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Gaza'ns Return To Ruins After Guns Fall Silent



Agencies

Gaza: Tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians loaded cars, carts and bicycles with belongings and made their way back to their neighbourhoods on Saturday, weaving through streets shrouded in dust as bulldozers began to claw through the wreckage of two years of bombardment.

Aid groups were preparing to scale up relief work, one of the many challenges ahead as a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas entered its second day.

"When people get there, they're going to find rubble. They'll find that their homes and their neighbourhoods have been reduced to dust," UNICEF

spokesperson Tess Ingram told The Associated Press on Friday.

As the ceasefire appears to hold, her organisation and its partners are urging Israel to reopen more crossings and allow aid to flow into Gaza more freely. Meanwhile, about 200 US troops arrived in Israel to help retrieve hostages and monitor the ceasefire.

"A ceasefire alone is not enough," Ingram said, speaking from central Gaza. "Yes, it stops the killing and injuring of children, hopefully, but it also needs to ensure a surge of humanitarian aid that begins to address the tremendous damage that has been done over the past two years." Aid groups were preparing to scale up | **More on P6**

6 YES, IT STOPS THE KILLING AND INJURING OF CHILDREN, hopefully, but it also needs to ensure a surge of humanitarian aid that begins to address the tremendous damage that has been done over the past two years."

J&K RS Polls

Seat-Sharing Standoff Between NC, Congress

NC Offers 'Risky' Seat, Congress Seeks Safer Option

Agencies

Srinagar: The 'standoff' within the ruling alliance continues over the seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. While the National Conference is offering the 'risky' seat to the Congress, the latter is pushing for one of the 'safer' seats.

Sources said that during negotiations with the Congress high command, the National Conference offered the competitive seat to its alliance partner. However, the Congress is insisting on one of the three safer seats for its candidate.

Sources further said that the Congress may choose not to

contest the 'risky' seat if NC remains adamant about its offer, given that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) holds a clear advantage on it.

"Talks between the leadership of both parties are still underway. The Congress may opt to stay away from the contest if they don't concede a safer seat," sources said.

Senior Congress leader GA Mir said there is no clarity yet on the slot on which the party will contest.

"We had requested that the Congress nominee file nomination papers against the first or second notification (safe seats), but there is no clarity yet on the issue," he said, adding that talks are underway.

"We are expecting that there will be clarity on the issue by tonight or by tomorrow afternoon," Mir added.

The National | **More on P6**

Correct Distorted History Of J&K: LG To Writers

Says With Terror Ecosystem Dismantled, Time To Present True Narrative Of J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday called on writers and historians to challenge distorted historical accounts and present factually correct narratives, particularly those concerning Jammu and Kashmir.

He called upon writers to rectify "false and fabricated narratives" in history books and provide accurate accounts challenging these "lies".

Speaking at the inaugural function of the Kashmir Literature Festival organised by the Srikula Foundation, Sinha said writers must use research and critical evidence to correct misleading portrayals of India's past.

"Writers must do research and use critical proof to challenge and correct the misleading historical accounts," he said. "During the colonial



6 FOR DECADES, A MANIPULATED NARRATIVE WAS PROPAGATED HERE

Writers and media figures grudgingly admit that, out of fear of terrorists and their ecosystem, they were forced to promote the narrative being pushed from across the border in the Valley."

era and after independence, a certain group of writers

distorted our history to shape their ideological agenda."

He urged young historians to take responsibility for setting the record straight. "Today, the young historians must provide accurate and factually correct accounts challenging those lies. In the last few years, new writers have tried to do justice to the injustice done to the history of India, which is an excellent initiative. Efforts are also being made to take Indian literature to the world, which is highly commendable," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Sinha also stressed the need to "correct the narrative" around Jammu and Kashmir by countering misinformation with verified facts.

"For decades, a manipulated narrative was propagated here in Jammu and Kashmir. Writers and media figures grudgingly | **More on P6**

Pays Tribute To Soldiers Who Died In Kokernag

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday paid tributes to two soldiers who lost their lives battling extreme weather conditions during counter-terror operations at Kokernag in Anantnag district.

The L-G visited the Srinagar-based headquarters of the Army's Chinar Corps at the Badami Bagh Cantonment, and laid floral wreaths on the coffins as a mark of tribute to the fallen soldiers.

An official spokesman said Sinha paid homage to Army bravehearts Lance Havildar Palash Ghosh and Lance | **More on P6**

Oppn Mulls Sending Teams To Ladakh

Press Turst of India

New Delhi: Opposition parties are deliberating on sending a delegation to Ladakh, where violence during a protest last month for statehood and tribal status under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution left four people dead and several injured.

Sources in several opposition parties confirmed that there have been informal discussions regarding sending a group of leaders to the Union Territory towards the end of October.

Parties like the Congress, the CPI(M), the Aam Aadmi Party, the Samajwadi Party, and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha have held talks on the proposal, they said.

An AAP leader acknowledged that deliberations have been held, but asserted that no final decision has been taken yet.

Sources in the CPI(M) and the Samajwadi Party also confirmed that the proposal is under consideration. A senior opposition leader said the | **More on P6**

Land, Luxury, & Layers Of Corruption

The Making Of A Kashmir Police Cashier's Empire

Ansar Hussain

Srinagar: When investigators began looking into the finances of a police cashier during his Bandipora tenure, they expected to find gaps in recordkeeping. What they discovered was an empire.

Peer Zada Mushkooor Ahmad Shah, a police inspector, previously posted as cashier at the District Police Office in Bandipora, had accumulated wealth that far exceeded his known income.

A secret verification launched by vigilance officers traced dozens of bank accounts, multiple plots of land, and a sprawling house.



According to the Anti-Corruption Bureau handout, Shah, a native of Jawalapora Budgam, owned 32 kanals and 6 marlas of land in Budgam, including a prime 17-kanal stretch in Sholipora Wudder.

At Ompora Colony, one of Budgam's more desirable neighbourhoods, the cop built a double-storey palatial house

with an attic, its scale and polish unmistakable even in a town dotted with new wealth.

Investigators found a bank balance of 48.26 lakh, several vehicles, and expenses of 40 lakh on the education of his children.

There were also payments for foreign travel and insurance premiums, luxuries difficult to justify on a public servant's salary.

From 2012 to mid-2025, bank records revealed a maze of cash flows and suspicious transactions.

Accounts were opened and closed under multiple names. Large deposits appeared without clear | **More on P6**

Forfeiture of 25 Books

3-Judge Full Bench To Hear Pleas On Monday

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: A three-judge Full Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, headed by Chief Justice Arun Palli, will on Monday hear five petitions challenging a government notification that ordered the forfeiture of 25 books under Section 98 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

The bench, also comprising Justice Rajnesh Oswal and Justice Shahzad Azeem, are scheduled to hear pleas filed by Shakir Shabir, Swastik Singh, David Devadas, CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami and Air Vice Marshal Kapil Kak and others.

The Books ordered to be

forfeited by virtue of notification on 5 August this year as per the government propagate false narrative and secessionism in Kashmir.

The petition filed by Kak and others including Dr. Sumantra Bose, whose two books have been forfeited; author Dr. Radha Kumar; and former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah have invoked Section 99 of BNSS to set aside the order of forfeiture.

"The spectus of the 25 books pertains largely to the socio-political life of Kashmir and the myriad political struggles interwoven into the cultural history of the valley. These books, most of which are works of | **More on P6**

Afghan FM Visits Darul Uloom Deoband

Hopes To Boost India Ties

Press Trust Of India

Saharanpur: Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Saturday expressed confidence that the India-Afghanistan ties will grow stronger in future as he visited Darul Uloom Deoband in Saharanpur, one of the most influential Islamic seminaries in South Asia.

A raging controversy over the absence of women journalists from his presser in New Delhi a day earlier, which sparked sharp criticism from opposition parties and media bodies, followed the Afghan minister for the

second day, but the seminary maintained that there were no restrictions from any side on women journalists covering its events on Saturday.

"I am thankful for such a grand welcome and the affection shown by the people here. I hope that India-Afghanistan ties advance further," the Afghan leader told reporters as he was greeted by Mohtamim (vice-chancellor) of Darul Uloom Deoband Abul Qasim Nomani, president of Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind Maulana Arshad Madani and officials of the seminary, amid a floral shower. | **More on P6**



An artisan weaving a wicker basket at Saras mela in Srinagar. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Ayushman Bharat Mission 2025-26

No Central Funds Released For J&K Under: RTI

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Despite the crucial role played by the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) in strengthening healthcare delivery and providing access to quality medical services for underprivileged sections of society, no central funds have been released for Jammu and Kashmir for the financial year 2025-26, raising concerns among health experts and beneficiaries.



This information emerged through a Right to Information (RTI) filed by activist MM Shuja. According to the data

obtained, central releases under the PM-ABHIM for J&K have varied in previous years - Rs 16.11 crore in 2021-22, Rs 1 crore in 2022-23, Rs 44.01 crore in 2023-24, and Rs 60.44 crore in 2024-25. However, the record shows zero release for 2025-26.

Officials noted that thousands of poor and rural patients across Jammu and Kashmir have benefited from free or subsidised treatment under the scheme. "This scheme has been a lifeline for thousands of | **More on P6**

RSN Platform Fraud: 4,500 Accounts Under Investigation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a first criminal case linked to the controversial Robust Secure Network (RSN) platform, authorities in Ganderbal have launched a massive crackdown, with approximately 4,500 accounts now under investigation for suspected financial irregularities.

A series of raids were conducted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over the past few days, Senior



Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal Khalil Poswal said. Each account holder will receive formal notices at their residences. | **More on P6**

J&K To Get Malls To Promote Handicrafts

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, stressed upon timely grounding of key projects including Ekta Malls in Srinagar and Jammu, while urging the department to push forward branding and promotion initiatives aimed at giving global recognition to Jammu and Kashmir's traditional crafts.

Ekta Malls will provide a one-stop destination for artisans and shoppers to showcase,

market, and purchase authentic J&K handicrafts.

Chairing a high-level meeting with senior officials of the Industries & Commerce Department, Dulloo reviewed initiatives to support local artisans, strengthen testing facilities, and promote genuine hand-made products across the Union Territory.

He also emphasized implementing a robust QR code-based traceability system for all Geographical | **More on P6**



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Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name 1: Santoor Scholarship Program 2025-26

Description: Santoor Scholarship Program 2025-26 aims to support the undergraduate studies of young women from disadvantaged backgrounds in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Eligibility: Open to young women pursuing full-time undergraduate courses in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Currently studying in the first year of their course.

Completed their Class 12 from a government school/junior college in 2024-25.

Must have completed their Class 10 from a local government school.

Children of employees of Buddy4Study, Wipro, and Santoor are not eligible.

Prizes & Rewards: One-time scholarship amount of INR 30,000 (fixed)

Last Date to Apply: 15-10-2025

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SWS8

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/santoor-scholarship-program-2025-261759739609.png>

Scholarship Name 2: ONGC Sports Scholarship Scheme 2025-26

Description: The ONGC Sports Scholarship Scheme 2025-26 is an initiative of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to promote sporting excellence among the underprivileged and talented Indian sports persons.

A total of 250 scholarships will be awarded to male and female athletes in 21 recognised sports.

Eligibility: Application is open to a male or female sportsperson between 15 to 20 years old and pursuing excellence in one of the 21 recognised sports listed on the official website of ONGC. They must have parental income of less than 5 lakh per annum.

Prizes & Rewards: A monthly scholarship be-



tween 15,000 and 30,000, depending on their level of participation.

