problem.

The sudden surge of these complexes started around 2019, following a notable rise in tourist visits. Investors saw an opportunity. Landowners, hoping to capitalize on future growth, began converting their agricultural land into commercial properties. Many took large loans from banks, expecting the market to thrive. Yet experts warn this is a textbook domino effect, where unchecked development is creating more problems than solutions.

Kashmir has never been a region driven by a strong service economy. The Economic Survey of Jammu and Kashmir places the service sector at around 35 percent of local GDP, far below the national average. These complexes face a harsh reality: the demand simply doesn't match the supply. Many of the buildings stand half-empty, others barely survive.

The shift is not just economic. It erases the valley's cultural and commercial identity. Lal Chowk, once the bustling center of Srinagar's trade, where generations of merchants and customers came together, is losing relevance. The scattered complexes fracture what was once a centralized marketplace, a place that connected people not just through commerce but through community.

Behind the scenes, this boom is worsening Kashmir's deeper economic woes. The unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir hovers around 17 percent, nearly double India's national average. These complexes generate minimal employment, mostly offering a handful of jobs per structure. They are not the solution to Kashmir's crisis of livelihoods.

More troubling is the cost to local families. Many farmers are abandoning fertile land to invest in construction. They risk losing both their agricultural heritage and their financial stability. With low footfall, businesses struggle to survive, leaving owners and investors trapped in debt.

Kashmir needs strategic, sustainable development, not this reckless race toward concrete. Urban planners and policymakers must ask the hard questions: Where is the real growth? What generates sustainable jobs? How do we preserve the economic and cultural soul of the valley?

Unless these questions are addressed, Kashmir's obsession with shopping complexes will deepen the economic divide and accelerate the loss of its identity.

Every time I visit Srinagar markets, I see the same scene unfold.

Butchers handle Rajasthan sheep with practiced ease. Trucks carrying these animals arrive from far-off states like Rajasthan and Delhi.

I ask the same question over and over: Why aren't our own Kashmir Marino or Bakerwali sheep part of the everyday mutton trade?

For years, we've told ourselves that Rajasthan breeds are somehow better: leaner, more suited for the grand wazwan, our traditional culinary art.

I have seen respected wazas insist on Rajasthan sheep when preparing for weddings or family feasts. Meanwhile, local sheep are raised almost exclusively for Eid-ul-Azha, the festival when sacrifice spikes demand.

In Budgam district alone, over the last five years, about 60,000 sheep are sacrificed every Eid. Roughly 35,000 to 40,000 of these are local breeds. But outside this window, these hardy local varieties hardly find their way to our butcher shops or kitchens.

The numbers don't lie. On any regular day, Kashmir consumes between 5,500 and 6,000 sheep, of which around 60 percent are imported.

I cannot help but see the economic irony.

According to the 20th Livestock Census of 2018-19, Jammu and Kashmir has a sheep popula-

tion of around 3.2 million. This number has been growing steadily.

Local breeds such as Marino, Bakerwali, Karnahi, and Gurezi are well-suited for our terrain and climate. These sheep are also known for producing high-quality wool, yet their meat remains overlooked.

The government recently imported over 400 Australian Merino rams, a positive development. But it is not enough. What we need is a strategy: scientific breeding, improved pasture management, and awareness.

Today, our highland pastures grow wild fodder with no planning. Instead of letting nature take its course, why don't we introduce structured forest fodder projects?

I have long argued for pilot programs that help farmers grow quality fodder, raising Marino and Bakerwali sheep to meet the standards of daily use.

I recall the chaos last Eid when around 300 weddings were canceled because landslides blocked NH 44. Dozens of trucks carrying Rajasthan sheep remained stranded. This should be a wake-up call. Why are we risking our cultural celebrations and farmers' incomes on a system so fragile it collapses with the first storm? Some say Rajasthan sheep

indigenous sheep would rise. The market would expand beyond Eid ul Azha.

Today, farmers depend entirely on one season, leaving them vulnerable. A continuous market could stabilize their income. Wholesale dealers, who profit from imported sheep, resist change.

It is time for government intervention, regulation, and awareness campaigns.

The Food and Civil Supplies Department, Food Safety Organisation, and local NGOs must play a larger role. Chefs, butchers, and consumers need to be convinced that local breeds are not inferior. The narrative must change.

The pride of Kashos should not lie in importing livestock but in growing it sustainably within our own pastures.

and ecosystems. Supporting local breeds strengthens the very identity of Kashmiri food, culture, and economy.

I have seen the resilience of local sheep farmers. I have seen their determination, working against odds. Their efforts deserve more than seasonal relief.

Our mutton industry can be self-sufficient. It can thrive every day of the year.

All it takes is belief in what we already have: our land, our livestock, and our people.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. He can be reached at bhatrajamuzaffar@gmail.com.

Glulam Rasool spent over thirty years working as a clerk in Srinagar's government offices. He was proud of his job, steady and respectable. He worked long hours, often under the strain of Kashmir's harsh winters and political uncertainty, believing that a pension and gratuity would carry him into a peaceful retirement. Instead, they have become sources of anxiety.

Rasool's story is far from unique.

Scores of retired government employees in Kashmir face mounting debts, rising medical expenses, and the pressure of supporting their children well into adulthood.

The familiar narrative of stable government employment unraveling into financial instability is becoming increasingly common.

Once, government jobs were abundant, prized for the security they offered in a region marked by economic and political challenges.

Now, these jobs are scarce, their competition fierce.

As vacancies shrink, younger generations find themselves waiting longer for employment, often relying on their parents for financial support far beyond what previous generations expected.

The real problem emerges when children pursue higher education outside Kashmir, a growing trend among Kashmiri families.

Fees in mainland India or abroad can cost several lakhs of rupees. The social obligation to arrange marriages, especially of daughters, comes with its own heavy price tags.

These cultural and economic realities combine to drain the savings of the service class.

Despite their best efforts, many lack the tools to plan effectively for long-term financial health. Traditional

## Retire in Debt

Decades of government service once promised stability in Kashmir. Today, retired employees face rising debts and insecurity, while the next generation struggles to plan for an uncertain future.

Irshad Mushtaq

savings accounts and fixed deposits, once considered safe, now deliver returns that barely outpace inflation.

The inflation rate in India has averaged around 6 to 7 percent annually in recent years, while fixed deposits offer 5 to 6 percent returns at best.



**The wisdom of elders, passed down in conversation rather than books, holds untapped value. Retired officials often share stories of managing family expenses during uncertain times, choosing between medical emergencies and basic household needs.**

This gap slowly erodes purchasing power, leaving retirees exposed to rising costs without a sufficient financial buffer.

A systematic approach to investment remains elusive for many in Kashmir. Financial literacy is low, and opportunities for guidance are limited. Mutual funds, recurring deposits, insurance policies, and government schemes remain misunderstood or inaccessible to many public servants.

Few think of setting aside 30 percent of their income early on, or building a diversified portfolio that can withstand market cycles and inflation.

The wisdom of elders, passed down in conversation

rather than books, holds untapped value. Retired officials often share stories of managing family expenses during uncertain times, choosing between medical emergencies and basic household needs.

Their practical experience offers a roadmap for

young families facing similar dilemmas today. But these lessons rarely make it into structured financial planning.

Farida Jan, a retired school headmistress in Anantnag, managed to support three children through university by making small, steady investments in government savings schemes and buying property over time. "It wasn't easy," she says, "but starting early, saving small amounts regularly, and being disciplined made the difference."

Farida's experience is a model rarely acknowledged in formal financial discussions but is proving vital in Kashmir's unique socio-economic context. The impact extends be-

yond individual families.

An entire generation risks entering retirement without financial stability, triggering a cycle of dependency and distress. Hospitals report rising cases of retired employees seeking medical help without means to pay. Families delay medical treatment or push children into poorly paid jobs simply to survive.

Kashmir's young generation faces a stark choice. They can either replicate the same path that led their elders into financial uncertainty, or they can break free of it by taking financial planning seriously from the start.

Open discussions in families, practical investment strategies, and seeking guidance from those who have lived through hardship are essential first steps.

Government policies should reflect this urgent need. Financial literacy programs tailored for Kashmir, affordable investment options for middle-income earners, and targeted retirement planning services could offer real relief.

Without these, generations will continue to suffer the consequences of unplanned futures.

The challenge is clear. The future of Kashmir's service class will not improve through wishful thinking. It will improve by building resilience today.

A disciplined saving habit, sound investments, and respect for the wisdom of those who endured uncertainty are the most practical, immediate tools available.

