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J&K RS Polls

4 NC, 3 BJP
Candidates File
Nomination Papers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The battle lines for the Rajya Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir are now clear, with nine candidates—four from the National Conference (NC) and three from the Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP)—filing their nomination papers on Monday, the last day for nominations.

The National Conference on Monday named party spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar as its fourth candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls in Jammu and **| More on P6**

Budgam, Nagrota Assembly By-polls

EC Starts Nomination Process

KO Web Desk

The nomination process for Budgam and Nagrota assembly segments began on Monday with the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday issuing two separate notifications for them. According to the notifications issued by the poll-body, the ECI said that **| More on P6**

173 Polling Stations Set Up In Budgam

Ahead of the upcoming bye-election in the 27-Budgam Assembly Constituency, a total of 173 polling stations have been established across 111 polling locations, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sanjeev Verma announced on Monday during his visit to the district.

Verma chaired a detailed review meeting with officials, assessing polling station-wise arrangements to **| More on P6**

Rajya Sabha Seat-Sharing Row

Congress Claims NC Promised
Safe Seat, NC Denies

Agencies

Srinagar: Did National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah assure senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi that a safe seat would be allocated to the party in the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls? Congress leaders claim he did, but the National Conference has denied giving any such assurance.

Senior leadership from both parties were engaged in behind-the-scenes negotiations over seat-sharing

arrangements. Congress had requested a safe seat, but the National Conference declined, offering instead a “risky” seat where the P holds an advantageous position.

They revealed that Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge personally initiated communication with the NC leadership. “He spoke to Dr. Farooq Abdullah over the phone and expressed the desire that a safe seat be allocated to Congress,” sources said, adding that Dr. Abdullah later met Sonia Gandhi in **| More on P6**

Gaza Deal Signed: All Hostages,
1,900 Prisoners Released

Agencies

Gaza: All 20 remaining living hostages held in Gaza and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel walked free Monday as part of a ceasefire pausing two years of war that decimated the Gaza Strip and killed tens of thousands of Palestinians.

Hamas said Monday that it will release the bodies of four of the 28 deceased Israeli captives, though it was not immediately clear when the rest of the bodies would be sent back to Israel. Israel says it has released more than 1,900 Palestinian prisoners as part of the Gaza ceasefire deal.

Speaking to parliament, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared he was “committed to this peace,” raising hopes that the ruinous war, which triggered other conflicts in the Middle East and had left scores of captives in militant hands, might come to an end. But fundamental questions remain over



when and how.

Cheering crowds greeted buses of released prisoners in the West Bank and Gaza, while families and friends of the hostages gathered in a square in Tel Aviv, Israel, cried out with joy and relief as news arrived that the captives were free.

US President Donald Trump flew to the region and addressed the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. He was later to head to Egypt for a summit to discuss the US-proposed deal

and postwar plans with other leaders.

Speaking ahead of Trump's address in the Knesset, Netanyahu pledged that he was “committed to this peace.”

He added: “Today, the Jewish calendar marks the end of two years of war.”

While major questions remain about the future of Hamas and Gaza, the exchange of hostages and prisoners raised hopes for ending the deadliest war ever between

Israel and the militant group. The ceasefire is also expected to see a surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza, parts of which are experiencing famine.

The war began when Hamas-led militants launched a surprise attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, in which some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed and 251 taken hostage.

In Israel's ensuing offensive, more than 67,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around half the dead were women and children. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government, and the UN and many independent experts consider its figures the most reliable estimate of war-time casualties.

The toll is expected to grow as bodies are pulled from rubble previously made inaccessible by fighting.

The war has destroyed large swaths of Gaza **| More on P6**

PALESTINIANS IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK REJOICED as buses carrying dozens of released prisoners from Ofer Prison arrived in Beitunia, near Ramallah, as Israel began releasing more than 1,900 prisoners and detainees as part of the ceasefire deal.