Last Date to Apply: 21-10-2025

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/ONGC3

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ongc-sports-scholarship-scheme-2025-261759739410.png>

Scholarship Name 3: SBI Platinum Jubilee Asha Scholarship 2025-26

Description: The SBI Platinum Jubilee Asha Scholarship 2025-26, one of India's largest scholarship programs, is an initiative of the SBI Foundation. This program aims to provide financial assistance to meritorious students from low-income families across India, ensuring the continuity of their education.

Eligibility: The SBI Platinum Jubilee Asha Scholarship 2025-26 supports meritorious Indian students from economically weaker families.

Eligible applicants include school students (Classes 9-12), undergraduates, postgraduates, medical students, and those enrolled in IITs, IIMs, or premier Indian institutions (Top 300 NIRF/NAAC A+)

with family income up to 6 lakh (3 lakh for school level).

Overseas applicants must be pursuing PG or higher courses in top 200 QS/THE-ranked universities. Minimum eligibility is 75% marks/7 CGPA in the previous year (67.5%/6.3 CGPA for SC/ST).

Half of the slots are reserved for females, and 50% for SC/ST, with systematic reallocation of unfilled seats.

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarships of up to INR 20,00,000 will be awarded to students depending on the category. (*T&C Applied)

Note: SBI strives to extend its financial support to students throughout their course. *Scholarship renewal is subject to students meeting the minimum eligibility criteria every year.

Last Date to Apply: 15-11-2025

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SBIFS13

QR Code: <https://d1e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/sbi-platinum-jubilee-asha-scholarship-2025-261759473084.png>

Scholarship Name 4: U-Go Scholarship Program 2025-26

Description: U-Go Scholarship Program 2025-26 is a CSR initiative by U-Go to financially support young women pursuing professional undergraduate courses in teaching, nursing, pharmacy, medicine, engineering, architecture, law, etc.

Eligibility: Young women pursuing professional graduation courses in teaching, nursing, pharmacy, medicine, engineering, architecture, law, etc., are eligible.

Applicants must be studying in any year (except the last year) of their graduation program.

Applicants must have secured at least 70% marks in the Class 10 and 12 examinations.

The annual family income of the applicants from all sources must be less than INR 5 lakh.

Students from across India can apply.

Prizes & Rewards: The selected scholars will receive the scholarship as specified below:

For Teaching Courses - INR 40,000 (\$500) per year for two years

For Nursing and Pharma Courses - INR 40,000 (\$500) per year for four years

For Three-year courses such as BCA, BSc, etc. - Up to INR 40,000 (\$500) per year for 3 years

For Engineering, MBBS, BDS, Law, Architecture Courses, etc. - INR 60,000 (\$750) per year for four years.

Note: Scholarship to cover 100% of educational expenses, including academic expenses (tuition fee, admission fee, exam fee, books, etc.), living expenses (hostel fee, mess fee, uniform, etc.), devices (laptop, mobile, equipment, etc.), monthly allowance, etc.

Last Date to Apply: 31-10-2025

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/UGO4

QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/u-go-scholarship-program-2025-261756723964.png>

'World's Largest Oil, Gas Companies Involved In Under 1.5% Renewable Energy Projects'

Press Trust Of India

The world's largest oil and gas producers could be involved in under 1.5 per cent of renewable energy projects globally, a new study has found.

Researchers from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain, looked at 250 of the largest oil and gas producers -- accounting for 88 per cent of the world's hydrocarbon output -- and

human rights organisation. "Oil and gas companies' renewable deployment is anecdotal at best. Their contribution to the fight against the climate crisis should be judged solely by how much fossil fuel they leave in the ground," lead author Marcel Llavero-Pasquina, a researcher at the university, said.

A shift towards renewable sources of energy, including solar and wind, is said to be crucial for slashing greenhouse gas emissions -- primary driver



their stake in 3,166 wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal projects.

"We find that the largest 250 oil and gas companies only own about 1.42 per cent of the global renewable energy capacity in operation," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Nature Sustainability.

Results also showed that only a fifth of the 250 companies analysed own a renewable energy project in operation, with renewable energy representing a mere 0.1 per cent of their primary energy extraction.

The study looked at the largest oil and gas producers in the 'Global Oil and Gas Exit List' of Urgewald, a Germany-based non-profit environmental and

of climate change.

The study's findings raise concerns for institutions and organisations that continue engaging with fossil fuel companies under the assumption that they are key players in the energy transition, the researchers said.

"After decades of empty words, it is time for governments, universities and public institutions to recognise that the fossil fuel industry will always be part of the problem, not the solution to the climate crisis," Llavero-Pasquina said.

"Oil and gas companies should not have a seat at the table where the future of climate and energy policy is decided," the lead author added.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Seed Production Officer, Sgr. Agri. Prod. & Farmer's Welfare Deptt. Kashmir
Sale of Onion seedlings at Seed Multiplication Farm Sumbal
This Office is pleased to announce the availability of Onion Seedlings at Seed Multiplication Farm Sumbal from 22nd of October 2025 for open sale among all farming community.
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DATED: 11-10-2025
Sd/-
(Mir Aijaz Hassan)
Seed Production Officer,
Lalmandi,
Srinagar

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION ANANTNAG
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS
E-NITNO.22 of 2025-26
For and on behalf of Hon'ble Lt. Governor of J&K U.T., e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on "Percentage Basis" (Single Click) from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K U.T. Govt./ CPWD/Railways/Other Governments/ Union Territories for the following works:-

S. No	Name of work	Advt. Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Earnest Money Deposit (Am't in Rs)	Time for completion	Class of Contract	Cost of Tender Document (Rs)	Major Head of Account	Tender Opening Authority
01.	Const of Cement Concrete Lining wall on L/S of Honi Khul B/o Brengi nallah at village Chichripora near land of Mukhtar Ahmad Mir and others	1.237	2500/=	4 Days	DEE	100	Capex Budget DMRRR 2025-26 M.H 4235	Executive Engineer Flood Control Division Anantnag
02.	Construction of FP Bund on Brengi Nallah by way of Toe Crates near the House of Akhter Hussain and others at Danter	9.96	20000/=	10 Days	DEE/ CEE	300	Capex Budget DMRRR 2025-26 M.H 4235	
03	Construction of PCC wall on R/S of Aripath Nallah near Confluence of Sherbagh-nallah behind Sadder Police Station	4.93	9900/=	6 Days	DEE	200	District Capex Untied Grants	

Position of Funds: Budgetary allocation 2025-26.
Position of Administrative Approval: - Accorded
Position of Technical Sanction: - Accorded
The bidding document, consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, drawings, set of terms and conditions, and other details, can be seen or downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of dates given below.

1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	11-10-2025 at 06.00PM
2	Date of start of downloading	11-10-2025 at 06.00PM
3	Bid submission start date Technical/Financial	11-10-2025 at 06.00PM
4	Bid submission end date	20-10-2025 at 06.00PM
5	Date & Time of opening of Bids (online).	22-10-2025 at 10:00AM

Terms and Conditions:
01. Bids must be accompanied with proof of the cost of the tender document in the shape of a Treasury Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer, Flood Control Division Anantnag (tender inviting authority). The name of the work shall be legible along with the NIT number and item number neatly written on the face of the Treasury Receipt. Any deficiency or correction will lead to cancellation of the tender. Also, the date of the Treasury Challan should be in between the date of start of bid and the bid submission end date.
02. The successful bidder shall have to submit the hard copy of EMD @ 2% in the shape of CDR/FDR, duly uploaded, along with the Treasury Challan and other allied documents.
03. The Affidavit must be dated between the period from the uploading time of the E-NIT to the closing time of the E-NIT, as per Condition 5(H).
All other terms and conditions shall remain the same as laid down in PWD Form 25 (Double Agreement Form).
No. FCD/Ang/2025/4357-79
DIPK-7096/25 Dated: 11-10-2025
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Flood Control Division, Anantnag

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have changed my name from (old name) Riyaz Ahmad S/o Nazir Ahmad to (new name) Riyaz Ahmad Mir S/o Nazir 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

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 754936656691 the name is entered as BTVALLA while my actual name is BATOOLA. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
BATOOLA
W/O GHULAM MOHAMMAD BHAT
R/O BUDGAM CELL: 9622008466. mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 903748857937 the name is entered as REYAZ AHMAD while my actual name is RIYAN AHMAD DAR. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
RIYAN AHMAD DAR
S/O MOHAMMAD RAJAB DAR
R/O BAGHWANPORA RAWALPORA SRINAGAR. mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE
The name of my daughter has been wrongly written in her adhaar as Rutba Jan while while her correct name as per school records is Rutba Ashraf which needs to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Mohammad Ashraf Lone
F/o Rutba Ashraf
R/o Sedow Tehsil & Distt Shopian fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have lost my 9th pass discharge certificate. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Govt Girls Higher Secondary School Magam within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Rukshana Akhtar
D/o sanawalla lone
R/o Budran magam BMG

PUBLIC NOTICE
I want to correct my name on PDD Bill as it has been wrongly mentioned as 'Mohd Ibrahim Bhat' whileas my actual and correct name is 'Ibrahim Manzoor Bhat' Under Consumer Id 0213040024050
If anyone has any objection he/She can contact concerned department within the period of seven days from this date.
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S/O: Manzoor Ahmad Bhat
R/O: Checki Tapper Pattan
Consumer Id 0213040024050 fko

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Major Evacuee Land Scam Uncovered in Sgr

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau has initiated a major criminal investigation after uncovering a large-scale scam involving the illegal exchange and manipulation of valuable evacuee land in Srinagar.

A spokesman in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer said that the investigation has brought to light serious irregularities and fraudulent acts allegedly committed by officials of the Revenue Department and the Custodian Evacuee Property Department, in active collusion with private individuals, for unlawful enrichment.

"Reliable information was received by the Bureau indicating that certain officers had facilitated the exchange of prime evacuee property measuring approximately 17 marlas and located on the highly valuable Gupkar Road, Srinagar with land of comparatively lesser worth at another site," the statement reads.

It added that the exchange was executed without obtaining the mandatory No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Defence Estates Office and in blatant violation of the directions of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir as well as established government procedures regulating such transactions.

"Enquiry conducted by the ACB revealed that the involved public servants had deliberately ignored legal requirements, manipulated land records, and colluded with private parties to facilitate the unlawful swap. These actions were aimed at extending undue benefits to select beneficiaries while causing wrongful loss to the state exchequer," the statement added. The probe has revealed that official records were



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tampered and falsified, particularly revenue extracts and tenancy columns, to conceal the true nature of ownership and tenancy rights. "Certain officials attested and verified false revenue entries and enabled the registration of evacuee property in private names. The value of the exchanged properties was grossly disproportionate, with the evacuee land on Gupkar Road being of high commercial and strategic importance," it reads.

The statement added that mandatory scrutiny by competent authorities and NOC from the Defence Estates were deliberately bypassed, indicating a premeditated conspiracy among involved officials and private beneficiaries. "The acts amount to criminal misconduct, abuse of official position, forgery, and conspiracy to cause wrongful gain to private individuals and wrongful loss to the government. The illegal actions have not only resulted in substantial financial loss to the government but also compromised the integrity of official custodianship over evacuee properties/assets meant to remain under state protection," it added.



Hundreds of students participated in the ongoing two-day Literature Festival at SKICC on Saturday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Kashmir Struggles with Only One PET-CT Machine

Installation process at SMHS initiated; to be operational soon at GMC Srinagar: Officials

Agencies

Srinagar: Amid an alarming rise in cancer cases across Kashmir, the valley continues to rely on just one PET-CT scan machine — located at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura — for staging, diagnosis, and monitoring of the disease.