For Glulam Rasool and thousands like him, hope lies in action, starting now.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

## Beautifully Ugly

At a time when healthcare should offer comfort and healing, the Chest Diseases Hospital in Srinagar stands as a painful paradox, where advanced treatments meet crumbling infrastructure and neglected care

Faizaan Bashir

When I first walked up to the Chest Diseases (CD) Hospital in Srinagar, I expected a place of hope.

After all, this is the region's primary institute for treating respiratory illnesses, a critical service in a valley where air pollution, smoking, and damp winters only worsen health problems. What I found instead was an unsettling contradiction: a hospital full of skilled doctors and committed staff, yet wrapped in neglect and structural failure. It was beautifully ugly.

The doctors at the CD Hospital do their best. They move with purpose, attend to patients with care, and often extend their help beyond the hospital walls. Some remain in touch with families at home when the patient's condition is grave. These men and women are genuinely dedicated, and their work deserves applause.

Still, the building itself feels trapped in a cruel irony.

I saw patients struggling to climb steep gradients and stairs, many of them gasping for air, their lungs failing them, while attendants carried them up by hand.

The hospital's main entrance sits well below the structure. Though there is a ramp, wheelchairs are almost nowhere to be found. Most are left abandoned in corners of the Out-patient Department or the casualty ward.

Picture a man battling breathlessness arriving in a medical emergency, only to have no proper means of getting inside except the sheer strength of his fatigue.

I don't say this to exaggerate. I dare anyone to visit the hospital and see it for themselves. The ramp is there in theory, but in practice, it's useless without wheelchairs ready at the base.

Even if you manage to wheel the patient part of the way, the casualty section itself sits a floor above, with no gradual gradient leading there. Carrying patients two flights up becomes the only option.

It is especially tragic because this hospital treats people suffering from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), tuberculosis, and other severe lung conditions. For these

patients, every extra step is torture. Every breath drawn is laboured. And the hospital becomes less a place of healing and more a place of suffering.

Cleanliness, a fundamental requirement of any hospital, fares no better. I have visited many hospitals in Kashmir, and few match the CD Hospital in filth.

Washrooms reek of feces and urine, walls are stained, and the lingering stench seems to mock the very idea of care. People blame patients and their families for littering, and true, some lack basic civility. But when a hospital provides only a handful of washrooms and no functional wash-basins, what else should we expect?

We need more than doctors and treatments here. The infrastructure has been left untouched for decades. I fear the passing of time has calcified this neglect into something permanent. We live in a world racing toward advanced medicine, digital health records, and smart clinics, while this hospital stands like a relic, lost in its own rot.

Imagine, right next to this building, roads are becoming smooth, modern buildings rise, and ambitious plans for Srinagar's future are in motion. Yet, the CD Hospital remains stubbornly crooked, an old structure failing both doctors and patients.

There are no easy answers, no simple fixes. But if there is one urgent solution, it is restructuring the hospital itself.

It needs a proper system of wheelchairs, functional ramps, sufficient washrooms, and clean wards. Without them, treatment becomes hollow gesture. Medicine wrapped in stench and hardship only adds insult to injury.

My visit left me frustrated, disturbed, and saddened. Kashmir deserves better. The people who come to the CD Hospital deserve better. The doctors trying to do good deserve better.

Above all, the patients who suffer the most, some gasping for their next breath, deserve better.

The author holds a postgraduate degree in History and can be reached at peerfaizanbashir@gmail.com.

# Scottish Father's Kashmir Campaign

For 37 years, a Scottish father crossed borders, lobbied officials, and held on to hope that never faded.

Fiza Masoodi

On a late summer day in 1981, in the meadows of Sonamarg, a young Scottish woman walked out alone and never came back.

Nineteen-year-old Alison MacDonald, a student from Aberdeen, had been traveling through Kashmir with a friend. The two agreed to part for a few days: one left on a pony trek into the hills, Alison stayed behind.

She was last seen buying apples near a bridge. Her rucksack and clothes were later found neatly folded in her guesthouse room.

For six days, her family knew nothing. Then the cable reached Scotland: Alison was missing.

Her father, Kenny MacDonald, was in Edinburgh, only months into his training for the ministry. He had grown up on the Isle of Skye, one of eight children in a Free Church family, and was by then a husband and the father of four. He had only recently left behind a career in Customs and Excise and stepped into the calling he believed God had kept for him.

The cable struck like a hammer. Within days, Kenny was on a plane to India.

The valley he entered was beautiful and confounding. Sonamarg lay beneath peaks that turned gold in late afternoon light. Streams cut through meadows where families picnicked and shepherds led their flocks. Yet when Kenny asked what had happened to his daughter, the answers shifted.

Kashmir police suggested she had fallen into the river. Others said she had wandered into the mountains. Nothing was certain, and everything sounded evasive.

Kenny did not believe the stories. He became convinced that Alison had been taken, forced into a life she had not chosen.

That conviction, born in those first days in Kashmir, shaped the rest of his life.

Kenny MacDonald was not a man to give up. His life until then had been defined by discipline and faith. As a young man he had served in Aden during National Service, then built a career as an officer with HM Customs. He had played football with rare dedication, appearing for Scotland's national amateur side more times than any Hebridean before or since, and even caught the notice of Tottenham Hotspur.

He might have gone south to London in 1958, but he was engaged to Reta Cromarty, a young woman from Orkney, and he turned the offer down.

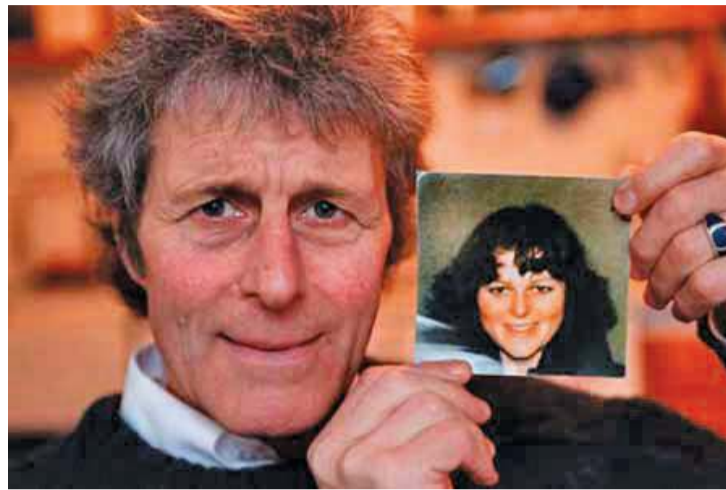
They married the same year, and together they raised four children: Sam, Derek, Mairi, and Alison.

Faith came to him slowly, then completely.

By the late seventies he felt drawn to ministry, and in 1980 he entered Free Church College. He was forty-five years old, steady, fit, and brimming with purpose. Less than a year later, his daughter disappeared.

From then on, his life became divided: minister and father, preacher and searcher.

Kenny travelled to Kashmir and Pakistan more than twenty times, often with Reta beside him. He pressed officials, met police, lobbied governments, knocked on embassy doors, and walked through villages with Alison's photograph. He kept her name alive in newspapers, spoke at meetings, and posted



appeals.

He did not let the story fade.

The fragments of rumour that reached him kept hope alive. One Kashmiri told him he had seen a fair-haired woman in a remote village. Another reported children with unusual colouring.

In 2007, a taped recording of a militant circulated in Srinagar. To Kenny's ear, the man's English carried a West Highland inflection that sounded like Alison.

None of it could be proved, yet none of it could be dismissed either.

For Kenny, each rumour was a signpost pointing away from despair.

Meanwhile, in Rosskeen, the parish he served after ordination, he became known as a gentle pastor. His sermons were plainspoken, his services brief, never more than an hour.

He wore a neat grey suit and clerical collar in the pulpit, but in the manse or on his rounds he appeared in faded jeans and a shaggy

Dennis the Menace jumper. He kept an open home, visiting ceaselessly, offering counsel, listening more than he spoke. Parishioners recalled him as a man who preached with tears, who seemed always to carry both grief and grace into his ministry.

By the 1990s, Kenny was battling multiple sclerosis, losing his sight and mobility. Yet in 1994, he wrote Alison: A Father's Search for His Missing Daughter, turning decades of anguish into a testament to unwavering hope. The book is less about answers than about a father's refusal to stop searching, his love outlasting borders, years, and doubt.

He retired in 1995, without ceremony, though he would later serve again as a locum minister in Skye.

Even as his body weakened, his voice remained steady, and his conviction about Alison did not falter. He held on to her bus-pass photograph, and spoke of her in the present tense. "Somebody must know where she is," he repeated.