J&K F&ES
Issues Winter
Safety Advisory

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Directorate of Fire & Emergency Services, Jammu & Kashmir, has issued an advisory for the general public to remain vigilant during the winter season amid a rise in fire incidents.

The advisory lists precautionary measures to prevent fire accidents, including ensuring electrical heating gadgets, stoves, and LPG appliances are switched off when not in use, using Kangris carefully, avoiding storage of combustible materials inside homes, and refraining from using faulty electrical appliances.

It also emphasizes using quality fuses, miniature circuit breakers (MCBs), and earth leakage circuit breakers, keeping wires away from hot or wet surfaces, staying in the kitchen while cooking, maintaining proper ventilation while using LPG heaters, and keeping escape routes and water access points clear. Careless disposal of cigarette butts is strictly discouraged.

In case of fire emergencies, the public **| More on P6**

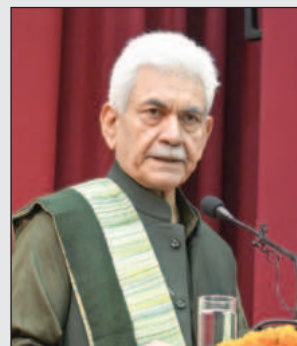
No Power Can Stop India's
Progress: LG Sinha
Says Inclusion Is The Key For Prosperity

Observer News Service

Jammu: “Inclusion is the key for prosperity,” the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Monday. He said in the past few years, the government's efforts were focused on ensuring all members of society participate fully in J&K's developmental journey and people with special abilities are able to unlock their potential and contribute to greater prosperity and social stability.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the 45th Foundation Day of School for the hearing impaired run by J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra.

The Lieutenant Governor



also observed that several forces based abroad and also in India are trying to stop the progress of the country. He said this conspiracy has been hatched by certain elements but no power can stop our march towards developed

India.

“India will emerge more powerful defeating the challenges and hurdles created by certain elements. No one can stop our rise,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor, in his address, called for implementing inclusive rehabilitation measures for people with special abilities and ensuring equal opportunities for them in education and employment.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the four important aspects for empowerment of people with special abilities. First, identifying their strengths and promoting them, **| More on P6**

Introduce
Specialised
Faculty For
Languages: LG
To SMVDU

At the 36th Executive Council meeting of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) at Raj Bhawan, the LG directed a comprehensive review of the university's initiatives to align with the

National Education Policy-2020, aiming to transform SMVDU into a premier national educational institute. He emphasized lifelong learning, community engagement, increasing enrolment, industry collaboration, skill **| More on P6**

HC Rejects Bail
Of Murder AccusedSays Duration Of Incarceration Cannot
Be Sufficient Ground For Granting Bail

M Ahmad

Srinagar: Mere passage of time or duration of incarceration during trial cannot, in isolation, constitute sufficient grounds for granting bail, High Court of J&K and Ladakh has said.

A bench of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal made the observation while rejecting bail plea filed by 40-year-old Tarun Sharma, a resident of Udhampur.

Sharma has been accused of murdering Amit Gupta of Shakti Nagar, Udhampur, on 20 October 2022 and as per

the prosecution the motive behind the offence stemmed from a financial dispute between him and the deceased. Gupta had allegedly paid an amount of Rs 10,000 to Rs

12,000 to Sharma who, being unable to return the money, committed the crime out of frustration and to escape liability.

“It is pertinent to note that mere passage of time or duration of incarceration during trial cannot, in isolation, constitute sufficient ground for granting bail, particularly in cases involving grave **| More on P6**

J&K Forests Dept To
Geo-Tag All Water Bodies

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo has directed the Forest Department to compulsorily geo-tag all water bodies across Jammu and Kashmir to aid their protection, conservation, and scientific management.

The directions were issued during a high-level meeting reviewing the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA: CTR) campaign, attended by senior officers from Jal Shakti, Forest, Social Welfare, Education, Rural Development departments, and district Deputy Commissioners via video conferencing.