The absence of this vital diagnostic facility at other major hospitals, including the Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar, has led to long waiting periods, delayed diagnoses, and increased suffering for patients battling cancer.

According to official data, GMC Srinagar alone has registered around 8,000 new cancer cases since 2017, yet it lacks a PET-CT machine - an essential tool for detecting cancer, evaluating treatment response, and identifying recurrence.

Oncologists said that PET-CT technology has become indispensable in modern oncology but remains severely limited in Kashmir.

"The entire valley depends on a single PET-CT machine at SKIMS, which caters to thousands of patients," said

Dr Manzoor, an oncologist. "This leads to long waiting lists, something that cancer patients simply can't afford. We urgently need more such facilities."

Another oncologist, Dr Aijaz, said PET-CT scans play a major role in the initial diagnosis, treatment planning, prognosis, and follow-up of cancer patients. "It's a breakthrough technology that combines functional and anatomical imaging. Having more of these machines would significantly improve outcomes for patients," he added.

Data from the Union Health Ministry reveals that 51,577 new cancer cases were reported in Jammu & Kashmir between 2019 and 2022. In the same period, 35,623 people lost their lives to the disease.

Since 2013, SKIMS Soura has recorded around 50,000 new cancer cases, while GMC Srinagar has registered around 8,000 since 2017.

Experts attribute the growing cancer burden to multiple factors, including dietary habits, lifestyle changes, genetic predispositions, and delayed diagnoses caused by limited diagnostic infrastructure.

A 2012 SKIMS study identified "di-

etary practices and high salt consumption" as key contributors to the rising incidence of cancers, especially stomach and esophageal types, in Kashmir.

The shortage of PET-CT machines has forced many patients to seek diagnostics outside Kashmir, often at enormous financial and emotional costs.

"I had to wait over a month for my PET scan at SKIMS," said Ghulam Nabi, a cancer patient from Pulwama. "Such delays can be devastating for patients like us. The news about a PET scan being installed at GMC Srinagar brings real hope."

Officials said the process for installing a PET-CT machine at SMHS Hospital, Srinagar, has been initiated. "We have taken up the installation and expect the facility to be available soon," an official said.

Health Minister Sakeena Itoo recently announced that Rs 124.83 crore has been allocated for major upgrades in J&K's healthcare infrastructure. The plan includes a PET-CT at GMC Srinagar, MRI machines at GMC Baramulla, Kathua, and Rajouri, a Cath Lab at GMC Doda, and enhanced telemedicine facilities across 80 units. (kno)

MMU Urges Local Procurement of Poultry, Meat Products

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A committee formed by the Muttahida Majlis Ulema (MMU) convened a meeting in Srinagar under the chairmanship of Mufti Azam Jammu & Kashmir, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam, to deliberate upon growing concerns regarding the quality, source, and authenticity of slaughtered poultry and meat products being supplied to the Valley.

During the meeting, attended by several prominent Mufti's including Mufti Nazir Ahmad Qasmi,

Mufti Abdul Rashid Miftah, Maulana Showkat Hussain Keng, Agha Mohammad Hussain, Mufti Mohammad Ali Akbar, Syed Mohammad Aslam Andrabi, and Maulana Syed Rehman Shams, the committee expressed deep concern over reports suggesting that a large portion of slaughtered chicken imported from outside Jammu and Kashmir fails to meet the prescribed halal standards.

After detailed discussions, the committee unanimously appealed to hotel and restaurant owners,

meat dealers, and those associated with the hospitality and food sectors across Kashmir to immediately cease the purchase, sale, and serving of slaughtered poultry and meat imported from outside the region, and instead procure these products locally in order to ensure compliance with Islamic dietary principles.

Mufti Azam Nasir-ul-Islam said that the decision was taken in light of consistent complaints and credible inputs indicating violations of halal norms in imported poultry supplies.

AMO Holds Awareness Camp at Parimpora Agri Market

Agencies

Srinagar: The Area Marketing Office Srinagar actively participated in the launch event of the Prime Minister Digital Development Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY) held at the Agri Market Parimpora on Saturday.


The event witnessed en-

thusiastic participation from farmers, traders, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and various stakeholders from across the Valley.

The occasion was graced by All Valley President Fruit Association Kashmir, Bashir Ahmad Bashir, who attended the event along with several prominent fig-

ures from the horticulture and trade sectors.

On the sidelines of the main event, the Area Marketing Office Srinagar organized a special awareness camp to disseminate information about various Central and UT-sponsored schemes related to Horticulture and allied sectors. (KNO)




SAD DEMISE

With deep sorrow and profound grief, we inform the passing of our beloved father, Mohammad Hafiz Khan, son of Late Ghulam Mohammad Khan, resident of 322 Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar. He departed from this world on 11th October.

May Allah grant him Jannah and eternal peace.

The Ijtimaie Fateha will be observed on Tuesday, 14th October, at 10:00 AM at the Government Polytechnic Graveyard, Gogjibagh.

Sons
Gulsher Khan
Dilsher Khan



فوتواری
پیر ایٹھانی ڈھکے سواتھادی جاتی ہے کہنا سے والد محمد بن باب
نام سن ملک ولد محمد ملک ساکنان چنڈ پورہ دارون سرینگر مورہ
8 اکتوبر 2025 بروز بدھوارنام 9:15 بجے سواتھانی
سے طاعت فرمائے

اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کا چہارم 12 اکتوبر 2025 بروز اتوار کو 6:45 بجے ان کے ہاٹی
مقبرہ بان چنڈ پورہ میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ باقی دن فجر وقتوں کی ان کے گھر پر جاری رہے گی۔
والسلام
سوکوران
علی محمد ملک (فرزند)
7006882047

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Notice Inviting Tender

Sr.DEE/TR/JAT acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the works as under. Bidders will be able to submit their original / revised bids up to closing date **03.11.2025 at 15:00 Hrs** only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall not be considered.

Tender No.	Name of work	App. Cost. (Rs.)	Cost of Tender form (Rs.)	Date & time for submission of tender	Earnest Money # (Rs.)	Completion period	Opening of tender	Website Particulars
756-TRD-JAT-2025-26	Supply & application of high voltage composite insulation coating suitable for 25kV OHE over Jammu Division (Phase 1)	2,32,88,326.61	NIL	Up to 03.11.2025 15:00 Hrs	2,66,500/-	Six (06) Months after 15:00 Hrs.	03.11.2025	www.ireps.gov.in

Note: # Tenderer (s) may please note that offers received without Bid Security either in cash through e-payment gateway or as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents (as per Annexure-21) valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period, will be considered as incomplete & invalid offer and for which contractor shall have no claim on Railway. No.: 756-TRD-JAT-2025-26 Dated: 10.10.2025 3150/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE


- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +9194841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI CALENDAR

18 Rabi-ul-Sani
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR 5:10
ZUHR 12:18
ASR 4:23
Magrib 6:06
ISHA 7:25

This Day In History

- 539 BC - The army of Cyrus the Great of Persia takes Babylon
- 1398 - The Treaty of Salynas is signed between Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas the Great and the Teutonic Knights, who received Samogitia.
- 1459 - Battle at Ludford Bridge: Richard of York defeated
- 1492 - Christopher Columbus's expedition makes landfall on Caribbean island he names San Salvador (likely Watling Island, Bahamas). The explorer believes he has reached East Asia (OS 21 Oct)
- 1576 - Rudolf II succeeds Maximilian II as Holy Roman Emperor
- 1654 - The Delft Explosion (gunpowder) devastates the city in the Netherlands, killing more than 100
- 1789 - French Revolution: King Louis XVI writes secretly to the King of Spain about complaining of harsh treatment; the Count of Artois writes to the Austrian king requesting military intervention in France.
- 1859 - Self-proclaimed Emperor of the USA, Emperor Norton issues edict abolishing the US Congress
- 1860 - British & French troops capture Beijing
- 1915 - Theodore Roosevelt criticizes US citizens who identify themselves with dual nationalities.
- 1931 - 1st International Conference on Calendar Reform
- 1933 - Alcatraz becomes a federal prison (unofficially).
- 1941 - Soviet government moves from Moscow to Volga as Nazis forces close in on Moscow
- 1943 - US bombs Rabaul, New Britain
- 1952 - Hanif Mohammad scores twin 100s v N Zone (Ind) his 1st fc cricket tons.
- 1957 - First commercial flight between California & Antarctica
- 1957 - Canadian Prime Minister Lester Bowles Pearson wins Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1960 - JFK & Richard Nixon's third presidential debate
- 1960 - Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev bangs his shoe on his desk at UN General Assembly session
- 1964 - Launch of Voskhod 1, first 3 man crew (Komarov, Feokistov, Yegorov).
- 1969 - 1st time 5 people in space
- 1969 - Soviet spacecraft Soyuz 7 is launched.
- 1972 - Mariner 9 takes pictures of Martian north pole
- 1973 - Israeli counter offensive in southern Syria
- 1973 - US President Richard Nixon nominates Gerald Ford to replace Spiro Agnew as Vice President
- 1975 - NASA launches space vehicle S-195
- 1976 - 4th Space Shuttle Enterprise, approach & land test (ALT) flight
- 1977 - 4th test of space shuttle Enterprise
- 1977 - US Supreme Court heard arguments in "reverse discrimination" case of Allan Bakke, white student denied admission to University of California Med School
- 1978 - Representatives of Israel & Egypt open talks in Washington
- 1979 - Pressure in nucleus of tropical cyclone at Guam hits record 870 hpa
- 1985 - Intl Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War receives Nobel Prize
- 1988 - Israel & China sign trade deal, plan diplomatic relations
- 2005 - The second Chinese human spaceflight Shenzhou 6 launched carrying Fei Junlong and Nie Hisheng for five days in orbit.
- 2012 - The United Nations Security Council unanimously approves of an African-led force to oust Islamist militants in northern Mali
- 2012 - The European Union wins the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize, sparking a series of critical commentary
- 2013 - 50 people are killed after a truck veers off a cliff in La Convencion Province, Peru
- 2014- Evo Morales is re-elected President of Bolivia

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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Sawalkote's Power of Promise

After decades of delay, the Sawalkote project turns faith into infrastructure and hope into light.

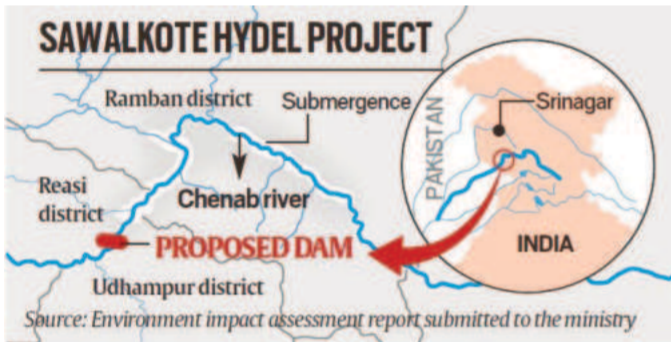
Er Navaid Runyal

For years, the people of Ramban watched the Chenab roll past their mountains, a river that gave everything except opportunity.

It carried away their hopes as swiftly as it carried silt, while generations waited for a promise called Sawalkote. That promise is finally real.

The Government of India has approved the 31,380-crore Sawalkote Hydropower Project, reviving a plan that began in the 1980s and stalled for four decades.

Back then, engineers dreamt of lighting up northern India with the Chenab's power. Surveys were done, blueprints drawn, and people believed progress had arrived.