For some, it is tragedy that Kenny left this life without the answer he longed for. For others, it is testimony that love can remain stubborn long after reason has given up, that it can carry a man across mountains, through illness, and into the final days of his life.

There was no evidence she was dead.

Kenny's story did not unfold in isolation. By the 1990s, Kashmir itself had descended into turmoil. Thousands of families in the valley faced their own unanswered questions. When Kenny spoke to Kashmiri parents of missing persons, he found their grief mirrored his own. They too carried photographs, filed petitions, and waited in vain for word of their missing.

For them, Alison's case was a foreign story but also a familiar one.

In 2015, as the decades stretched on, the MacDonald family renewed their campaign. They offered a £20,000 reward for information. The "Let's Find Alison" Facebook page carried appeals, prayers, and

photographs. Kenny gave interviews, his words unchanged: Alison is still alive, somewhere, in Kashmir. He never softened his belief.

By then he had become a grandfather many times over. He lived with Reta in Golspie, after years in Resolis and Dunvegan. Parishioners remembered his warmth, humour, and gratitude for small things. He bore his illness with patience. And still, he carried Alison with him, her absence like a presence in every room.

When Kenny MacDonald died in January 2018, at the age of eighty-three, in Migdale Hospital in Bonar Bridge, tributes came from both church and community. Friends recalled his humility, his love of conversation, and his gift for listening. Parishioners spoke of his devotion and his kindness. The "Let's Find Alison" campaign wrote simply: "He has gone to receive his eternal reward."

What remains is the story of a father who never stopped searching.

For some, it is tragedy that Kenny left this life without the answer he longed for. For others, it is testimony that love can remain stubborn long after reason has given up, that it can carry a man across mountains, through illness, and into the final days of his life.

Alison's disappearance has never been solved. No proof has ever surfaced that she is alive, and none that she is dead. The case remains open.

Somewhere between Sonamarg's meadows and the memories of those who lived through the years of turmoil lies the answer Kenny never found.

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## Fighting for Space

Free rides were meant to open doors for women. Instead, daily commutes have become a test of endurance, patience, and courage

Syed Mohammad Burhan

At 8:30 every morning, Rafia stands near Lal Chowk, a central square in Srinagar, watching the familiar line of Smart City buses roll in.

Her schoolbag hangs over one shoulder, her eyes flitting across the crowd, calculating the odds of squeezing in without confrontation.

The air, already heavy with humidity, seems to pulse with tension as commuters press closer.

The bus doors open. A wave of bodies surges forward. She steps in, arms close to her sides, gripping her bag as though it's a shield.

The smell of sweat rises, voices murmur.

Today, a man mutters something about women "taking over" the bus. Rafia stiffens, her face unreadable.

She learned early on that survival meant looking past these remarks.

Rafia is not alone. Her story has become part of a larger narrative unfolding in Srinagar, a city where public transport once symbolized despair for women and now, after a bold government move, has become an arena of cultural friction.

In April this year, the local government waived bus fares for women, a decision hailed as progressive. The idea was simple: free travel would empower women to pursue education, jobs, and social engagement.

At first, the change felt empowering. Saima, 23, a graduate student, recalled how the new buses were a relief. "Before, I avoided buses," she said. "The old public transport was filthy, unsafe. You never knew what to expect."

For the first time, she felt a sense of control over her commute.

Zeenat, a 35-year-old marketing professional, remembers the first time she boarded a Smart City bus without fear. "It was like a small victory," she said. "The space was organized, calm. I could sit without worrying about being harassed."

But as the months passed, the promise of safety began to erode.

The decision to make rides free drew a sharp response from many men, who perceived it as an infringement on their space.

Overcrowding worsened. The number of female commuters doubled, according to the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, while the fleet expanded only marginally.

Instead of adding new buses, some were reallocated from urban routes to suburban services, squeezing the sys-

tem further.

In the narrow corridors of a packed Smart Bus, personal space vanished. Men jostled past women in anger or indifference. Saima described her daily ride as "negotiating space."

"Some days," she said, "it feels like I have to prove I deserve to be here."

Zeenat's approach is more direct. Last week, near Lal Chowk, she confronted a group of older men shouting at women boarding the bus. "They acted like their age gave them a right," she said. "I told them, 'This bus is for



**The buses, in many ways, reflect Srinagar's broader struggle. They were meant to signal progress, modernity, and safety. Instead, they reveal unresolved tensions about gender, power, and dignity.**

women. I won't tolerate your harassment."

The men recoiled, startled by her defiance.

At Dalgate, a protest stirred controversy. A young man walked out, complaining that the packed buses caused "inconvenience."

The protest was less about logistics and more about perceived entitlement, a reaction to a policy designed to level opportunity.

For Rafia, the Smart City bus is a lifeline. Her days stretch long, teaching at a government school and returning home with fatigue etched in her face. Skipping the bus isn't an option.

Alternatives are costlier or unreliable. The old 407s remain crowded, unregulated, and a source of dread. Former SMC Commissioner Athar

Aamir Khan, the then-CEO of the Smart City Project, had described the fleet as a "commitment to safety." In early days, that promise seemed real.

But now, cameras that once symbolized oversight stand powerless when bodies press shoulder to shoulder. Panic buttons lie out of reach. The fleet has become a mirror of the old chaos.

The data reflects this shift.

The Municipal Corporation estimates the number of daily female commuters doubled within months of the free policy's implementation. Yet the fleet size grew by less than 10 percent. Advocates warned of this imbalance from the start, but their concerns were sidelined.

The policy's goal was to enable women to participate fully in society, to move freely without fear. Instead, commuting became a test of endurance. "Every day, I feel like I'm fighting for my presence," Rafia said. "It's exhausting."

Zeenat argues for systemic solutions. She calls for stricter enforcement at boarding points, public awareness campaigns, and expanding the fleet. She also supports women-only buses during peak hours as safety measures.

"Empowerment doesn't come from idealistic policies," she said. "It comes from real, enforceable actions."

The deeper problem is cultural. The idea that public spaces are male domains runs deep in Srinagar's social fabric. Free travel for women challenges that belief.

Some men see the policy as a personal affront, expressing it through rage or rant. The solution lies in reaffirming that these buses serve a public good, not a personal loss.

The buses, in many ways, reflect Srinagar's broader struggle. They were meant to signal progress, modernity, and safety. Instead, they reveal unresolved tensions about gender, power, and dignity.

As Rafia rides back home that evening, she looks out the window at the city's fading light, hoping that tomorrow will not be another battle.

Her story, like that of Saima and Zeenat, stands as a reminder: meaningful change demands more than policy. It requires action, attention, and the courage to confront societal norms.

Srinagar's test is unfolding, and the stakes are high.

— The author is a Special Correspondent at Kashmir Observer.

## The Weaver's Dream

The novel traces lives under constraint, revealing how dreams, folklore, and courage intersect in the heart of Kashmir.

Naveed Qazi

Shabir Ahmad Mir's *The Last Knot* invites readers into a Kashmir that feels both familiar and enchanted.

The novel follows a nineteenth-century carpet-weaver who dreams of crafting a flying carpet, a symbol of freedom, defiance, and imagination in a world tightly bound by tradition and power.

Mir's prose transforms the landscape into an actor in the story. Haer Parbat or Kohi Maran looms over the valley like a watchful guardian, Dal Lake mirrors the sky with uncanny stillness, and the surrounding mountains seem to follow every human gesture.

These descriptions carry the weight of history pressing on the characters, asking readers to feel the rough weave of the carpet, the cold stone of the fort, and the tension in the streets of Srinagar under Dogra rule.

The novel's structure mirrors the weaver's loom: threads intersect, loop, and form intricate patterns. Time bends and folds, while myth and reality overlap. Characters like Abli Bab, the dyer, and Heemal appear in fragments, inviting readers to stitch the story together.

This non-linear design can be demanding, yet it mirrors life in a place where every act of emancipation feels provisional.