The Chief Secretary emphasized seamless coordination between departments to ensure comprehensive

identification and geo-referencing of water bodies in both forest and non-forest areas within a month, ahead of the winter snowfall. He highlighted the urgent need to address climate change challenges and secure water resources for future generations.

ACS Shaleen Kabra noted that the campaign has transitioned from planning to intensive community-driven implementation. He said all 20 districts of J&K have uploaded 100% District Water Conservation Plans (DWCPs) on the JSA portal, providing a scientific framework for sustainable water management.

The meeting reviewed post-monsoon reports from districts including Doda, Ganderbal, Jammu, **| More on P6**

India's System Driven By Justice
Rather Than Punishment: HM

Says 50% of Chargesheets Now Filed on Time Under New Laws

KO Web Desk

Jaipur: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday described the implementation of three new criminal laws as a historic reform and the “biggest overhaul” of India's criminal justice system in the 21st century.

Speaking at a function here, Shah said the new laws – Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam – which came into effect on July 1, 2024, have already started delivering results. “Over 50 per cent of chargesheets are now being filed on time. I am confident this figure will rise to 90 per



cent in another year,” he said.

Highlighting the impact in Rajasthan, Shah said the conviction rate has risen from 42 per cent earlier to 60 per cent after the laws were implemented. “Once the implementation is complete, I believe it will rise

to 90 per cent,” he added.

The Home Minister inaugurated an exhibition showcasing the transformation of India's criminal justice system from a punitive approach to one focused on justice, transparency, and efficiency. The exhibition features live demonstrations across 10 zones, covering the entire judicial process “from reporting of a crime to the final verdict.”

Shah emphasized that the reforms aim to provide easy and timely access to justice for all. “Under the old system, cases would drag on for 25 to 30 years without sentencing, depriving people of timely justice. The new system will change that,” he said. **| More on P6**

Dry Spell
To Continue Till
Oct 23: MeT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Monday forecast continued dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir for the next several days, with a slight rise in both daytime and night temperatures.

According to the forecast, the weather is expected to remain mostly dry from October 13 to 18, while October 19–20 may see partly to generally cloudy skies in the afternoons. However, dry conditions are likely to prevail overall through October 23.

Farmers have been advised to carry on with routine agricultural activities, as no major weather disturbances are anticipated.

The Met Centre also noted that temperatures may increase by 1–3°C in several areas during the week. Residents have been urged to stay updated with regular weather advisories and forecasts.

Traffic Restored
Fully on NH 44

Observer News Service

Jammu: The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has successfully restored two-way traffic movement for heavy motor vehicles on the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway, ensuring seamless transportation of essential commodities and fruit-laden trucks from the Valley to markets outside, officials said.

The 250-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was on August 26 blocked by multiple landslides and road sinking at several locations, particularly at Tharad Bridge and Balli Nallah in Udhampur district, and Maroog in Ramban district, they said.

Traffic movement on the highway had been severely disrupted following heavy rainfall, flash floods, and cloudbursts during August and September, the officials added.

The highway was disrupted on August 26 and restored for one-way traffic on September 10 after NHAI swiftly mobilized men and machinery to restore connectivity on a war footing, they said.

“Following sustained efforts, the damaged stretches were repaired and blacktopped. The most affected and vulnerable portion near Tharad, between Udhampur and Chenani, approximately 300 meters in length, was fully blacktopped on October 5, ensuring smooth passage for both HMVs and LMVs,” a NHAI official said.

The official said the restoration now **| More on P6**

Mental Health Counseling Cell Inaugurated at KGP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A Mental Health Counseling Cell was inaugurated on Monday at the Kashmir Government Polytechnic (KGP), Gogibagh Srinagar, under the “Happy and Healthy Minds” initiative—marking a major stride in promoting emotional well-being and mental health awareness among students.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by faculty members and students, reflecting the institution’s growing commitment to fostering a supportive and healthy academic environment.