When Sawalkote's turbines start to spin, the light reaching Indian homes will carry the strength of Ramban's people, the patience of Pogal's elders, and the spirit of a river that never stopped flowing

Then came decades of red tape, shifting governments, and environmental disputes that buried the dream in files.

In October 2025, India's environment ministry finally cleared construction, soon after New Delhi suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, a 1960 pact that had restricted India's use of western rivers flowing into Pakistan.

For the first time in decades, India moved to fully use its share of the Chenab's waters. Sawalkote became the emblem of that shift, a statement that India would build clean, responsibly, and on its own terms.

Once complete, Sawalkote will generate 1,856 MW of power, making it the largest hydropower project in Jammu and Kashmir.

The 192.5-meter-high dam, one of India's tallest, will produce about 7,500 million units of electricity annually.

Spread across Ramban, Reasi, and Udhampur districts, the project will be executed by NHPC Limited, India's leading hydropower company.

What makes Sawalkote different is its commitment to sustainability.

NHPC has set aside 594 crore for environmental protection, one of the highest allocations ever in the region.

Forest restoration, slope stabilization, and biodiversity conservation are part of the plan. Soil erosion will be managed through catchment treatment, and waste will be reused or safely contained.

The site lies about 63 kilometers from Kishtwar High Altitude National Park, ensuring wildlife remains undisturbed.

The project's impact will reach far beyond electricity.

Around 1,500 families across 13 villages will be affected. NHPC's resettlement plan promises modern housing, fair compensation, and access to schools and healthcare.

The construction phase will employ 1,500 workers, with 200 permanent jobs after completion.

For a district long known for migration, those numbers mean homecoming and dignity.

In Ramban's remote valleys of Pogal Paristan and Neel, hope is rising again. These regions waited years as others developed. Now, they see Sawalkote as a sign that progress has finally remembered them.

Beyond the turbines, Sawalkote stands as a symbol of India's renewed focus on self-reliance and sustainable energy. Along with projects like Pakal Dul, Kiru, and Ratle, it positions Jammu and Kashmir as a key hydropower hub of the north.

When Sawalkote's turbines start to spin, the light reaching Indian homes will carry the strength of Ramban's people, the patience of Pogal's elders, and the spirit of a river that never stopped flowing.

That's the true power of Sawalkote, a river turned into hope, and hope turned into light.

The author is an Electrical engineer from Marnal Maligam Pogal, Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Reels Generation

The chase for digital fame is replacing the valley's centuries-old tradition of learning and reflection.

Muzamil Farooq

Ten years ago, a Kashmiri child's ambition might've been to become a doctor, a poet, or an engineer. But today, many dream of becoming a "content creator."

The smartphone camera has replaced the classroom as the center of aspiration. And for a growing number of young Kashmiris, fame, measured in likes, followers, and comments, has become the new form of achievement.

The shift represents a cultural and intellectual crisis unfolding before our eyes.

Social media in Kashmir has turned into a parallel education system, except that it teaches nothing. Children as young as ten scroll through a constant feed of short videos that reward visibility over substance.

These platforms thrive on algorithms that understand one thing: what captures attention fastest.

A fifteen-second clip of mimicry or dance triggers a surge of dopamine, the brain's pleasure chemical.

Over time, this becomes a loop of craving and reward. Reading a book or solving a math problem cannot compete with that kind of instant thrill.

This change is a social shift that could redefine how an entire generation thinks and values itself.

School now feels dull, thinking slow, and reflection useless. In its place comes a habit of endless scrolling, shallow expression, and the illusion of being "seen."

Teachers in Kashmir report a growing impatience among students, an inability to focus, and a preference for memorized quotes over reasoned thought. The attention span has shrunk, while the appetite for recognition has exploded.

The ancient Kashmiri tradition of deep inquiry, the spirit of Lal Ded's mysticism or Sheikh-ul-Alam's moral clarity, has been replaced by a culture of mimicry and trend-chasing. Children now learn in fragments: thirty seconds of fake wisdom, sixty seconds of pop psychology, a few lines of motivational talk recycled from elsewhere.



“

Kashmir stands at a critical crossroads. If the current trend continues, the valley may soon have a generation fluent in trends but illiterate in thought, a generation of imitators without innovators. The danger is that they are losing the ability to imagine, question, and create. The glow of the screen may light their faces, but it is slowly dimming the mind.

It creates the illusion of intellect without its substance.

The tragedy is that this pursuit of digital fame rarely leads anywhere. For every influencer who manages to build a following, thousands more spend their most formative years chasing attention with no real skills to show for it.

This diversion of talent is catastrophic for an unemployment-ridden region. When education loses meaning and work loses meaning, vanity fills the void.

Even the economic argument often made for social media, "at least some are earning," crumbles under scrutiny. Only a handful of Kashmiri influencers manage to secure brand deals or ad revenue. The vast majority earn nothing.

The platforms benefit the most, extracting hours of attention while offering digital dust in return. What looks like empowerment is often exploitation of attention, the most valuable currency of our age.

Culturally, the impact runs deep. Kashmir has survived conflict, curfews, and communication clampdowns through its strong mindset. The valley's strength has always been its thinkers, teachers, and writers. When those roles are devalued and replaced by the pur-

suit of virality, the collective imagination that once built poetry, art, and scholarship begins to wither.

A society without thinkers eventually becomes a society without direction.

The psychological toll is equally stark. The constant comparison with other people's curated lives breeds anxiety and insecurity. A teenager's mood can swing with a single drop in likes. Validation becomes addictive, and self-worth depends on engagement metrics.

This trend could soon evolve into a silent epidemic of depression and self-doubt.

The real challenge is to rebuild a culture of critical engagement, where digital literacy means understanding how algorithms shape behaviour. Children need to be taught how to question what they consume online, how to spot misinformation, and how to find meaning beyond the screen.

Parents and schools must treat media literacy as seriously as mathematics. Teachers can use social media creatively to make learning relatable without surrendering to its superficiality. Policymakers should stop glorifying digital "stars" and instead celebrate young scientists, artists, and researchers.

Kashmir's heritage is full of thinkers who changed the world without hashtags. Their stories need to return to the center of public life.

Most of all, children must be reminded that creativity is contribution, not performance. Fame fades, but knowledge endures. The true test of intellect is not how many people see you, but how deeply you see the world.

Kashmir stands at a critical crossroads. If the current trend continues, the valley may soon have a generation fluent in trends but illiterate in thought, a generation of imitators without innovators.

The danger is that they are losing the ability to imagine, question, and create. The glow of the screen may light their faces, but it is slowly dimming the mind.

The author is a researcher at the Centre for Innovation Research University of Stavanger, Norway. He can be reached at muzamil.farooq@uis.no

Shining Silver

Once central to Kashmiri artistry, silver is finding new meaning in an age of technology and investment.

Irshad Mushtaq

For as long as wealth has glittered, silver has held its own among humankind's oldest treasures.

Around 3000 BCE, miners in Anatolia, modern-day Turkey, first extracted silver from the earth. Since then, its glow has travelled through every age. It minted into ancient Greek coins, traded along Silk Routes, melted into jewelry, and harnessed in machines that define our present.

Silver is both old and new, sacred and scientific.

The metal carries stories within its shine in the valley. Long before financial markets became accessible, Kashmiri families stored value in silver ornaments. Delicate anklets, engraved plates, and heirloom vessels symbolized prosperity.

Srinagar's silversmiths shaped the metal into art. Their craft survived political shifts and economic storms.

But in recent decades, silver has lost attention to gold, which dominates Kashmiri households as the ultimate store of value.

That preference is understandable. Gold's scarcity and resistance to corrosion have always made it a safe investment.

Silver, by contrast, is more abundant and susceptible to tarnish. Its price has also been volatile. But what makes silver less glamorous in jewelry makes it more relevant in modern industry.

The metal's unmatched electrical and thermal conductivity have turned it into a critical component of 21st-century technology. Every smartphone, car circuit, and solar panel depends on it.

Globally, silver production is concentrated in Mexico, Peru, and China. These nations supply over half of the world's output, meeting demand across electronics, medicine, and renewable energy.

The Silver Institute's 2024 report projected that industrial use will account for nearly 60 percent of total silver demand by 2030, driven by clean energy expansion and electric vehicles.



In solar energy alone, silver is indispensable. It forms the conductive layer that converts sunlight into power.

This industrial backbone gives silver a dual identity: precious metal and strategic resource. And for investors, that duality is key.

Silver tends to rise when economies grow, due to industrial demand, and also when markets fall, as investors seek safe havens.

That balance makes it both a growth asset and a hedge against inflation. History reinforces this pattern.

During the Great Depression, silver's price collapsed along with global trade. Post-World War II, demand surged as reconstruction and industrialization took hold. The 1970s saw record highs amid inflation, while the early 2000s revived silver as digital industries expanded.

The metal's recent rebound, driven by renewable energy and electronics, shows that silver moves in tune with global change.

Kashmiri investors, however, have remained largely attached to physical gold.

The cultural logic is strong: gold is tangible, secure, and familiar. But financial awareness in Kashmir is growing.

With smartphone-based trading platforms and

easier access to the Indian stock market, a new generation is looking beyond traditional forms of saving. This is where silver enters the conversation.

In 2021, India introduced Silver Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs), a turning point for small investors. These funds track the market price of silver and trade like stocks, eliminating the need for physical storage. Mutual funds with silver-linked assets offer further diversification.

These are accessible entry points into global commodities for Kashmiri professionals, entrepreneurs, and students seeking long-term stability.

The advantage is affordability. While one gram of gold costs over 11,000, the same value in silver costs under 200. This allows investors to build gradual exposure without large capital.

It also makes silver ideal for portfolio diversification, adding a metal that moves differently from equities and currencies.

There's also symbolism in embracing silver now. As Kashmir explores economic revival through crafts, tourism, and technology, investing in silver aligns with both heritage and future.

The metal once molded into Kashmiri jewelry now powers the global shift toward green technology. That continuity matters.

It roots financial growth in cultural memory while embracing innovation.

The case for silver is about broadening the horizon. Markets are evolving, inflation persists, and currencies fluctuate. In such times, assets tied to both culture and technology offer rare balance.

For a Kashmiri investor today, silver is a bridge between the past and the coming economy. Owning it, even symbolically, is a way of participating in a changing world.

Those who recognize that silver's true value lies in its adaptability will see that its glimmer has never faded.

It has only found new ways to shine.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The Heart Behind Healing Hands in Kashmir

From football fields to home visits, one man's mission is to make physiotherapy accessible to everyone in Kashmir.

Gowher Bhat

The clinic sits on a narrow lane in Srinagar's Bagh-e-Mehtab area, framed by walls that have seen decades of discord and daily life intertwine. Inside, the air smells faintly of antiseptic, mingling with the hum of an exercise band stretching across a mat.

A boy limps in, clutching his ankle. Nearby, a labourer leans against a walker, unsure if he will leave upright. In the corner, Dr. Sameer Mushtaq kneels beside a patient, hands steady, eyes attentive. He adjusts a joint, coaches a movement, and reassures a frightened child.

Outside, Srinagar moves in its usual bustle. Shopkeepers call greetings, while the distant azaan drift over rooftops. But inside, time slows.

Pain is measured, movement is restored, confidence is rebuilt, and with it, hope.

Amir, a fourteen-year-old footballer, is one of the many whose lives have intersected with Dr. Sameer's hands. He arrived at the clinic after twisting his ankle during practice. His mother remembers the apprehension in his eyes, the fear that his season was over.

Weeks later, he ran across the field again, pain gone, confidence intact. "He helped me walk, then play," Amir says. "I'll never forget it."