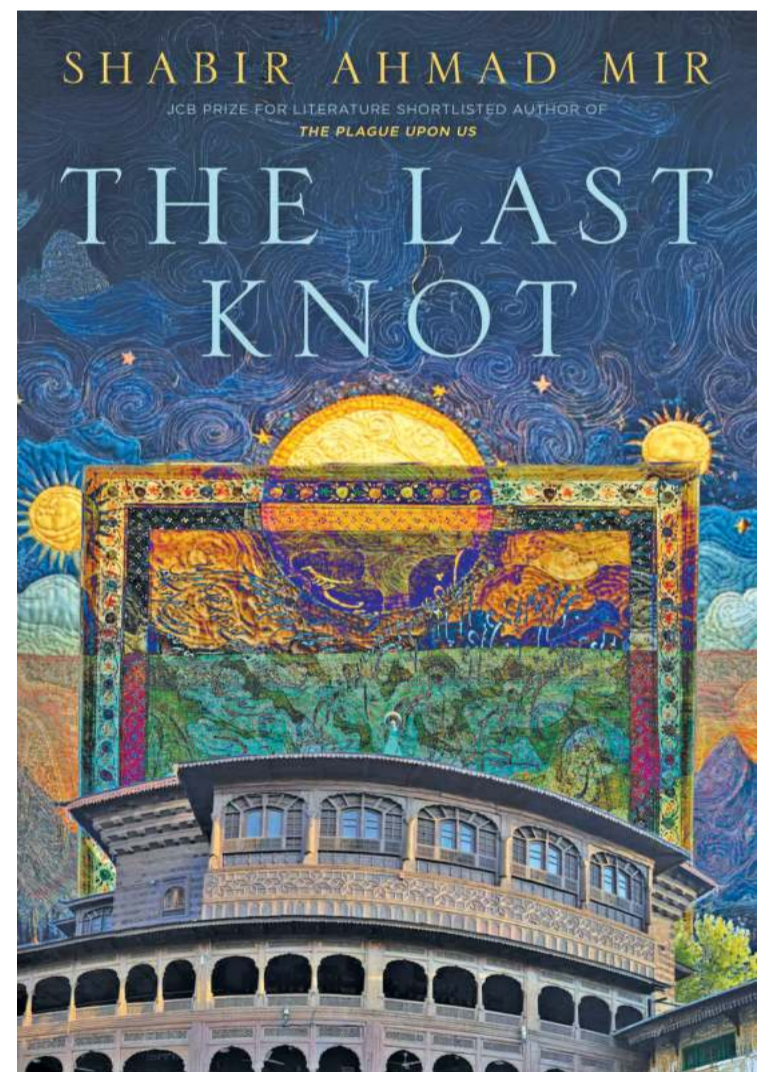
At the heart of *The Last Knot* is the pursuit of aspiration under constraint. The carpet becomes a metaphor for imagining a life beyond the strictures imposed by craft-masters, rulers, and circumstance. Each step toward its creation feels like an act of resistance, a claim on possibility in a world built to constrain.

The novel is less about whether the carpet flies and more about the transformation found in daring to dream.

Mir resists tidy endings. The knot of the title remains partially tied, echoing Kashmir's own unresolved history. Characters speak in suggestion and silence, leaving motivations open and experiences layered.

This ambiguity may challenge some readers, but it deepens the novel's resonance.

In moving toward allegory and myth, Mir charts a new path for Kashmiri fiction. While much of the region's literature has explored social realism, *The Last Knot* embraces folklore and collective memory,



**The Last Knot demonstrates how Kashmiri fiction can explore the magical while remaining anchored in history.**

reshaping history through storytelling without romanticizing it.

The novel also converses with global traditions of magical realism, yet the voice remains distinctly

Kashmiri, rooted in local rhythms, cultural motifs, and the cadence of oral storytelling.

If the novel demands patience, it rewards it. Its density, the symbolic weight, and the looping narrative reflect the complexity of the lives it portrays. Reading it becomes a deliberate, immersive act, untying the story as one might unravel the threads of a carpet.

*The Last Knot* demonstrates how Kashmiri fiction can explore the magical while remaining anchored in history.

Through its blend of myth, memory, and the ordinary struggles of people in a fraught time, the novel offers a fresh, imaginative voice that is unmistakably of its place.

— The reviewer is the author of eleven books. He can be reached at [naveedqazi@live.com](mailto:naveedqazi@live.com)

## Multi-crore Fraud Cases J&K Crime Branch Files 7 Chargesheets Against 12

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Police's Crime Branch on Friday filed seven chargesheets in separate cases against 12 accused including an advocate, a government teacher and a cashier in connection with various frauds involving over Rs 2 crore and the use of fake documents.

The chargesheets were filed in seven separate cases against Public Works Department (PWD) cashier Slocus Nar, advocate Brij Mohan, government school teacher Jameel Anjum Mir, besides nine private people, a Crime Branch (CB) spokesperson said.

The CB filed a chargesheet against Nar, who was posted as cashier in the office of the mechanical division in Jammu, for criminal breach of trust and misappropriating huge funds by misusing his official position.

In another case, Jatinder Sharma and Parveen Kumar were charged with duping a Himachal Pradesh resident, Dhian Chand, of Rs 70.20 lakh on the pretext of providing Kahirwood, the spokesperson said.

A chargesheet was also presented against Ashok Kumar, Ram Lal, Kamal Kishore and

advocate Brij Mohan for obtaining caste certificates and permanent residence certificates (PRCs) using fake and forged documents.

The CB filed a chargesheet against suspended government school teacher Jameel Anjum Mir for duping Rashid Manhas of Rs 10 lakh in cash and gold worth Rs 5 lakh on the pretext of providing a job.

In another case, Rahul Shakhdar was charged with duping Rs 23 lakh by assuring a government job to the grandson of the complainant, Kewal Krishan Gupta of Jammu, the spokesperson said.

A chargesheet was also filed against Ashish Dinesh Kumar Shah of Mumbai for duping Jammu resident Bonish Behal of Rs 88.50 lakh through real estate fraud.

Yet another chargesheet was submitted against Firdous Ahmed Ahanger (currently lodged in central jail, Srinagar) and Rahil Ahmed (now absconding) for fraudulently withdrawing a huge amount from the complainant's bank account.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Crime, Jammu, Benam Tosh, confirmed that seven chargesheets in cases have been filed in courts of law for judicial determination, the spokesperson said.

## Nepal Gets Its 1st Woman PM Ex-Chief Justice Sushila Karki Takes Oath

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Former chief justice Sushila Karki was sworn in as the interim Prime Minister of Nepal. The ceremony, held at Nepal's Rashtrapati Bhawan, capped days of speculation and behind-the-scenes negotiations, bringing to office the country's first woman head of government. Following the oath-taking ceremony, it was decided that general elections would be held on March 5, 2026.

Besides President Ramchandra Paudel and PM Karki, Vice President Ram Sahay Yadav and Chief Justice Prakash Man Singh Rawat were present during swearing-in ceremony. India's Ambassador to Nepal, Naveen Srivastava, also met and congratulated the newly sworn-in PM.

The decision, announced formally by the Office of the President, followed a consensus between President Ram Chandra Paudel, Nepal Army chief General Ashok Raj Sigdel, and representatives of the Generation Z protest movement, whose agitation had driven the resignation of former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli earlier in the week.

The developments followed days of mass protests, spearheaded by young Nepalese



frustrated with corruption and unemployment. Those protests, which led to a police crackdown this week, left at least 51 people dead and forced the departure of Oli.

While Karki's name had been circulating for several days as a possible consensus candidate, she was not the only figure considered. At one stage, reports suggested that protesters were divided, with some rallying behind Kulman Ghising, the engineer widely credited with ending Nepal's power shortages.

Another name in the mix was Balendra Shah -- better known as Balen -- the 35-year-old Kathmandu mayor, rapper, and politician whose popularity among urban youth has

surged. Karki, who served as Nepal's first female chief justice between 2016 and 2017, is regarded by many younger Nepalese as an uncompromising figure. During her time on the bench, she earned a reputation for taking a hard line against corruption.

Her judicial career, however, was not without turbulence. Less than a year into her tenure as chief justice, the government initiated an impeachment motion against her, a move widely seen as politically motivated. That effort collapsed under the weight of public pressure, but the episode left Karki disillusioned and she eventually stepped down.

## IGNOU Term-End Examination December 2025 to Begin from 1st December

PIB

Srinagar: Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) will conduct the Term-End Examination (TEE) December 2025 for ODL and Online programmes in both Pen & Paper and CBT modes from 1st December 2025 to 8th January 2026. The examination form is available on the Student Portal and can be submitted up to 6th October 2025 (6:00 PM) without late fee.

IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar will hold the examinations at 36 centres located in Government Degree Colleges across Kashmir Division and Ladakh. Students registered for Practical/Lab courses, including BLIS, are advised to

contact the Regional Centre for venue and schedule. Online Hall Tickets will be issued in November.

Regional Director Dr. A.H. Rizvi said, "The Regional Centre is fully geared up for the fair and smooth conduct of the December 2025 examinations. We are grateful to the local administration for security support and to the postal authorities for facilitating the handling of sealed examination material beyond working hours."

Candidates must carry their Hall Ticket and valid IGNOU ID Card to the examination centre. Use of mobile phones or electronic gadgets will not be permitted. Students may contact IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar in case of any query.



## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Reopened Highway

"We had booked two quintals of meat. The dealer could not deliver," Nazir Ahmad said. "Without mutton, there can be no wazwan, and without wazwan, there can be no wedding."

Wedding planners, families, and caterers reported similar disruptions in the valley. Some couples postponed their ceremonies entirely, awaiting the return of regular supplies. Others scaled down celebrations, serving modest meals to immediate family members.

"It was a simple nikah with basic dishes," said Kamran Ahmad, a groom from Srinagar. "The walima was cancelled. There was no alternative."

Kashmir consumes approximately 60,000 tonnes of mutton annually, worth over 4,000 crore, with weddings alone accounting for roughly 1,500 crore.

The prolonged highway closure underscored the valley's reliance on imported meat from Delhi, Punjab, and Haryana, and reignited debates over boosting local livestock production.

Khazir Mohammad Regoo, head of the Mutton Dealers Association, said that because the highway was closed, more than 200 weddings had to be postponed.

"Around 300 sheep had to be trekked over 20 kilometers through mud and mountains," he said. "Families received only a few sheep for nikahs. Wazwan feasts had to be cancelled."

The disruption also affected chefs, photographers, and marriage hall owners.

Mohammad Shareef Khan, a prominent chef from Srinagar, said, "For each quintal of mutton, a waza charges 15,000 to 20,000. With cancellations, business has stopped entirely."

Wazwan requires small lambs, typically under 15 kilograms, of specific breeds imported from outside Kashmir, as local animals are often too large or costly.

Using bigger animals can spoil the signature dishes, chefs explained, making imports essential to uphold tradition.

The reopening of the Srinagar-Jammu highway has brought cautious optimism. Families hope to reschedule postponed weddings and restore the rhythm of the valley's wedding season.

### Devout Throng

love and peace," said 70-year-old Ghulam Qadir, leaning on his walking stick amid the throng.

Shazia Bano, who travelled with her children from Anantnag in south Kashmir, said, "It is not just a tradition, but a moment to renew our faith and love for the Prophet (SAW)."

Religious clerics, delivering sermons before the congregational prayers, urged the faithful to follow the Prophet's teachings of compassion, truthfulness, and service to humanity.

Security arrangements were tightened around the shrine, with medics and volunteers assisting the elderly and managing the swelling crowds. Outside the shrine, local vendors welcomed the devotees, selling prayer caps and other items. Abdul Rashid, a shopkeeper, said, "Days like this bring life to our stalls. People come with devotion and also buy something sacred to take back home as blessings."

The observance comes a week after Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), marking the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), when Muslims across the Valley celebrated the occasion with prayers, sermons, and religious gatherings. Friday's assembly at Hazratbal offered devotees another opportunity to express their faith and devotion in a deeply spiritual setting.

### Vaishno Devi Yatra

was necessitated due to inclement weather conditions and essential maintenance of the track leading to shrine. The Yatra will resume as scheduled, provided weather conditions

remain favourable.

Spokesperson of the SMVDB advised pilgrims to carry valid identification, follow designated pathways, and cooperate with on-ground staff.

"RFID-based tracking will remain mandatory for transparency and traceability. For live updates, booking services, and helpline support, devotees are encouraged to visit the Shrine Board's official website: www.maavaishnodevi.org," it said.

The Shrine Board expressed its gratitude to all devotees for their patience and understanding during the suspension period.

"The resumption of the Yatra marks a reaffirmation of our collective faith and resilience. The Board remains committed to upholding the sanctity, safety, and dignity of this revered pilgrimage," the spokesperson added.

The yatra suspension was the longest since the COVID-19 restrictions, with authorities prioritising pilgrim safety and completing restoration work on the damaged track and commercial structures in Katra.

The cloudburst-induced landslide took place at Adhkuwari in the Trikuta Hills of the Katra belt. The Yatra was suspended the same day.

### HC Upholds Mother's

already settled with their mother in Kashmir, and removing them would not serve their welfare. The order granting custody to the father was therefore set aside.

However, the Bench allowed the father interim custody during his visits to Srinagar--up to five days at a time and on special occasions like Eid--provided the children's education or comfort was not disrupted.

The appeal, titled Sana Aftab v. Mubtasim Billah Malik, was disposed of with liberty for either party to approach the competent court if circumstances change in the future. (inputs from KNT)

### HC Directs Pak

Oswal, noted that the couple entered India on short-term visas that expired in 1988.

The judges stated that the appellants had not approached the court with clean hands and had attempted to manipulate the system by providing false information to prolong their stay.

The judgment referred to recent legal precedents, including Supreme Court rulings warning against the use of falsehood in litigation.

The court said that the couple's interim relief order in 1990 allowed them to remain in Srinagar for over three decades, but as of June 28, 2025, they were directed to leave India.

The bench added that under India's Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, foreign nationals cannot enter, stay, or reside in India without valid visas or permits.

The court clarified that foreign nationals are entitled only to rights under Article 21 of the Constitution, which covers life and liberty, and not the right to settle in the country.

The couple had arrived in India in July 1988 with their minor son, Nayeem, and had obtained short-term residential permits. Multiple extensions were granted, but the 1989 deportation order had curtailed their stay.

The High Court upheld the legality of the original deportation order and dismissed the appeal, stating that the appellants had failed to provide any valid grounds for staying in India.

The court also reinforced that the government has absolute authority to expel foreign nationals. (KNO)

### Uneasy Calm

a peace committee meeting chaired by Deputy Inspector General of Police Shridhar Patil to expedite restoration of peace and normalcy in the region.

Prohibitory orders remained in force in Doda and Bhalasa towns, where mobile internet and Wi-Fi services continued to remain suspended as a precautionary measure.

"The situation remained calm overnight with no fresh protests. However, elaborate security measures are in place, with heightened security in sensitive areas," said an official.

The security has been beefed up and patrolling intensified in Doda town in view of the Friday prayers, he said.

The deployment was strengthened around Doda town, Bhaderwah, Gandoh and Thathri amid high tensions over alleged administrative high-handedness. Concertina wires were installed near government offices to prevent untoward incidents.

Police vehicles patrolled the area, making announcements urging residents to stay indoors. In Bhaderwah town nevertheless, a semblance of normalcy prevailed with shops and business establishments operating on Friday.

DIG Shridhar Patil assured people that the situation is almost under control. "We want to tell the people of Chenab Valley that the situation is by and large under control. Efforts are on to bring back complete normalcy. We are moving towards that," the DIG told reporters on Thursday night.

He said around 40 citizens from Doda city and surrounding areas participated in discussions at the meeting, during which they shared valuable suggestions.

"I want to thank the people of Doda for their cooperation in ensuring peace. We had detained 60-70 people during the incident; several of them have been released on bonds. There are no casualties," he said.

The district saw protests and violent clashes on Monday and Wednesday as protesters tried to defy restrictions, prompting the security personnel to resort to baton charges at several places. Several protesters were detained, while some of them were released later.

Eight police personnel, including a deputy superintendent of police and a station house officer, were reportedly injured during the clashes.

The chief education officer has ordered that all schools in the district will remain closed until Sunday. The business establishments would also remain shut.

Describing Malik as a government critic, the district administration said his arrest was based on "provocative speeches and abusive language" on social media, allegedly aimed at disturbing peace.

In the meantime, Malik's father Shamas Din Malik has appealed for his son's release, stating he no longer wished to pursue the matter in courts. "I want my son back. I met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who said he would see what he could do," he said.

Shamsudin, who was briefly hospitalised after collapsing from weakness and stress following his son's detention, apologised for the language used by his son and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to facilitate his release.

The AAP has accused the Central government of targeting the party politically. At a protest in Jammu, AAP MP Sanjay Singh on Wednesday condemned the arrest, stating the party would continue its struggle "against injustice on the streets, in Parliament, and if necessary, in the Supreme Court."

On Thursday, high drama unfolded at Circuit House in Srinagar as former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah was prevented from meeting AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, who was detained on the premises to prevent him from protesting against Malik's arrest.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday night described the situation in Doda as

"deeply disturbing," criticising the administration's handling of the unrest.

"An internet blackout has been imposed, schools have been shut, and curfew has been enforced in Doda district. Alarming reports suggest that roads are being deliberately blocked, depriving people of their fundamental right to movement," she said.

This is the first time a sitting MLA in Jammu and Kashmir has been taken into custody under the stringent law, which allows detention without charge or trial for up to two years in some cases.

### 'Speaker Must

nothing personal against the speaker or his office.

"During (Assembly) sessions, I learnt a lot from the way he (Rather) conducted the House, upheld diversity and accommodated voices. But as the custodian, actions to protect the legislators are equally important," Para said.