Consultant Clinical Psychologist Dr. Mohd. Muzaffar Khan was the guest speaker on the occasion. In his address, Dr. Khan shed light on the growing mental health challenges faced by youth, including stress, anxiety, and maladaptive coping mechanisms. He underscored the need for adopting positive

coping strategies to prevent mental distress and substance misuse.

The program also featured insightful presentations by Mrs. Sabahat Muzaffar and Mr. Adil Rashid. Mrs. Muzaffar spoke on the fundamentals of mental health, emphasizing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience, while Mr. Rashid discussed the causes and consequences of substance abuse and its far-reaching impact on individuals and society.

Principal Dr. Shafaquat Ara expressed her deep appreciation for the collaborative efforts of KASHMER (Kashmiri American Society for Healthcare, Medical Education and Research) and HPVT (Help Poor Voluntary Trust) in establishing the Counseling Cell. She highlighted the importance of integrating mental health support within educational institutions to help students lead balanced, confident, and productive lives.

Conference on “InfraEM Bharat – Engineering the Atma Nirbhar Future” Begins at NIT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A two-day national conference titled “InfraEM Bharat – Engineering the Atma Nirbhar Future” began at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Monday, bringing together experts, researchers, and academicians from across the country to deliberate on innovations and sustainable solutions for building

a self-reliant India.

Jointly organized by the Department of Civil Engineering and the Department of Metallurgical & Materials Engineering.

The conference was formally inaugurated by Prof. Roohie Naaz Mir, In-charge Director, NIT Srinagar, along with Prof. J.A. Bhat, Head, Department of Civil Engineering, and Prof. Mohammad Shafi Mir, senior faculty member.



Supporters of BJP raise slogans after candidates filed nomination papers for Rajya Sabha seats in Srinagar on Monday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Parents Cry Foul Over Alleged Date of Birth Tampering in Schools

Agencies

Srinagar: A deep-rooted scam involving the alleged manipulation of children’s dates of birth has come to light in Srinagar, sparking outrage among parents and calls for a full-fledged criminal investigation. According to multiple complaints, some hospitals, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) employees, and private school authorities are allegedly colluding to alter birth records, allowing overage children to secure admission in pre-primary classes meant for three-year-olds.

The revelation has shaken parents who discovered that their three-year-old children were being forced to compete and study alongside children appearing nearly double their age. The malpractice, parents say, not only undermines fair competition but also exposes deep administrative corruption within educational and health institutions.

“I was shocked when my three-and-a-half-year-old daughter lost a school race to a classmate who looked almost six,” said a concerned mother. “When I inquired about the child’s actual age, the school authorities remained silent. That’s when I realized something was seriously wrong.”

Another parent shared a similar experience, saying he was stunned to find children between six and ten years old sitting in the same class as his three-year-old child. “This is not just an admission irregularity; it’s a crime. How can such older kids be admitted with falsified documents? Who issued these fake birth certificates? There

must be accountability,” he said.

According to parents, several hospitals have allegedly been issuing manipulated birth certificates with backdated entries, while certain SMC employees are suspected of adjusting official records to match the fraudulent documents. Private schools, eager to fill seats and boost enrolment numbers, are said to be turning a blind eye to these discrepancies.

“This is a dangerous precedent,” said an education rights activist, calling for an independent inquiry. “Allowing older children into classes meant for toddlers not only disadvantages genuine stu-

dent but also violates educational norms, child protection guidelines, and ethics. It’s an organized form of document forgery that must be dealt with firmly.”

Legal experts say that if proven, such actions fall under sections of the Indian Penal Code related to forgery, fraud, and criminal conspiracy. “Manipulating a child’s date of birth for personal or institutional gain is a serious offence that merits immediate prosecution,” said a senior lawyer, adding that both the issuers of fake certificates and the beneficiaries could face legal consequences.

Parents are now urging the Jammu and Kashmir government,

the Directorate of School Education, and the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to launch a joint investigation. They are demanding a forensic audit of all birth certificates used for school admissions over the past three years, along with verification of hospital records and municipal entries.