Dr. Sameer's story begins far from Srinagar. He grew up in the city, witnessing people battle injury and illness with limited access to specialized care. These early observations stayed with him.

He went to Karnataka to study physiotherapy at Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, where he learned to read the body as if it were a language: to recognize how tension, stiffness, and weakness communicate distress. He remembers long hours in anatomy labs,



FOR THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST, the mind and body cannot be separated. Empathy and compassion are tools as important as therapy bands or weights.

then in clinics, practicing under senior physiotherapists, learning that patience could sometimes be more powerful than medicine.

After graduation, he moved to New Delhi, working in multispecialty hospitals. Patients came from every corner of India: office workers, factory labourers, retired soldiers. The experience sharpened his technical skills, but it also instilled a perspective that would define his practice.

"Healing is universal," he says. "Whether someone is a labourer in Srinagar or an executive in Delhi,

attention matter."

Returning to Kashmir was both personal and purposeful. He had a chance to move to the United States, to a well-paid position at a modern rehabilitation center. He refused.

"I wanted to be here," he said. "Even if I help one person, it is more meaningful than thousands elsewhere."

In 2020, he opened Dr. Sameer's Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation Centre in Bagh-e-Mehtab. It began as a small space with basic equipment and a single patient table.

for years."

Many patients can't afford even basic treatment, so Dr. Sameer pays for it himself. Every month, he treats dozens of people for free, including daily-wage workers, children from struggling families, and older patients recovering from surgery.

"It isn't charity," he says. "It's duty. Healing belongs to everyone."

Shabir, a young carpenter who fractured his wrist, is another patient. His family could not pay, and other clinics refused him. Dr. Sameer took him on, designing a recovery plan that allowed him to work within weeks.

Shabir returned months later, carrying a carved wooden frame for the clinic, a small gesture of gratitude that now hangs near the entrance.

The clinic's impact extends into sports. Dr. Sameer collaborates with a local football academy, overseeing training, injury prevention, and rehabilitation. Young players walk in afraid, uncertain if they can continue. Weeks later, they leave stronger, moving confidently on the field.

They remember this physiotherapist for teaching discipline, patience, and body awareness.

His patients describe him as patient, humble, and deeply humane. Abdul Qayoom, a retired teacher recovering from shoulder surgery, remembers the first session vividly. "He didn't rush me," he says. "He asked about my life, routines, and fears. That attention alone began the healing."

For Dr. Sameer, this is central: the mind and body cannot be separated. Empathy and compassion are tools as important as therapy bands or weights.

He now dreams of taking physiotherapy to villages, running free camps, and guiding young therapists to put care before profit. "Pain isn't fate," he says. "With

Dr. Sameer Mushtaq shows what medicine was always meant to be: human, patient, and compassionate. His hands and heart together tell a story of healing, hope, and a life devoted to his people.

the right help, people can recover." Dr. Sameer Mushtaq shows what medicine was always meant to be: human, patient, and compassionate. His hands and heart together tell a story of healing, hope, and a life devoted to his people.

— The author is a scribe and educator based in Kashmir. He can be reached at gowherbhat866@gmail.com.

From Kashmir to Kufa

A Kashmiri traveller retraces centuries of Islamic history, visiting shrines, mosques, and cities that shaped faith and culture.

Syed Nissar H Gilani

One of my favourite hobbies is travelling. It offers an unparalleled amount of exposure, a chance to land in a foreign country and gather immense knowledge about its culture and heritage.

This year, Iraq was on my bucket list. I made the trip early this year with a group of well-wishers and friends. Twelve days wasn't long enough to truly know the country, but it was sufficient to radically change the images once conjured in my mind when I heard the name Karbala during my childhood.

Our route covered Baghdad, the resting place of "Peeran

and has remained a center of pilgrimage for centuries. The Imam Ali mosque is housed in a magnificent structure with a gold-gilded dome. Nearby is the Wadi-as-Salaam graveyard, believed to be the largest in the Islamic world, containing the tombs of several prophets.

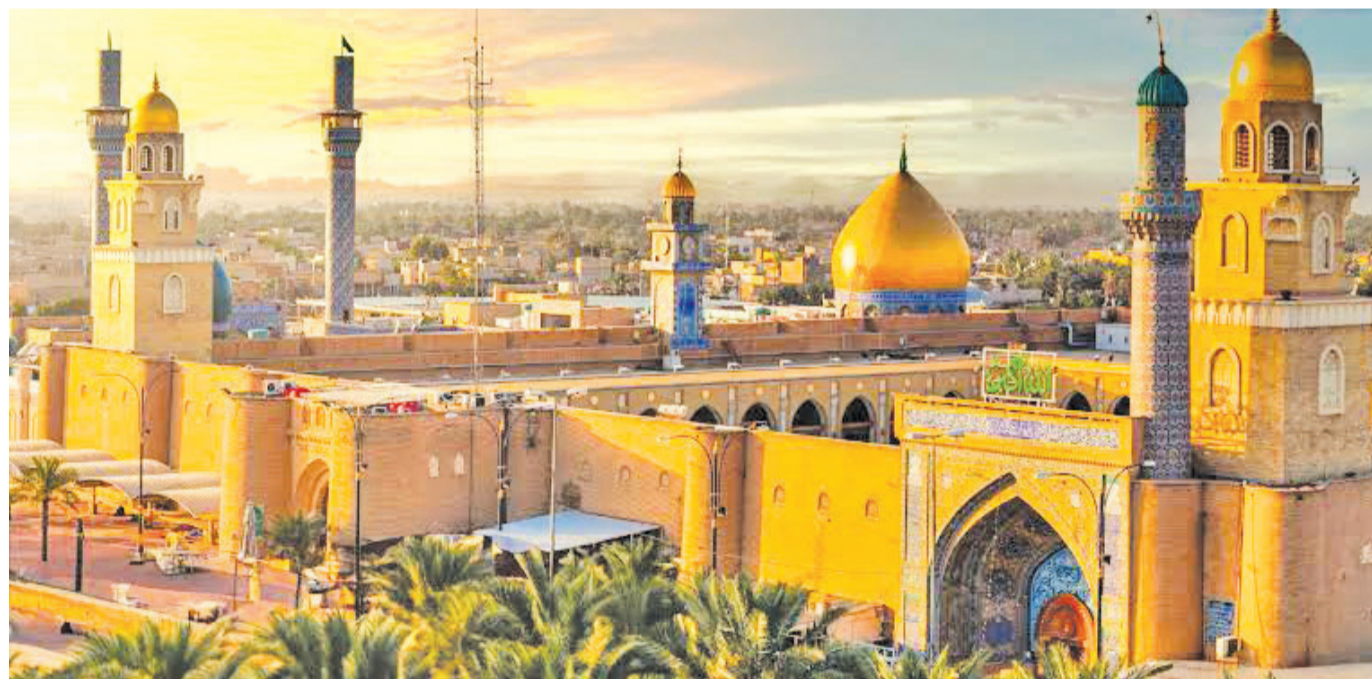
Over time, many hospices, schools, libraries, modern multi-story commercial malls, and luxury hotels have sprung up. Najaf looks neater and cleaner than the capital, Baghdad. I was happy to see the Islamic University, established in 2004, offering a wide range of departments, alongside many other universities providing scientific and humanities faculties.

As of now, Kufa and Najaf are joined into a single urban administrative unit, with a road distance of only 12 kilometers. Kufa has many top attractions. During our two-day stay, we visited the Great Mosque of Kufa, constructed in the middle of the 7th century. The city itself was founded in 638 (17 Hijrah) during the reign of the second Caliph, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, and in 656, Ali Ibn Abu Talib (K.W.) made Kufa his capital.

The Grand Mosque of Kufa was the place where Hazrat Ali Ibn Talib (K.W.) was critically wounded and martyred. It is very calm and architecturally beautiful. Visitors can see the humble house of Imam Ali (A.S.) where he resided while ruling the Islamic empire. Adjacent to this is the site of his nephew, Muslim bin Aqeel (R.A.). As the ambassador and cousin of Imam Hussain (A.S.), he was deputed to Kufa to ascertain the veracity of the thousands of letters written by its residents before the tragic event of Karbala.

Kufa has many more significant historic places, such as the Al-Sahlah Mosque, beautifully decorated with panoramic landscape.

The next day we headed to Karbala, the epicenter of the tragedy, which is just 76 kilometers and an hour's drive from Najaf. Our travel guide, Moulana Arif, a highly knowledgeable



Sadly, the resting place of Imam Ahmad Bin Hambal [R.A.], one of the prominent Islamic scholars, is cramped in a shed in the old area of Baghdad, closely resembling our M.R. Gunj area of Srinagar City.

and professional young man from U.P. in his late thirties, insisted we don't miss the golden opportunity to see other historic places en route. We agreed in unison and were glad to visit the city of Hillah, founded in the 12th century on the west bank.

Here lies the tomb of Nabi Ayoub (A.S.) on the Shatt al-Hillah, a branch of the Euphrates River (Al-Furat). Not far away, in the hills of Al-Hillah, is Qasr-i-Namrood, a deserted castle near the shrine of Nabi Ayoub (A.S.).

Finally, after a full day's tour, we reached Karbala.

The city's atmosphere is spiritually distinct from the others. The Shrine of Imam Hussain (A.S.) is covered with a golden net. The golden-domed Shrine of Hazrat Abbas (A.S.), the brother of Hussain (A.S.) who was also martyred on the day of Ashura, is located nearby, opposite the Imam Hussain shrine.

Two days later, we proceeded to Baghdad in a luxurious Japanese coach, covering a distance of 124 kilometers. En route, we passed through Al-Madain town, where the Tomb of Salman al-Farsi (R.A.), a companion of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and the first Persian to convert to Islam, is located. I was disappointed to observe that his shrine was not very well maintained.

After a few hours of driving with halts, we arrived in Baghdad, the capital of Iraq and the second-largest city in the Arab world after Cairo. Founded in 762 as the capital of the Abbasid dynasty of caliphs, for five centuries it was the most significant cultural center of Arab and Islamic civilization and one of the greatest cities of the world.

Sadly, Baghdad was heavily damaged by carpet bombing during the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991), resulting in serious damage to its civilian infrastructure, economy, and cul-

tural inheritance. The war and unrest, including looting and arson, almost repeated what Hulagu Khan had done when he captured, sacked, and burned Baghdad in 1258.

Today, Baghdad, once famous for its Arabian Nights tales, is sadly in a terrible state of decay due to poor governance, a rapid rise in population, sanctions, and corruption. Repeated cycles of destruction and reconstruction have left little of its ancient heritage intact.

Among the silver linings of the capital is the Shrine of "Darbar, Peeran-e-Peer, Ghous-ul-Azam Dastageer" Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani Hassan-o-Wal Hussaini (R.A.). Its surrounding square is named Kilani Square.

During the reign of the Safavid Shah Ismail I, the shrine was destroyed, but the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman beautifully rebuilt the grand structure in 1535, and it exists to this day. Many supermarkets and departments have

sprung up around the sprawling campus of the Peeran-e-Peer's Shrine.

I felt excited when I entered the Shrine. Our group became part of a larger family of hundreds who had travelled here from all over the world. We planned to remain at the grand Shrine for the whole day, and were given a place to stay inside a corner of the beautiful mosque attached to the Shrine.

Upon learning our nationality, we were treated exceptionally well, and extraordinary lunch and dinner, featuring some traditional Iraqi dishes, were served to us in a big dining hall nearby. Meals are usually sponsored by donors.