Taking note of Para's post on X after Malik's arrest on Monday, the speaker issued a show-cause notice to the opposition MLA, asking why breach of privilege or contempt proceedings should not be initiated against him.

The speaker directed Para to explain his position in person or in writing within seven days for making a "false" claim that the Assembly Secretariat endorsed Malik's arrest under the PSA.

In his post on X on Monday, Para said, "Shameful surrender. The Assembly Secretariat endorsing PSA against an elected MLA is a direct assault on democracy. J&K CM @OmarAbdullah must act, don't allow the institution of MLA, the last agency of the people, to be silenced. Today it's Mehraj, tomorrow it could be you."

### CM Pledges Swift

the Hangul. Every species exists for a reason. When they thrive, ecosystems thrive--and when ecosystems thrive, humankind thrives as well," Omar said.

The Chief Minister, who is also Pro-Chancellor of SKUAST-K, assured delegates that the government would act promptly to ensure measurable growth in the populations of Hangul and Markhor before the next international conference.

Recalling the words of eminent conservationist MK Ranjitsinh, Omar emphasized that wildlife conservation is closely linked to human survival. Sharing his personal regret, he noted that despite living near Dachigam National Park, he had never seen a Hangul in the wild. "I don't want a situation where our children and grandchildren know these species only through photographs in books, like the dodo or woolly mammoth. That would be a tragedy we must not allow," he said.

The three-day conference brought together over 200 delegates, including wildlife experts, conservationists, and biologists from India, the US, UK, Canada, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Participants shared research findings and strategies for conserving Hangul, Markhor, and other threatened ungulates of the Himalayan region.

On the occasion, Omar released a Vision Document titled Institute of Mountain Wildlife Sciences and presented awards and appreciation certificates to participants. Other speakers included Forest Minister Javed Ahmed Rana, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir A. Ganie, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Suresh Gupta, and international expert Dr. Gonzalez.

Concluding his address, Omar expressed optimism: "That is my hope, that is my belief, and I am sure that if we approach it the right way, as we saw success with Project Tiger and encouraging signs with Hangul and Markhor, that success will continue to grow."

### Efforts Underway

we will know the actual quantity of lithium present. Several specialised companies exist in the country, but none participated initially. We will restart the process," he said.

Singh also highlighted the rapid growth of startups in India, noting that the country has become the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, with the number of startups increasing from just 350 in 2014 to over 1.5 lakh in 2025.

He pointed to the CSIR-Aroma Mission in Jammu and Kashmir, under which over 3,000 lavender-based startups have been established across rural India. "These startups are generating income and creating employment, transforming the lives of thousands of families," he said.

Singh further said that Jammu could become a hub for the perfume industry if distillation facilities are set up locally instead of outside the region. "We invite the private industry to join hands with us for this," he added.

Discussing international collaboration, Singh mentioned his visit to Grasse in France, a village famous for flowers used in perfumes. "We aim to add value to local products and better integrate the private sector in this mission," he said.

He also praised the media for its role in shaping the science and technology landscape and highlighting environmental issues.

### SC Notices Centre

serious threat to democracy but also maligned the country by appointing hardcore criminals, kidnappers, drug smugglers and money launderers as national and state office bearers after taking huge amounts of money from them.

"There are no rules and regulations for political parties. Therefore, many separatists have formed their political party to collect donations. Some office bearers of these parties have succeeded in getting police protection also," the plea said.

Referring to a recent media report, the plea claimed the income tax department found a "fake" political party that was "converting black money into white by deducting 20 per cent commission".

"Transparency and accountability in the working of political parties are essential in public interest as they perform public function and, therefore, ECI must frame rules and regulations for them," the plea, filed through lawyer Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said.

It said the apex court has initiated various reforms to bring transparency and probity in public life.

"The move to regulate political parties within the ambit of the Constitution would pave the way for robust democratic functioning," it said.

Alternatively, the plea sought a direction to the Law Commission of India to examine the best practices of developed democratic countries and prepare a comprehensive report on registration and regulation of political parties to reduce corruption and criminalisation in politics. (PTI)

### LG's Smart Housing

It is not just a house but a complete support system."

The project will be completed in phases, prioritizing families who suffered the most damage. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who presided over the signing of the MoU between HRDS India and divisional administrations, said, "Construction of houses is more than just putting up structures. It is about building dreams and providing a fresh start for affected families."

The HRDS India will provide three-bedroom "Smart Houses" with modern features ensuring comfort and safety, bringing long-awaited relief and hope to border residents.

## CM Omar, Dr Farooq Offer Friday Prayers at Hazratbal



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and National Conference (NC) President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday joined thousands of devotees in offering the congregational Jumma (Friday) prayers at the revered Hazratbal Shrine on the occasion of the Friday following Eid-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

On this blessed day, the Chief Minister, along with Dr Farooq Abdullah, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, and other senior NC leaders, also had the honour of witnessing the sacred glimpse of the Holy Relic, believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), after the prayers.

The leaders prayed for lasting peace, prosperity, and happiness for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Minister's sons, Zamir and Zahir

Abdullah, also accompanied the NC delegation on the occasion.

Speaking to reporters after the prayers, Dr Farooq Abdullah underlined the importance of communal harmony, saying, "Hindus and Muslims should live in peace and harmony. Everywhere, Muslims are being harassed."

Meanwhile, the official X account of the Chief Minister, J&K, shared that Omar Abdullah paid obeisance and offered prayers at Hazratbal on the occasion of the Friday following Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), praying for peace, harmony, and prosperity in the Union Territory.

The occasion witnessed a large gathering of devotees at Hazratbal, where emotional scenes unfolded as an ocean of worshippers raised their hands in unison, seeking blessings, peace, and divine mercy on the revered day.

## Mission YUVA

### J&K Bank Organizes Login Day Events To Promote Youth Entrepreneurship



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K Bank held a series of Login Day events this week across Srinagar, Udhampur, Anantnag, Pulwama, Budgam, Jammu, and Baramulla under the Government's Mission YUVA Program, witnessing enthusiastic participation from aspiring youth.

In Srinagar, General Manager Syed Rais Maqbool chaired the session and handed over 46 sanction letters to beneficiaries. Similar events in other districts saw wide distribution of assistance letters—35 in Udhampur, 31 in Anantnag, 50 in Pulwama, 26 in Budgam, 60 in Jammu, and 52 in Baramulla—taking the week's to-

tal to 300 sanction letters.

Officials including Deputy Commissioners of Reasi and Jammu joined the events, lauding the Bank's proactive role in youth empowerment. General Managers emphasized that Mission YUVA aims to turn young people into job givers rather than job seekers by providing timely financial support and guidance.

Beneficiaries expressed gratitude for the smooth application process and assistance in preparing project reports. The Bank assured continued support, stressing that accessible financial services are crucial for self-reliance and economic growth across Jammu and Kashmir.

## Amazon.in Announces The Great Indian Festival Starting Sept 23



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Amazon.in announced that the Amazon Great Indian Festival will start on September 23, 2025. Prime members will get 24-hour exclusive early access to the shopping extravaganza. As India gets ready for the festive season, customers can look forward to the widest selection at great prices delivered at the fastest speeds. With attractive deals across all popular categories including smartphones, electronics, fashion, beauty, home essentials, grocery and more, immersive shopping experiences, 10% instant discount on SBI Credit & Debit Cards & EMI Transactions, exciting offers from leading banks and extra cashback on the Amazon Pay ICICI Bank Credit Card, this Amazon Great Indian Festival has something for everyone.

Saurabh Srivastava, VP Categories, Amazon India said "The Amazon Great Indian Festival celebrates the spirit of Indian festivities by bringing together customers, sellers and brands for the country's biggest shopping celebration. This year, customers can look forward to the lowest prices of the year on over one lakh products, blockbuster deals, exciting new launches,

engaging entertainment and much more. With a reduction in GST on millions of products, along with exciting deals already planned by sellers, customers can look forward to great savings this Amazon Great Indian Festival.

Amazon announced the opening of 45 new delivery stations ahead of the festive season across India. These are in tier II and tier III cities like Rai Bareilly and Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh, Maraimalai and Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu, Howrah and East Midnapore in West Bengal, Port Blair in Andaman, Narsipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Srinagar and Udhampur in Jammu & Kashmir, Ranchi and Giridih in Jharkhand, and Tinsukia and Silchar in Assam among others. With this, Amazon has around 2,000 last mile delivery stations across the country. Amazon had recently also launched a major operations network expansion with 12 new fulfillment centers and 6 new sort centers, adding 8.6 million cubic feet of storage capacity and 500K sq ft of sortation area. The company has also created over 150,000 seasonal work opportunities to boost its pan-India operations network and deliver customer orders reliably across the country.