“This is not just about admissions, it’s about fairness, integrity, and the future of our children,” said another parent. “Those responsible must be held accountable, whether they are hospital officials, municipal employees, or school administrators. They must face the law.”

dents but also violates educational

As the outrage grows, civil society members and education watchdogs are pressing for systemic reforms, including digitized verification of birth records, inter-departmental coordination, and strict penalties for tampering with official documents.

The controversy has cast a shadow over Valley’s education system, raising uncomfortable questions about the ease with which official records can be forged and the long-term consequences such practices could have on trust in institutions. Parents say they will continue to raise their voice until justice is served and transparency is restored in the admission process. [KNT]

- 
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 - PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
 - PDD: 0194-2450213
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 - CAPD: 18001807011
 - SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
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• BUIBHARA: 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 20 Rabi-ul-Sani 1447	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	5: 12
	ZUHR	12:16
	ASR	4: 21
	Magrib	6:03
	ISHA	7: 22

This Day In History

- 530 - Discorus ends his reign as Catholic anti-Pope
- 1066 - Battle of Hastings: William, Duke of Normandy and his Norman army defeat the English forces of Harold II who is killed in the battle
- 1322 - Robert the Bruce of Scotland defeats King Edward II of England at Byland, forcing Edward to accept Scotland's independence
- 1758 - Battle at Hochkirk, Saksen: Austrian army beats Prussia
- 1773 - American Revolutionary War: The United Kingdom's East India Company tea ships' cargo are burned at Annapolis, Maryland.
- 1774 1st Continental Congress makes Declaration of Colonial Rights in Philadelphia
- 1805 - Battle of Elchingen, France defeats Austria
- 1806 - Battle of Auerstadt-French beat Prussians
- 1834 - First African-American granted a US patent, Henry Blair, for a corn planter
- 1840 - Maronite leader Bashir II surrenders to the British forces and goes into exile in Malta.
- 1843 British arrest Irish nationalist Daniel O'Connell for conspiracy
- 1862 Baseballer James Creighton ruptures bladder hitting HR, dies 10/18
- 1862 Excelsiors defeat Unions of Morrisania 13-9
- 1863 -Battle at Bristoe Station, Virginia (about 2000 casualties)
- 1865- Cheyennes & Arapahos sign "peace treaty" then chased out Colorado
- 1882- University of the Punjab is founded in present day Pakistan.
- 1884- George Eastman patents paper-strip photographic film
- 1914- German troops occupy Brug
- 1916- The Perm State University was founded in Russia.
- 1920 -Part of Petsamo province ceded by Soviet Union to Finland
- 1922- 1st automated telephones-Pennsylvania exchange in NYC
- 1925- Anti-French uprising in Damascus (French inhabitants flee)
- 1931 - Spanish Cortes agrees to separation of Church & State
- 1933 - Nazi Germany announces its withdrawal from the League of Nations.
- 1939 - German U-47 sinks British battleship HMS Royal Oak, 833 killed
- 1943 - Japan declares the Philippines independent under President José P. Laurel
- 1944 - Allied troops land in Corfu
- 1944 - British troops march into Athens
- 1948 - Large scale fighting between Israel & Egypt
- 1952 - UN General Assembly first meets at its new headquarters in New York.
- 1954 - Israeli act of revenge in Qibiya Jordan, kills 53
- 1957 - Queen Elizabeth II becomes the first Canadian monarch to open the Parliament of Canada with the Speech from the Throne.
- 1958 - Malagasy Republic becomes autonomous republic in French Community.
- 1963 - Algeria & Morocco border conflict
- 1964 - Premier Nikita Khrushchev replaced by Leonid Brezhnev as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party
- 1966 - 175 US airplanes bomb North Vietnam
- 1973 - Egyptian tanks move further into Israel
- 1976 - Nobel Prize in Economics awarded to American economist Milton Friedman
- 1976 - Soyuz 23 carries 2 to Salyut 6, but returns without docking
- 1979 - 100,000 demonstrate in Bonn against nuclear energy
- 1986 - Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Auschwitz survivor Elie Wiesel, for his efforts to ensure the Holocaust was remembered
- 1988 - Naguib Mahfouz is the 1st Arabic writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.
- 1991 - Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi wins Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1994 - Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Yasser Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres
- 1994 - NASA Space probe Magellan burns up in atmosphere of Venus