I had a chance to meet the chief administrator of the shrine complex for a half-hour meeting in a tastefully decorated reception hall housed in an architectural building. After exchanging pleasantries, we revealed the purpose of our visit.

We concluded our meeting with suggestions for the holy shrine campus regarding its beautification, aiming to enhance the aesthetic and functional aspects of this great shrine.

During our three-day stay in Baghdad, we also saw the Abu Hanifa Al-Numan Mosque. This place is very beautiful and extremely well-maintained. Its interior architecture is commendable.

The ambiance sends you into a sublime spiritual state. Abu Hanifa [R.A.], who ranks as one of the greatest jurists of Islamic civilization, was born in the city of Kufa in Iraq. A visit to the Abu Hanifa Mosque is a great way to understand the rich culture and history of Baghdad, and it is definitely worth a visit.

Sadly, the resting place of Imam Ahmad Bin Hambal [R.A.], one of the prominent Islamic scholars, is cramped in a shed in the old area of Baghdad, closely resembling our M.R. Gunj area of Srinagar City.

I met a cross-section of people in Baghdad who informed me that youths are desperate for jobs, with almost a quarter of the working-age population unemployed or underutilized.

Governments after Saddam Hussein's departure have so far done little. Robberies, kidnappings, and prostitution are, unfortunately, on the rise. Many still believe Saddam's time was a golden era, a notion strongly refuted by others.

As a tourist, it is strongly recommended to thoroughly make a reconnaissance and contact reliable travel agencies or local tour operators who can assist with finding suitable accommodation.

It is important to prioritize personal safety and well-being when planning travel to the cities of Iraq, particularly the capital Baghdad, and staying informed about the current situation in Iraq is essential.

As of now, Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, and Kufa are calm.

— The author is a former civil servant. He can be reached at nisarogilani57748@gmail.com.

Peer" Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani (R.A.). Next was Najaf, renowned as the burial site of Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib (K.W.). The city has grown significantly

Srinagar Open Tennis Championship Enters Semi Finals

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Srinagar Open Tennis Championship on Saturday reached the semifinal stage as Mir Jameel, Dilbagh Singh, Gurmit Singh and Inayat Jehangir made the last four of the singles event.

While last year's runner up Dilbagh Singh will take on Mir Jameel in the first semifinal, defending champion Inayat Jehangir will face his sparring partner Gurmit Singh for a place in the final tomorrow.

Jameel, Dilbagh and Inayat have reached the semifinal without dropping a set while Gurmit made the cut by virtue of having better game difference as he was locked on the same number of points with Mohammad Qais and Irfan Bhat in the group stages.

In the double's event, Mir Jameel and Danish Ahmad will take on Sajad Bhat and Rouf Ahmad while Dilbagh and Inayat will face Asif Nowsheri and Tahafuz Ilahi.

A total of 40 matches -- 24 singles and 16 doubles -- have been played so far.



A special competition has been organised for children under the age of 10 years on Sunday as part of efforts to attract more youngsters to the sport.

The championship, organised by the District Lawn Tennis Association in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir Lawn Tennis Association, has established itself as a significant event in Kashmir's tennis calendar.

Judiciary Must Adapt To Challenges Posed By Data, AI: SC judges

Press Trust Of India

Indore: The judiciary must adapt to the rapidly changing technological landscape, said four Supreme Court judges on Saturday, highlighting the emerging legal challenges linked to data, artificial intelligence (AI) and innovation.

They were speaking at the International Colloquium on the theme "Evolving Horizons: Navigating Complexity and Innovation in Commercial and Arbitration Law in the Digital World" held in Indore.

In his inaugural address, Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari of the top court said that the goal of the judiciary is not to reinvent law but to expand the frontiers of fairness without restricting the idea of fair competition.

His colleague Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah said the legal profession cannot remain an exception to technological progress. "With the rise of technology-driven and automated contracts, the judiciary must ensure that justice is not compromised due to technological evolution and must



In the modern economy, control over data has become more significant than mere ownership of firms or companies, and therefore, transparency and fairness must be ensured without curbing economic growth, he stressed.

His colleague Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah said the legal profession cannot remain an exception to technological progress.

"With the rise of technology-driven and automated contracts, the judiciary must ensure that justice is not compromised due to technological evolution and must

evolve alongside these advancements," he said.

As business expands, disputes naturally increase, and the solution lies within the judiciary, said Justice Rajesh Bindal.

"Since India has emerged as the fourth-largest economy in the world, there is an urgent need to change our mindset and provide specialised training to all stakeholders, he said.

The SC judge observed that while AI is useful, it also presents new challenges in areas like patents and registrations.

Calling India not just a participant but an architect of the global economy, Justice Arvind Kumar said the ease of doing business and innovation must progress hand in hand without compromising justice.

He emphasised the shift from adjudication to collaboration and from

arbitration to innovation, underscoring the need for the legal fraternity to adapt accordingly.

Madhya Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva said the state is well-positioned to become a hub for legal and technological innovation, aligned with the national goal of "Ease of Doing Business".

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said India has a long tradition of deliberating on all aspects of justice and engaging in scholarly debates on complex issues. He also lauded the judiciary for its landmark verdicts in the Shah Bano case from Indore and the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute.

The colloquium was also attended by Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta and Danish Patent and Trademark Office Deputy Director General Maria Skou.

61 Live Animals Seized From Passenger At Mumbai Airport

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: Customs authorities have caught an Indian with 61 live animals, including reptiles, "rare mammals" and insects, at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport here, officials said on Saturday.

The passenger had travelled to Mumbai from Bangkok, they said.

The animals were stabilised and provided medical care by a team of experts from the Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare, said a forest official. The animals will be sent back as per the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act and CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), he added.

ATM unit with Rs 20 lakh cash stolen

Press Trust Of India

Nashik: Unidentified persons stole an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) unit containing Rs 20.26 lakh cash in Nashik Road area in the wee hours on Saturday, police said.

At least four unidentified persons with their faces covered with clothes broke into the SBI ATM kiosk in the Jail Road area near Currency Note Press (CNP). They blackened the CCTV camera with black colour, cut the power supply to the alarm, and decamped with the ATM in a four-wheeler vehicle. Police have registered a case and are investigating, an official said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Gaza's Return

relief work, one of the many challenges ahead as a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas entered its second day.

"When people get there, they're going to find rubble. They'll find that their homes and their neighbourhoods have been reduced to dust," UNICEF spokesperson Tess Ingram told The Associated Press on Friday.

As the ceasefire appears to hold, her organisation and its partners are urging Israel to reopen more crossings and allow aid to flow into Gaza more freely. Meanwhile, about 200 US troops arrived in Israel to help retrieve hostages and monitor the ceasefire.

"A ceasefire alone is not enough," Ingram said, speaking from central Gaza. "Yes, it stops the killing and injuring of children, hopefully, but it also needs to ensure a surge of humanitarian aid that begins to address the tremendous damage that has been done over the past two years."

The days since the announcement of the ceasefire have moved swiftly. Israel's military confirmed it had taken effect Friday and said the 48 hostages still in Gaza would be freed Monday. A UN official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet public, said Israel also approved expanded aid deliveries starting Sunday.

The steps mark key steps toward ending the war ignited by Hamas' Oct 7, 2023, attack on Israel. The fighting has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians, flattened entire neighbourhoods, and displaced around 90% of Gaza's more than 2 million people, some multiple times.

The scale of destruction will likely become clearer as Israel's military withdraws to ceasefire lines, but more than three out of every four buildings have been destroyed, the UN said in September, creating a volume of debris equivalent to 25 Eiffel Towers, much of it likely toxic. (AP)

Correct Distorted

admit that, out of fear of terrorists and their ecosystem, they were forced to promote the narrative being pushed from across the border in the Valley," he said. "The terror ecosystem has been dismantled and now is the time to present the true narrative of Jammu and Kashmir, free from all bias and fear of gun, to strengthen trust and accelerate socio-economic growth."

The Lieutenant Governor further emphasised the importance of offering new perspectives and a vision that connects readers with culture, nature, and human well-being in a rapidly evolving world.

Highlighting Kashmir's cultural and historical depth, LG Sinha said, "It is essential to weave the region's historic transformations into words and express what we truly feel."

He, however, noted that no modern historian can be compared to Kalhana, the great chronicler of ancient Kashmir.

The Lt Governor said expressions of poets like Habba Khatoon, Nund Rishi and Padma Sachdev emerged from the soil of Kashmir and contributed immensely to India's cultural identity. "India's Sanskrit heritage and Sanatan consciousness are deeply rooted in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

He also noted that India's history reflects a long-standing spirit of global dialogue. Referring to ancient texts like the 'Nemat Pura', he said they demonstrate India's intellectual engagement with the wider world even in early times.

Urging the youth to draw inspiration from the wisdom of the past, the Lt Governor said learning from ancient dialogues can help the younger generation move forward with stronger ideas and vision.

Reflecting on recent developments, he said that over the last four to five years, literary festivals and book events have flourished across India. He stressed the need to expand such initiatives and connect youth to libraries, Indian classical music, and cultural activities.

Sharing an inspiring anecdote about Tansen and Akbar, the Lt Governor recalled how Akbar once wished to meet Tansen's guru, Sant Haridas. "Tansen told him that true masters do not visit royal courts. When Akbar later listened to Sant Haridas sing by the Yamuna, he was moved to tears. When asked why he

couldn't sing like his guru, Tansen replied, "I sing to attain something, but my Guru sings because he has already attained everything."

The event was attended by Lieutenant General (Retd.) D.P. Pandey, Yuvraj Srivastava, Founder of Srikula Foundation, senior officials, literary figures, and a large number of young people.

Pays Tribute To

Naik Sujay Ghosh, who laid down their lives for the nation.

The two soldiers made the supreme sacrifice while conducting counter-terror operations in the Kishtwar Range of Kokernag, battling extreme weather conditions.

"I salute the supreme sacrifice of our Army bravehearts Lance Havildar Palash Ghosh and Lance Naik Sujay Ghosh. The nation shall remain forever grateful for the exemplary valour and selfless service of our soldiers. We stand in solidarity with the families of our martyrs in this hour of grief," Sinha said.

The two soldiers, part of the Army's elite para unit, had gone missing during a combing operation in Kokernag earlier this week.

The operation was launched in the Ahlan Gadole area, following inputs that terrorists were hiding there. The body of one soldier was recovered on Thursday, while another body was found on Friday, officials said, adding that it seems both died due to hypothermia.

Oppn Mulls

matter is being discussed "seriously".

Leh was rocked by widespread violence on September 24 during an agitation spearheaded by LAB and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) for statehood and extension of Sixth Schedule safeguards

Opposition leaders have been vocal in condemning the deaths during the protest and the subsequent arrest of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk under the stringent National Security Act (NSA).

They have also supported the demand of the Apex Body Leh and the Kargil Democratic Alliance for a judicial enquiry into the firing incident.

The home ministry has accused Wangchuk, who was leading a hunger strike in Leh at the time, of "instigating" the protesters. Wangchuk called off his hunger strike after the incidents of violence. He was detained under the NSA on September 26.

The NSA empowers the Centre and states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India". The maximum detention period is 12 months, though it can be revoked earlier.

It can be invoked by the local administration and has to be ratified by a board headed by a former high court judge. Because it is preventive detention and not arrest, there is no legal obligation to present the detainee before a court of law.

The Making Of

sources, while withdrawals left no paper trail.

Several high-value properties were discovered to be registered in the names of his wife and children.

The ACB inquiry found Shah's wealth to be "grossly disproportionate" to his official pay, pointing to years of systematic enrichment through illicit means.