## Flood Prevention In Kashmir

### HC Sets 4-Week Deadline To File ATR

M Ahmad

**SRINAGAR:** The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has granted Divisional Commissioner Kashmir four weeks time to submit the Action Taken Report in a Public Interest Litigation regarding prevention of floods in Kashmir Valley.

While observing that the matter was sensitive, a division bench of Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajesh Oswal had directed Divisional Commissioner Kashmir to join the proceedings in the PIL virtually.

In compliance with the directions, the Divisional Commissioner joined the proceedings and submitted that the Amicus Curiae has submitted certain suggestions and recommendations which are still being examined. He submitted that the necessary information is being collated and the proceedings be deferred for four weeks to submit the Action Taken Report. The court adjourned the PIL to 28 October.

On August 12, Senior Additional Advocate Mohsin S. Qadri, sought time to examine various suggestions and recommendations submitted by the Amicus Curiae and to



submit an action taken report.

Among others, the Amicus Curiae says that silt deposit has made Jhelum flow sluggish and the same needs to be treated.

He has also sought measures to prevent liquid waste, generated in cities, towns and villages in the Valley due to sewage, waste water, going directly or indirectly into the river.

He has also suggested that the Wetlands Reserves Like Hokersar, Khushalsar, Hygam and Mirgund, Pampore Wetlands need to be eco-restored and Conserved in accordance with the stipulations envisaged in the "Integrated Management Action Plan for Wetland Conservation Kashmir- 2022- 2027"

already approved by Government and submitted to GOI for funding. This would of course also require a reappraisal in consideration of climate change effects that have been witnessed over the past years, he says.

Last year, the court had issued several directions, underling that preventing the possibility of recurrence devastating floods like September 2014 was of "prime importance" for it. Among other directions, the court has directed authorities to state by way of filing an Action Taken Report detailing therein what preventive measures they have taken in order to deal with the precarious issue of floods in Kashmir. The government had also directed the government to furnish utilization certificates in respect of the amount to the tune of Rs.4,1323.17 lakhs released by Union of India for various projects undertaken by UT of Jammu and Kashmir. The court had also sought the latest compliance report from all the concerned Deputy Commissioners to its directions for ensuring that no construction of any kind is raised near the water bodies within their territorial jurisdiction.

## Unprecedented Fruit Fall Hits Orchards

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Apple growers across Kashmir are reeling under fresh distress as large-scale fruit fall has been reported from orchards at the peak of the harvesting season.

Already battered by extreme weather, pest infestations, and transport disruptions, farmers say this unexpected phenomenon is pushing them toward massive financial losses.

For months, the valley's orchardists have struggled against prolonged dry spells, hailstorms, high-velocity winds, and diseases such as spider mite and rusting. Highway closures further choked the supply chain, leading to delays and rising freight costs. Now, when growers were finally ready to reap the fruits of their year-long toil, the sudden drop in apples

has left them shocked.

"This is the first time in my life I am seeing apples falling from trees like this," Abdul Rashid, an orchardist from Shopian, said.

"We worked hard the whole year, fought pests and dry weather, but now prolonged rain spells during harvest have caused the fruit to drop in large numbers. It is heart-breaking."

Agricultural experts point to the unusual weather pattern as the main reason behind the crisis. Prolonged wet conditions, they say, weaken the fruit's stem and attachment, causing premature drop.

"Continuous rainfall during the harvest period leads to physiological stress on trees. The moisture imbalance in soil and air directly impacts fruit holding capacity," said Dr Shabir

Ahmad Dar, a horticulture scientist. "But we need systematic field surveys to assess the extent and suggest preventive measures for the future."

Officials from the Horticulture Department acknowledged receiving distress calls from multiple districts.

"While excessive rainfall seems to be the immediate trigger, we will work to find out other contributing factors like soil nutrition and orchard management practices," said a senior horticulture officer.

Growers, however, say the government must go beyond assessments. "We urge immediate intervention. The authorities should not only study the problem but also announce compensation. This season has turned into a nightmare for us," said Mohammad Yousuf, a farmer from Kulgam. (KNO)

## PAG Inaugurates Library On Wheels At HSS Sangam Idgah

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The 15th edition of Alisha's Library on Wheels—a library project designed to support students preparing for competitive examinations—was inaugurated today at the Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Sangam, Idgah Srinagar by K P Yadav Principal Accountant General J&K. This school bore the tragic loss of two teachers in a militant attack in 2021. The 10-seater library, fully stocked with books on UPSC, SSC, banking, state PCS, law, and other competitive examinations, seeks to empower students with knowledge, guidance, and access to opportunities.

This joint initiative is a collaborative effort of Alisha Madhvarshi, a US-based NRI student whose book royalties fund the project, and Deputy Commandant Rakesh Nikhraj, a CISF officer have provided all the books for this library. Joining hands with them for this edition is the 161 Battalion of CRPF, Srinagar under its Community Outreach Programme, who have provided all the required furniture for the library, further strengthening the bridge between security forces and the local community by investing in education and empowerment.

Mr K P Yadav, Principal Accountant General in his address said that books illuminate the path where violence once cast a shadow.

"With this 10 starter library, we are not just offering resources—we are rekindling the dreams of young students. Education is the strongest antidote to fear and despair, and



initiatives like these will help Kashmir's youth to rise, learn, and lead," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Commandant, 161 Battalion CRPF Balihar Singh said that CRPF has always believed in winning hearts through service and outreach. "CRPF understands the value of Education and how specially in Kashmir valley education opens the door to unlimited opportunities of people" he said.

Alisha, the young NRI co-founder of the initiative, spent time in virtual mode with the students, listening to their aspirations and challenges. She encouraged them to dream big and stay focused on their goals: "Every book you open is a new door to possibility. I want each of you to believe that no dream is too big. This library is your space—make it a stepping stone to shape your future, and remember that the world is waiting to hear your voice."

Addressing the gathering, co-founder Rakesh Nikhraj, Deputy Commandant, CISF, highlighted the importance of perseverance and education "I, too, once began my

journey with limited means but abundant determination. Education changed the course of my life, and I believe it can transform yours as well. This library is a resource, but your true strength will come from hard work and consistency. We are with you on your journey," he added.

Seven meritorious students were given online courses worth Rs 50K to prepare for competitive examinations conducted by the Staff Selection Commission. The 14th edition was unveiled recently in Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Rainawari, Srinagar.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teachers, and members of the local community. The library, welcomed as a symbol of resilience, renewal, and opportunity, reaffirmed that books and knowledge remain the most powerful tools to rebuild lives and inspire futures in Kashmir. Altaf Ahmad Wani, Principal, HSS, Sangam assured the optimal usage of this library in shaping the future of students of his school

## Media Key To Govt Scheme Awareness: Dr. Jitendra Singh



Press Information Bureau

**JAMMU:** Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on Friday said that the media acts as an effective bridge between the Government and the people and has a pivotal role in spreading awareness about various government schemes and initiatives. Dr. Jitendra Singh was addressing the media workshop 'Vartalap' as a Chief Guest, organised by the Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, Jammu.

During his address, Dr. Singh emphasised that the success of welfare programmes in every sector launched by the Government depends largely on how effectively information about these initiatives reaches the intended beneficiaries. He further said that through timely and accurate dissemination, media not only informs citizens but also ensures transparency and greater public participation in governance.

By sharing success stories and showcasing positive outcomes, the media motivates more citizens to avail the benefits of Government programmes, Aroma Mission being the best example in J&K and get rid of "government job mindset", Dr. Singh emphasised.

Referring to the contribution of young Indian space scientist Shubanshu Shukla in the field of space research, Dr. Singh remarked, "Who will tell people what Shubanshu Shukla did in space? It is the media that can convey his achievements to the society and highlight the role of our scientists in nation-building."

Dr. Jitendra Singh observed

## CBC Conducts Auditions For Empanelment Of Cultural Troupes & Artists



Press Information Bureau

**LEH:** The Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Regional Office, J&K and Ladakh conducted an audition cum screening process for the empanelment of cultural troupes and individual artists from the Union Territory of Ladakh.

The auditions were conducted at Lotsava Auditorium of Ladakh Academy of Art Culture and Languages in Leh under the Chairmanship of Sh. Santosh Kumar, Additional Director General (ADG), Press Information Bureau (PIB) and CBC J&K and Ladakh region. The proceedings were co-chaired by Sh. Ghulam Abbass, Director, CBC, J&K and Ladakh region.