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9070806160



SAD DEMISE

With profound grief, we inform the passing of Mir Syed Mohammad Hussain, beloved son of Late Mir Syed Habibullah, resident of Anzimar, Khanyar, Srinagar, who left for his heavenly abode on 13th October 2025. Mourning will be observed for three days only.

Congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on Wednesday, 15th October 2025, at 10:30 AM at the Bahaudin Sahab Graveyard.

BEREAVED
Mir Syed Mohammad Hussain

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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KO VIEW

After Gaza’s Inferno

After more than two years of a devastating war that reduced much of Gaza to rubble and left tens of thousands buried beneath it, a fragile ceasefire has finally taken hold. Ironically, the deal—brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump—was struck with the very same Hamas that Israel and its chief patron, the United States, had vowed to annihilate.

In pursuit of this objective, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu waged a relentless campaign, defying international law and global outrage. His actions ultimately led to his indictment as a war criminal by the International Court of Justice. Yet, it was Trump who stood before the Israeli Knesset praising Israel’s war effort, admitting unabashedly that Washington had been deeply involved in sustaining Israel’s military operations—both in Gaza and against Iran. “We’ve given a lot of our best weapons to Israel,” Trump declared, even joking that Netanyahu would frequently call him asking for arms he had “never heard of.”

The U.S. president conceded that Israel had “won all that it can by force of arms,” suggesting the limits of military dominance. Still, he used little leverage to restrain Israel, choosing instead to highlight the Abraham Accords—an initiative he credited to his son-in-law Jared Kushner, whom he lauded as someone who “loves Israel so much.” Netanyahu, for his part, offered Trump a standing ovation. Yet, we all know that only hours after the truce took effect, he warned that the war would resume unless Hamas was completely disarmed. “If this can be achieved the easy way, great,” Netanyahu said. “If not, it will be achieved the hard way.”

Such threats cast doubt on how long this ceasefire will last. A similar truce in January 2025 collapsed soon after Hamas released Israeli prisoners, prompting Israel to unleash renewed bombardments that killed thousands. Whether Israel will again return to war once its remaining captives are freed remains uncertain.

For now, mediators—including the United States—insist the ceasefire is permanent. Israeli forces have withdrawn behind agreed lines, allowing thousands of displaced Palestinians to move northward. As they return to the ruins of their homes, hundreds of bodies continue to be recovered from the debris. Gaza’s authorities have called for an independent international investigation into Israeli war crimes and acts of genocide during the two-year conflict.

The International Criminal Court has already issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former defense minister Yoav Gallant. Many observers believe Netanyahu prolonged the war to delay his ongoing corruption trial, which could land him in prison. In his Knesset address, Trump even urged Israel to cancel that trial, praising Netanyahu’s “war leadership” as justification.

That the U.S. president would defend a leader indicted for war crimes—and seek to absolve him of corruption—underscores the moral decay at the heart of this alliance. It is, to say the least, preposterous.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Money On The Mind

Investing is reshaping financial habits in the valley, but smart strategy must replace social media tips.

Irshad Mushtaq

Kashmir’s investment culture is changing fast. A growing number of young professionals are moving beyond savings accounts and government jobs to explore mutual funds, gold, and stock markets. Yet many enter this world without understanding how unpredictable it can be.

Markets, whether in Srinagar or Singapore, rise and fall in rhythm. Global events, oil prices, and even local policies can shift investor sentiment overnight. When stocks dip or gold slows, panic often sets in. Many Kashmiri investors sell in haste, losing sight of the market’s cyclical nature. History shows that downturns often sow the seeds of the next big rally. Patience, not fear, turns uncertainty into opportunity.