What makes this case stand out is not only the magnitude of Shah's holdings but the ordinariness of his post.

As a cashier in the police department, his role was meant to be administrative, clerical, almost invisible. But his lifestyle marked by luxury cars, foreign trips, and property deals spoke of a different kind of power.

Such revelations are becoming more common in Jammu and Kashmir. The Anti-Corruption Bureau has, over the past five years, registered multiple cases against public officials accused of amassing wealth far beyond their means. The accused often include engineers, revenue officers, and police personnel, figures who handle cash and contracts at the middle tiers of governance.

The contrast between stagnant wages and visible affluence has eroded trust in institutions that once commanded respect.

The investigation now challenges that

normalization.

Officials describe the findings in the cop's case as "a textbook example" of corruption driven by power, position and privilege.

The case file notes that Shah may own additional properties still untraced.

The formal case now rests under the Prevention of Corruption Act, with investigators describing clear evidence of criminal misconduct.

3-Judge Full

academia, serve as records in the discipline of history," the petition said.

The ban order, as per the plea, contains mere broad statements, without elaborating on how the contents of the books impact national security or honest narratives. The forfeiture order did not detail how the 25 books were identified as secessionist, the petitioners say.

"It is settled law that an administrative or quasi-judicial order having civil consequences must disclose reasons which must form part of the order itself, reasons cannot be supplied at a later stage," the petition submitted.

It argued that the J&K administration's "failure" to identify and incorporate the specific contents of the books, or even to refer to them in passing interim order was a "fatal illegality which is not curable at this stage".

"The procedural safeguards envisaged by the BNSS in requiring reasons to be incorporated in the order cannot be short-circuited by administrative verbosity masquerading as reasons... The order merely reproduces the opinion of the State government without elucidating the grounds for forming the opinion, as is mandated by law," the petition submitted.

The petition has urged the High Court to uphold the academic discipline of history and literature as well as to ensure that the right to know of the people, as part of the freedom of speech and expression, was not trampled upon by administrative overreach.

The books include political commentaries and historical accounts such as The Kashmir Dispute 1947-2012 by noted constitutional expert Noorani, Kashmir at the Crossroads and Contested Lands by Sumantra Bose, In Search of a Future: The Kashmir Story by David Devadas, Roy's Azadi and A Dismantled State: The Untold Story of Kashmir After Article 370 by journalist Anuradha Bhasin.

Afghan FM

Hundreds of students of the Islamic seminary and a large number of locals who had gathered at the Deoband campus jostled to shake hands with the visiting foreign dignitary, but were stopped by security personnel.

"We will be sending new diplomats, and I hope you people will visit Kabul as well. I have hopes for stronger ties in the future from the way I was received in Delhi. These visits may be frequent in the near future," Muttaqi said.

Later, a public event organised by Deoband was cancelled due to "overcrowding" and "security reasons".

Prior to his arrival from Delhi by road, intelligence and security agencies made extensive arrangements at Deoband. Officials from the Afghan embassy in Delhi arrived here on Friday for the high-level visit and met officials at Darul Uloom to review all arrangements.

Muttaqi, who landed in New Delhi on Thursday on a six-day trip, is the first senior Taliban minister to visit India after the group seized power four years back. India has not yet recognised the Taliban set up.

Opposition parties on Saturday termed the absence of female journalists from the press conference of Afghan Foreign Minister "unacceptable" and an "insult to women", and said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "silence" in the face of such discrimination exposes the "emptiness" of his slogans on 'Nari Shakti'.

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were among those who criticised it.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said, "(Taliban) on female journalists in India. Shocking and unacceptable that the Govt of India agreed to it -- and that too in New Delhi on the eve of the International Day of the Girl Child."

The Editors Guild of India and the Indian

Women Press Corps (IWPC) termed the act as highly discriminatory and said it cannot be justified on grounds of diplomatic privilege under the Vienna Convention.

Amid the row, the Darul Uloom Deoband asserted that there were no directives to keep women journalists away from covering the visit of the Afghan minister to the seminary.

"There were no restrictions from the Afghan foreign minister's office about who would attend," Deoband PRO Ashraf Usmani, also the media in-charge of Muttaqi's programme, told PTI, and dismissed as "baseless" claims that women journalists were kept away.

The Islamic seminary's clarification came regarding a public event of the Afghanistan minister that was scheduled to be held during his visit to the Darul Uloom Deoband in Saharanpur on Saturday but was called off at the last moment due to "overcrowding" and "security reasons".

"There were no directives from anywhere on the attendance of women journalists. But the programme got called off at the last moment," Usmani told PTI.

"Though the programme was called off due to overcrowding, the presence of a couple of women journalists for the Afghanistan minister's event was enough to rebut reports of women journalists being made to keep away from the event," he said, even naming news channels those journalists represented.

More people turned up for the event than were expected. So the Afghanistan minister's speech didn't happen as local administration cited security concerns as a reason for cancelling the public event, Usmani said.

"Various things were doing the rounds, from women journalists not being allowed to them being made to sit separately. All of this was baseless," said Usmani, who is a Nazim (equivalent to departmental head) in Darul Uloom Deoband.

The president of Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind, Maulana Arshad Madani, told reporters that Jamiat's relationship with Afghanistan is very old, and thousands of people from there had come here to study and later went back.

Asked about Friday's press conference of the Afghan foreign minister, Madani told reporters, "It was a coincidence that yesterday's press conference was attended only by men. The Afghan foreign minister had not said no to women coming to the press conference. It was wrong and propaganda."

On the Afghan leader's engagements at the Deoband, Usmani said: "Amir Khan Muttaqi participated in a scholarly session inside the seminary's central library, where he symbolically read a lesson of Hadees (Prophetic tradition) under Maulana Nomanani."

He said that in order to teach Hadith, the person is given an 'Ijazaat-e-Hadees' (permission) by an 'ustad' (teacher)".

Usmani said that Nomanani in his personal capacity has bestowed the symbolic title of 'Sanad-e-Hadees' to Muttaqi as an extension of the 'tree' (lineage), to which he belongs.

"Now, Muttaqi is also a part of this tree, and he can say that he was taught by Maulana AQ Nomanani," Usmani told PTI.

He categorically said that the title has not been given by Darul Uloom Deoband seminary, and is a personal title given by the 'ustad' (AQ Nomanani).

"Now, Muttaqi will be known as a 'shaagird' (disciple) of AQ Nomanani," Usmani said.

The Afghan foreign minister's visit to India assumed greater significance as it came at a time when both India and Afghanistan are having frosty relations with Pakistan over a range of issues, including cross-border terrorism.

Kabul will soon send its diplomats to India as part of "step-by-step" efforts to improve bilateral relations, Muttaqi had said on Friday, even as he asserted the Taliban will not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against other countries.

Muttaqi also pitched for India and Afghanistan joining hands to remove obstacles for the development of the Chabahar port in Iran in view of the Trump administration bringing it under sanctions.

Seat-Sharing Standoff

Conference on Friday announced the candidature of Choudhary Muhammad Ramzan, Sajad Kichloo, and Shammii Oberoi.

While the alliance is expected to comfortably

win three seats, the BJP holds an advantageous position on the fourth. The alliance has 24 votes, whereas the BJP commands 28 vote. (KNO)

J&K To Get

Indication (GI) tagged items, directing the department to ensure rollout by the end of the year to guarantee authenticity and global visibility.

Other projects under review included Wool and Silk Villages, Common Facility Centres for Yarn Dyeing, the Indian Institute of Textiles at Basohli, Sericulture Park, and Craft-based Resource Centres, with officers instructed to expedite completion.

Skill development and branding initiatives were also discussed. Under the Karkhandar Scheme, master craftsmen mentor new artisans, providing monthly stipends and continuous support, with 12 Karkhanas established and over 120 artisans trained.

With the support of NIFT Srinagar, 36 prototype designs across five craft forms have been developed, and nearly 1,000 artists trained under ten skill enhancement programs. The Indian Institute of Carpet Technology, Srinagar, has digitized 650 traditional designs and developed 2,600 carpet and 600 Kani patterns, generating Rs 56 lakh in revenue.

Under the "Soulful Kashmir" initiative, the department is launching "Know Your Artisan" programs at the Jhelum Riverfront, along with craft safaris and promotions through airports, city centres, FM channels, and Doordarshan to enhance market reach.

"The Ekta Malls, along with digital traceability and global branding efforts, will provide our artisans the platform and recognition they deserve," the Chief Secretary said.

RSN Platform

requiring them to respond to allegations. The Income Tax Department is also expected to conduct parallel inquiries, with high-value transactions being closely monitored.

Authorities have urged the public to exercise extreme caution and not share personal or financial information with anyone. "Many young individuals are approaching elderly family members under false pretenses, collecting documents and claiming to be opening insurance policies. These are fraudulent activities--no such policies exist," the SSP warned.

In a related development, another FIR was registered just three days ago. Investigations revealed the involvement of a key suspect who had previously organised the marriage of a person named Kangan and was allegedly recruiting young people into the gang. "Strict action will be taken against him," the SSP said.

Authorities have appealed to families to closely monitor their children's activities. "Many youths are being misled into handing over money at home under the guise of 'investing'. These hidden or under-the-table investments are not only illegal but dangerous," Poswal said. He cautioned that such cases often end tragically, including suicides, leaving law enforcement little room to intervene.

The public has been advised to avoid using RSN or any similar gaming or investment platforms suspected of illegal activity. Authorities warned that preventive detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) may be enforced if the situation continues to escalate.

No Central Funds

poor patients who could not afford specialised treatments. It must continue to get priority at all levels of government so that the momentum in healthcare development is not lost," a senior health official said, requesting anonymity.

Public health expert Dr Shabir Ahmad highlighted the wider implications of the funding gap. "Health is not an expenditure but an investment in human capital. Stopping or delaying funds for a scheme like Ayushman Bharat will directly impact the poor," he said.

Officials in the health department expressed hope that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare would soon address the shortfall and ensure the smooth continuation of the mission in the coming quarters. (inputs from KNO)

Empty Classrooms, Idle Teachers: J&K's Education Sector in Dire Straits

'146 schools in JK function with zero enrolments'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In Jammu and Kashmir, at least 61 teachers are posted or deployed in those schools having zero enrolments—thus raising a question on managing the human resources and quality of education. Besides, the official data reveals that Jammu and Kashmir has at least 146 such schools wherein no student is enrolled. According to the official figures mentioned in Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE Plus) 2024-25, Jammu and Kashmir has 61 teachers in those schools having zero enrolments and 146 schools with zero enrolments.

In September, it was reported that Jammu and Kashmir has at least 1371 schools wherein single teachers have been posted or deployed. The figures reveal that there is an enrolment of 32,303 students enrolled in those schools where only single teachers



are posted or deployed.

Pertinently, in a previous report, the official figures have revealed that in Jammu and Kashmir more than 31,054 students were enrolled in those schools that were functioning with a

single teacher. In the previous report, there were only 1330 schools that were functioning with only a single teacher. However, the recent report suggests that the numbers have increased by at least 41 schools.

Last year, the news of closure of over 4400 government run schools owing to 'zero or extremely low' enrolment of students came out. In July-2024, it was reported that there were a total of 23,117

IN JULY-2024, it was reported that there were a total of 23,117 government run schools in Jammu and Kashmir out of which 4394 have been deleted from the UDISE data.

government run schools in Jammu and Kashmir out of which 4394 have been deleted from the UDISE data. Despite repeated calls, Secretary, School Education Department and Jammu and Kashmir Samagra Shiksha Project Director were not available to comment on the matter—(KNO)

DPAP Will Not Fight Upcoming Bypolls in Budgam, Nagrota: Azad

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) will not contest the upcoming bypolls in Budgam and Nagrota Assembly seats, its chairman and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Saturday.