Other members in the panel of judges were Tsewang Paljor, Deputy Secretary, Department of Culture, Ladakh, Khursheed Yousuf, Head of News, Akashvani and Doordarshan Leh, Baljit Singh, Assistant Director, CBC Chandigarh, renowned theatre artist Mipham Otsal and renowned Ladakhi singer Tundup Dorjay.

The screening process witnessed an enthusiastic participation of cultural troupes and individual artists from Leh, Kargil and Zaskar regions. The selected troupes and artists will be allotted programmes for publicity of public welfare schemes of the Government of India as part of CBC's integrated communication strategy for public outreach at the grassroots level.

## DC Doda Reviews Essential Services & Road Connectivity

Observer News Service

**DODA:** Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh today conducted a visit to Doda market to take stock of availability of essential supplies after giving relaxation of 2 hours for people to come out and get their supplies, etc. He interacted with Market Association and general public and assured them that all their issues and requirements shall be addressed on priority.



He also visited Kandhote Thathri Subdivision to take stock of damages caused to NH-244 and power infrastructure due to massive landslides in the area.

Col (Retd) Ajay Thakur, GM NHIDCL briefed him about the ongoing restoration works and

assured that the stretch shall be made roadworthy for ensuring that essential supplies be allowed.

The Deputy Commissioner further reviewed the supply chain mechanism and uninterrupted transit of essential commodities and supplies to the Kishtwar District and subdivisions of Thathri and Gandoh. The visit was aimed at restoring connectivity and power and maintaining uninterrupted supply of daily necessities and

ensuring the smooth movement of people during the prevailing situation.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Doda, Anil Thakur and Sub-Divisional Magistrate Thathri, Sheetal Sharma.

# India-Pakistan Asia Cup Match: BJP, BCCI Slammed For Playing With The 'Enemy'

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** Opposition parties in Maharashtra on Friday slammed the BJP and the BCCI over the India-Pakistan Asia Cup cricket match scheduled for September 14, with Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray asking if "blood and cricket can flow together."

The Maharashtra Congress called it an insult to the kin of those killed in the Pahalgam terror attack and soldiers who have been martyred in the line of duty.

The Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) said the government's dual standards had been exposed after it allowed the match to proceed.

Responding to the criticism, Maharashtra minister and cricket administrator Ashish Shelar said international sporting



events cannot be dictated by bilateral political stand-offs.

Talking to reporters, Thackeray said Pakistan has staged mul-

multiple terror attacks inside India, and broadcasters in the country should boycott the India-Pakistan match.

"The BCCI is becoming anti-national. Why is the BCCI so excited about playing with Pakistan? Is it because of greed for money, TV revenue, advertisement revenue, or is it for the fees of players? When Pakistan can boycott Asia Cup just because it was in India, then why cannot the BCCI do it?" he asked.

"Had the real BJP been in power, it would not have allowed it. The BJP has changed its ideology," Thackeray said.

"If blood and water cannot flow together, how can cricket and blood be together?" Thackeray later said in a post on X.

Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant told PTI that allowing the game to go ahead was a diplomatic failure and an insult to the kin of those

killed in the Pahalgam terror attack and soldiers who have been martyred in the line of duty.

"The cricket match has exposed the dual standards of the government and the ruling party whose politics revolves around India-Pakistan," NCP (SP) spokesperson Jitendra Awhad told PTI.

Speaking elsewhere, BJP minister Shelar, who is also the BCCI's representative on the Asia Cricket Council Board, accused Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut of adopting an "anti-India" position on the issue.

"Those who oppose India's participation now should remember that (late Shiv Sena founder) Balasaheb Thackeray had hosted (former Pakistan batting great Javed) Miandad at his own home," he remarked.

## Bangladesh Brace For Stern Sri Lanka Test After Smooth Start

**B**oyed by a comfortable win over Hong Kong, Bangladesh will face a far sterner test when they take on six-time champions Sri Lanka in a Group B clash of the Asia Cup here on Saturday, a contest that could go a long way in deciding the fate of the tough group.

Chasing an elusive Asia Cup title, Bangladesh's campaign got off to a steady start as skipper Litton Das struck a composed 59 in a seven-wicket win over Hong Kong on Wednesday.

While the margin of victory was convincing, the performance exposed a few areas of concern, particularly in bowling, with pacer Taskin Ahmed and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain going for runs despite picking wickets.

Against Sri Lanka, however, Bangladesh cannot afford the same lapses.

The islanders, led by Charith Asalanka, have quietly built a formidable unit combining top-order solidity with middle-order power and a spin attack tailor-made for UAE conditions. (PTI)

## 'BCCI Following Govt Stance On Sporting Ties With Pakistan'

**I**PL chairman Arun Dharmal on Friday said the BCCI is strictly adhering to the government's stance on cricketing ties with Pakistan amid heightened tensions following the Pahalgam terror attack and 'Operation Sindoor'.

The traditional rivals are set to clash in Dubai for the first time since the escalation of the border conflict in May when India launched strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan after 26 tourists were killed in a dastardly attack in Pahalgam.

"The government has made it very clear that we will not play bilaterals and only feature against Pakistan in multilateral tournaments. We are only following the government's advice," Dharmal said during a joint interaction with reporters at the Playcom Business of Sports Conclave.

As per a new policy announced by the government recently, India will not engage in any bilateral sporting contest with Pakistan but will continue to face the neighbours in multilateral tournaments such as the ongoing Asia Cup cricket tournament. (PTI)

## 3 Kashmir Footballers In U-17 India Squad For SAFF Cup



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Three footballers from Kashmir, Aazim Parveez Najar, Abrar Ali Baba and Maroof Shafi, have been selected in the final squad of the India U-17 National Football Team. The Blue Colts are set to compete in Sri Lanka for the SAFF Cup, which kicks off on September 13.

The three players are part of a 23-member squad selected by head coach Bibiano Fernandes on Friday. The team has been training in Goa for the last two months after undergoing selection trials.

Maroof Shafi is a goalkeeper, Abrar Ali Baba is a midfielder and Aazim

Parveez Najar is a forward. Meanwhile, J&K Football Federation, DFA Srinagar, Downtown Heroes FC and others congratulated the trio for their selection.

"Aazim, our very own Downtown Hero, will be carrying not just the tricolor but the dreams of every aspiring player back home," the Heroes said in a statement.

"This remarkable achievement is a true reflection of their hard work, dedication, and passion for the game. Their success is not only a personal milestone but also a proud moment for the entire football fraternity of Srinagar and Jammu & Kashmir," JKFA and DFA Srinagar said in a release.

## Srinagar Premier League: Northall United Defeats Kanwal FC 2-0

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In Friday's contest of the "My Youth My Pride" Srinagar Premier Division Football League 2025-26, Northall United FC took on Kanwal FC at TRC Ground here.

In a well-contested matchup, Northall United FC emerged victorious by defeating Kanwal FC with a score line of 2-0. The team showcased excellent skills, discipline and determination, securing three crucial points in the league.



The Srinagar Premier League is being organised by the District Football Association Srinagar under the "My Youth My Pride" initiative of the J&K Sports Council.

On Thursday, Iqbal Sports FC defeated Kashmir Panthers FC 2-0. In another encounter, Arco FC stunned JK Bank XI with a 4-2 win.

On Saturday, Jhelum FC will play SWFC Kashmir at 2:00 PM, while STFC Nati-pora will take on Galaxy FC at 4:30 PM at TRC Ground.

## Satish Sharma Has Virtual Meeting With Union Minister For Youth Affairs

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Minister for Youth Services and Sports Satish Sharma on Friday participated in a virtual meeting chaired by Union Minister for Youth Affairs to discuss issues related to youth engagement, sports development and holistic empowerment.

The virtual meeting was also attended by Sports Ministers of other states and Uts. Commissioner Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Yasha Mudgal; DG Youth Services and Sports, Anuradha Gupta and other senior officers YSS also attended the meeting.

During the interaction, Satish Sharma highlighted the transformation taking place in J&K. He also briefed the Union Minister about the impact of the J&K Sports Policy (2022). The Minister underscored the role of flagship programmes like Khelo India



and Ab Khelega Jammu & Kashmir.

Citing recent success stories, Minister Sharma drew attention to inspiring youth icons from J&K including Arjuna Awardee and para-archery champion, Sheetal Devi; Chain Singh, Olympian shooter from Doda.

He also talked about cricketer talents including Umran Malik, Abdul Samad, Rasik Salam, Vivrant Sharma, who have excelled in the IPL. He also mentioned about Nasir Sofi, a young volleyball player from Baramulla recently selected for the U-15 National Coaching Camp for China.

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