Diversification is another lesson worth learning. A balanced portfolio, including spreading money across technology, agriculture, real estate, and energy, can protect against shocks in any one sector. For instance, while crude prices may fall, healthcare or tech stocks might rise, cushioning overall returns.

Financial literacy remains low in the valley. Many investors follow social media “tips” instead of credible analysis. Awareness programs and local advisory services could help bridge this gap. A financially informed generation can channel Kashmir’s remittance inflows and growing incomes into structured wealth creation.

The journey of investing is not about chasing instant gains. It’s about building resilience, studying trends, and understanding risk. For Kashmir’s emerging investor class, learning to stay calm during volatility is the first step toward sustainable growth. In finance, as in life here, endurance often pays better than speed.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The Myth Of
The Spotless File

Kashmir praises spotless files while citizens wait for justice, roads, and services. Action, not inaction, defines integrity.



Khair Ull Nissa Shah

Integrity in public service has never been about staying untouched. It is about standing up, deciding, and delivering when it matters.

But in Kashmir, the officer most praised today is often the one who does the least.

They keep their reputation spotless, desk tidy, and conscience untested. They hide behind rules and fear, avoiding action. In a place that desperately needs bold leadership, that kind of “virtue” can slow everything down.

People don’t feel integrity in clean desks or careful rules. They feel it when hospitals function, roads are completed, and grievances are addressed.

That kind of delivery has become rare in Kashmir.

What we have instead are officers who believe doing nothing is proof of honesty. A culture of “safe governance” now defines the system, where avoiding error matters more than achieving results.

Across administrative corridors, the refrain is the same: We are honest. But honesty is not abstention. It is execution.

The tragedy of today’s officialdom is that the uncorrupted have become the unwilling. They delay, defer, and disappear behind procedure. They mistake paperwork for ethics and hesitation for virtue.

The World Bank’s Governance Indicators make this distinction clear.

“Control of corruption” and “government effectiveness” are measured separately because a system can be clean and still useless. Some of the least corrupt countries in the world perform poorly on service delivery because they confuse purity with performance.

The absence of theft doesn’t

guarantee the presence of accountability. And in Kashmir, that confusion has become institutional.

A few years ago, I saw how this contradiction takes shape in real life. A businessman, later a politician, bribed law-enforcers, a tehsildar, and even legal members. He plotted arson and an attack on a young widow with two children. The evidence was overwhelming, and the witnesses credible. But he walks free.

The officers handling the case refused money, but they refused justice too. They called their silence neutrality. But neutrality in the face of wrongdoing is betrayal. Their hesitation became complicity, as their passivity protected power.

This is the silent corruption of our times, the corruption of indifference.

When officers define their morality by what they refuse to do rather than what they accomplish, governance collapses in slow motion. Decisions stall, files circle endlessly, and ordinary people lose faith.

“Kashmir’s future does not depend on spotless files or immaculate reputations. It depends on steady hands willing to serve. The valley needs fewer saints of paperwork and more stewards of purpose, people who tell the truth in their data, decide with conviction, and measure integrity by the lives they improve.”

In many government departments, fear has replaced initiative. Bureaucrats whisper about “staying safe,” “keeping their record clean,” “not getting caught in controversy.” The safest career path is to do nothing at all.

This fear-driven inertia is not unique to Kashmir.

In the United States, the Veterans Affairs Department once falsified patient data to look efficient. In Britain, hospital administrators manipulated waiting lists to meet targets. In China, local officials inflated growth numbers to protect their careers.

In each case, the failure was

cowardice. Systems, notably, decay when they stop caring.

The cost of that decay in Kashmir is human and heavy. Every delayed decision ripples outward.

A road project held up for “file verification” means a village remains cut off through winter. A widow’s property case drags on because a tehsildar hesitates to sign. And a farmer’s compensation file moves slower than the season that destroyed his crop.

These stories repeat across the valley, turning governance into a slow-burning tragedy.