He said the decision not to fight the bypolls was taken after thorough consultations and a ground-level assessment, which indicated limited organisational strength in these segments.

"We do not believe in symbolic contests or vote division. Where our support base is not sufficiently strong, we would rather consolidate efforts in other constituencies and focus on the broader mission of restoring democratic dignity and development in Jammu and Kashmir," Azad said.

The bypolls to Budgam and Nagrota constituencies will be held on November 11, while the counting of votes will be undertaken on November 14.

The Budgam seat fell vacant immediately after the 2024 Assembly elections when Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chose to retain the Ganderbal constituency. The seat has been vacant since October 21, 2024.

Nagrota, on the other hand,



fell vacant on October 31, 2024, after the death of BJP MLA Devender Singh Rana.

Reiterating his long-standing demand, the DPAP chairman once again called for the immediate restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

"Effective governance requires close coordination between the lieutenant governor and the chief minister, so that citizens' grievances are addressed promptly and public welfare schemes reach every corner of the region," he said.

Highlighting the plight of those affected by recent floods, Azad urged the Centre to announce a comprehensive financial relief package for the victims. He stressed that rebuilding lives and infrastructure must remain the top priority, beyond political or bureaucratic considerations.

CS Reviews Progress of PMGSY Road Works

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Saturday chaired a review meeting of the Public Works Department (PWD) to assess the progress of road and bridge construction works being executed under various phases of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) across J&K.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, PWD; Development Commissioner (Works); Chief Engineers; and other senior officers of the department. All Deputy Commissioners participated through video conferencing.

At the outset, the Chief Secretary emphasized the critical importance of timely completion of road projects under PMGSY Phases I and II. He directed the concerned officers to make every possible effort to ensure the execution of all pending works within the stipulated timelines. He further instructed that clear responsibility be fixed in cases where works remain incomplete or unexecuted due to any avoidable reasons.

Underscoring the need for stronger on-ground supervision, the Chief Secretary called for the designation of senior officers to oversee the progress of PMGSY works on a regular basis. These officers, he directed, should undertake frequent site visits and ensure that site engineers maintain daily monitoring of both the quality and quantity of work being executed.

The Chief Secretary also directed that Executive Engineers and As-



sistant Executive Engineers be required to conduct regular field inspections, with their movements and site visits tracked and monitored at the highest levels within the department. He remarked that the role of engineers lies more in the field where the work is executed than in the confines of their offices.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the status of works taken up under later phases of PMGSY, seeking detailed information regarding projects sanctioned, completed, ongoing, and pending, along with their physical progress and expected dates of completion.

He also reviewed in detail the works proposed under PMGSY Phase IV, including those aimed at connecting vibrant villages in frontier areas. He took stock of the status of forest clearances required for several such road projects to ensure that procedural delays are minimized.

Providing a detailed overview, ACS, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh apprised the Chief Secretary about the department's roadmap for completion of balance road and bridge works under various PMGSY phases. He informed that under Phase IV

and its subsequent batches, the department has prioritized early execution and time-bound completion of projects across both divisions.

It was informed in the meeting that as of April 2025, 88 road projects under Phase I, 6 under Phase II, and 85 under Phase III were pending completion. Of these, 6 projects under Phase I and 40 under Phase III have since been completed, and a structured roadmap has been drawn to finish the remaining works within the shortest possible timeframe.

With regard to bridges, the meeting was informed that out of 305 bridges taken up under the first three phases of PMGSY, 227 have been completed, while 50 more are targeted for completion by March 2026.

As for Phase IV, it was revealed that 316 schemes have been sanctioned, out of which 3 projects are already under execution. The remaining 313 projects have been tendered out of which 134 are under technical evaluation, 87 under financial evaluation, and 39 for which Letters of Acceptance (LoA) have already been issued and will be taken up for execution shortly.

OBSTRUCTING TRAFFIC

Jammu Fruit Vendors Penalised with Community Service

A local court here on Saturday directed three fruit sellers to perform community service for five days after they were found guilty of obstructing traffic and causing a nuisance near a hospital here, police said.

Nadeem, Bilal and Fejan -- all residents of Uttar Pradesh -- were detained by police and produced before the court, they said.

The three were booked under Section 34 of the Police Act for blocking a stretch of road near the Government Medical College and Hospital at Maheshpura Chowk.

According to the community punishment conditions, the individuals will clean the wards of the hospital from 10 am to 4.30 pm, police said.

In another case, police successfully secured a conviction in a case of illegal liquor possession and sale.

On July 15, a police team arrested Krishan Singh from his house at Badyal Quazian in the RS Pora area of Jammu and recovered 54 quarters of whisky being sold illegally, they said.

A chargesheet was filed in a local court, which convicted the accused on Saturday and imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 2,000 under the relevant provisions of law. (PTI)

Tractors Involved in Illegal Transportation of Minerals Seized

In continuation of its ongoing drive against illegal mining, Police in Awantipora on Saturday said to have intensified efforts to combat illegal mining activities in the Police district Awantipora and seized six tractors involved in illegal transportation of minerals.

A Police party led by SHO Police Station Tral under the supervision of SDPO Tral Rajesh Kumar seized six tractors from Nowdal area of Police Station Tral, involved in illegal transportation of minerals, a police spokesman said in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer.

Accordingly, police said that a case under FIR number 125/2025 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Tral and further investigation has been initiated.

Meanwhile, the community members are earnestly appealed to extend their cooperation by sharing any information regarding such unlawful activities in their areas. "J&K Police assures complete confidentiality of the informants and reiterates its resolve to take strict legal action against those indulging in illegal mining," the spokesman said. (Observer News Service)

Surprise Ticket Checking Conducted in Banihal-Katra Section

The Jammu Division, under the direction of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Uchit Singhal, conducted various campaigns to ensure excellent service to all passengers.

To ensure quality food, pure drinking water, and clean toilets, ticket checking drives are conducted at stations and trains to curb ticketless and irregular travel, a spokesman said in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer.

"On October 10, 2025, a surprise ticket checking drive was conducted in the Banihal-Katra section. This drive was conducted by a team led by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Uchit Singhal, including Assistant Commercial Manager, Manoj Meena, Ticket Inspector, Abdul Rashid, and other ticket checking staff. As part of the ticket checking drive, trains running from Banihal to Katra were checked on both sides," he said.

During this ticket checking drive, 22 passengers were charged for travelling without tickets and a fine of Rs 23,760 was collected.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Uchit Singhal, stated, "Ticket checking drives will be conducted periodically in the division to curb ticketless and irregular travel. Therefore, all passengers are requested to travel with valid tickets. The Railways respects all its passengers and wishes them a pleasant journey." (Observer News Service)

VC Reviews Functioning of LCMA



Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, after taking charge as Vice Chairman of the Jammu & Kashmir Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA), convened a comprehensive review meeting with officers of the Authority on Saturday.

During the meeting, he took stock of the functioning of all operational wings, including enforcement, lake cleaning and maintenance, planning and monitoring, public outreach, and regulatory oversight. He called for strengthening inter-departmental coordination to ensure timely execution of lake conservation initiatives.

As per a statement, the Vice Chairman stressed the need for adopting proactive measures for the preservation and restoration of Dal-Nagin and other allied waterbodies.

He further directed officers to ensure prompt redressal of public grievances related to encroachments, pollution, and illegal activities affecting lake ecosystems. He directed the Enforcement Officer to demolish any construction that takes place within 200 mtrs and stressed for regulation of constructions beyond the restricted zone.

Qadri reaffirmed LCMA's commitment to safeguarding the region's natural heritage and instructed officials to maintain high standards of transparency, accountability, and field-level responsiveness in all operations. (Observer News Service)



NC Govt Has Failed Politically: Ruhullah

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) Lok Sabha MP Ruhullah Mehdi on Saturday said the Omar Abdullah-led government in Jammu and Kashmir has "failed on the political front" as it approaches its one-year mark in office on October 16.

"The government is about to complete a year in office. Whatever was needed to be done on the political front has not happened. There was a need to show intent, but I personally feel that has not been shown till now," Ruhul-

lah told reporters.

He stressed that the government must work to satisfy the people. "If people are satisfied, I am satisfied. If people ask questions, those should be heard seriously. They should ponder where the lacunae are," he added.

On the issue of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, Ruhullah criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying it has no intention of restoring the rights "snatched from people" following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. The move ended the state's autonomous status

and divided it into two Union Territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

"They want people to remain disempowered. They want to make them more disempowered," he said.

Commenting on the upcoming bypolls in Budgam, Ruhullah, who has represented the constituency thrice in the erstwhile J&K assembly, said he has conveyed the people's demands to the party. "I have talked to them. I have said what the people of Budgam want. I will talk to you in detail about it after a few days," he said.

Ruhullah also urged the

government and the assembly Speaker to revoke the Public Security Act (PSA) on Aam Aadmi Party MLA Mehraj Malik to enable his participation in the upcoming assembly session. Malik, the AAP J&K president, was detained under PSA on September 8 for allegedly disturbing public order in Doda district.

"The elected government and the Speaker should make efforts. First, his PSA should be withdrawn. It is not a relevant law if he has made some mistake. They should ensure Malik attends the assembly session," Ruhullah said.

KVK Organizes Live Streaming of "PM Dhan-Dhaaniya Krishi Yojana"

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Anantnag successfully organized the live streaming of the launch of "PM Dhan-Dhaaniya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)" by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India from Pusa, New Delhi. The event at KVK-Anantnag witnessed an overwhelming participation of around 400 farmers, in addition to the presence of local PRIs, DDC members, and other stakeholders from various parts of the district.

The live telecast of the Prime Minister's address, highlighting the government's commitment towards transforming Indian agriculture and empowering farmers through sus-



tainable and technology-driven practices, was enthusiastically received by the participants.

In addition to the live streaming, associated programmes including technical interactions, awareness sessions on flagship schemes, Natural Farming and exhibitions showcasing local innovations and success stories were also organized by KVK-Anantnag on the occasion.

Authorities Clear Garbage from Sopore-Kupwara Highway

SRINAGAR: Authorities on Saturday swung into action and cleared the accumulated waste along the Sopore-Kupwara highway at Shangergund Model Town, pressing men and machinery into service from early morning hours.

Officials said that over 10 dumpers of waste were lifted from the site after a prompt sanitation drive was launched by the Municipal Council Sopore, even though the stretch lies beyond its jurisdiction.

"We couldn't afford to let the highway remain in such a condition. Despite being outside MC limits, we took responsibility

and cleared the waste to restore cleanliness," a senior administrative official said.

The official further said that strict action will now follow against those involved in illegal dumping of waste along the highway. "We will take up the installation of CCTV cameras at key locations to identify and penalize habitual dumpers. Action will be taken under rules and we will ensure no one turns the stretch into a dump again," the official added.

A senior administrative official also confirmed that the stay on the proposed dumping site has been disposed of, and the matter has already been taken up with

the Divisional Commissioner's office for final approval. "The process of establishing a permanent waste disposal site for Sopore is underway. Once finalized, it will provide a lasting solution to the town's long-pending sanitation problem," he said.

Locals, meanwhile, welcomed the cleanup effort following media coverage, but urged the authorities to focus on sustainable waste management. "Cleaning after media reports helps temporarily. What Sopore needs is a proper waste site and accountability against those who dump garbage irresponsibly," said a local resident—(KNO)



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