True honesty must mean fidelity to purpose, courage in execution, and truth in data. An officer’s real test is how much he delivers. Governance should reward delivery, not delay.

Global reform frameworks now recognise this shift.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) urges governments to measure success by outcomes. It is no longer about how many files were processed, but how many

lignence, not lawful action taken with integrity.

The human cost of bureaucratic fear is most visible among women. Widows, single mothers, and survivors of violence often spend years facing indifferent offices. For them, this passive set-up feels like another form of violence, a system that refuses to see their suffering because seeing would require action.

A region trying to rebuild its economy and confidence cannot survive on inaction disguised as honesty. Kashmir needs administrators who act and take lawful decisions. It must move from passive purity to active integrity.

That transition demands courage, both institutional and individual.

Four steps can begin that shift. First, redefine honesty as duty performed. Second, protect decision-makers who act transparently and in good faith. Third, make performance data public so citizens know who delivers. And fourth, hold inaction accountable, because delay is a form of deceit.

Governance, like business, cannot thrive on fear of mistakes. It must thrive on responsibility. The officer who refuses to act becomes the silent partner of the corrupt.

Kashmir’s future depends on steady hands willing to serve. We need fewer saints of paperwork and more stewards of purpose, people who tell the truth in their data, decide with conviction, and measure integrity by the lives they improve.

Honesty is about being useful. The day we understand that, public service in Kashmir will finally begin to serve again.

Khair Ull Nissa Shah is a global business leader and policy advisor with two decades of experience in international markets. Views expressed in this article are author’s own and don’t necessarily reflect KO’s editorial policy.

Letter to Editor

Why Kashmir’s Largest Lake Is Losing Its Lifeblood

Wular Lake, once the shimmering heart of Kashmir, no longer mirrors the sky. Its waters that once nurtured life now float with plastic, silt, and waste. Where fishermen once rowed, children now wade for scraps. Among them is Bilal, a young boy collecting bottles for a few rupees to help his family survive. His father died of cancer, and school has become a privilege he can no longer afford.

Every morning, Bilal steps into the murky shallows. His small hands scoop out what others throw in. His work is unpaid service to a dying lake, a fragile act of care in the absence of state attention.

Wular’s decay has been decades in the making, shaped by official neglect and shrinking public concern.

Once Asia’s largest freshwater lake, Wular spread across 189 square kilometers and regulated floods, supported biodiversity, and sustained generations of fisherfolk.

Today, nearly half of it is gone. Encroachments, pollution from settlements, and unregulated sand mining have shrunk its body and poisoned its breath. The Wular Conservation and Management Authority, created with fanfare in 2012, promised restoration.

Thirteen years later, the water remains choked, and its people abandoned.

This story is about political priorities. The government proudly announces new highways and hydropower projects, but the wetlands that once sustained Kashmir’s ecological balance receive little attention. The state’s developmental gaze looks upward to mountains and tourist resorts, rarely downward to the water that keeps its valleys alive.

Environmental decline in Kashmir carries human costs. Fishermen have left their boats for odd jobs. Women who once sold lotus stems now walk farther for clean water. Children like Bilal inherit

more waste than hope. In them lies the intersection of ecological and social collapse, a sign that the environment is life itself.

Still, Bilal’s story is not one of defeat. Each bottle he collects is an act of defiance, a message that care can emerge even from loss. His hands, scraping the surface of a dying lake, mirror the strength that policy has failed to deliver.

Wular needs revival. That means political will, sustained funding, and a partnership with the people who live along its shores.

When a child must clean what a government ignores, it becomes a reflection.

Wular is Kashmir’s mirror, now clouded by neglect. To save it is to save a part of ourselves.

Sincerely,

Iffat Aurooj
aurooj.iffat@gmail.com

Kremlin to Kashmir: Can Capitalism Save Itself?

Across Russia, Kashmir, and Mumbai, the quest for fulfillment exposes capitalism's contradictions and its pressing need for reform.



Wajahat Qazi

What is common between a middle-aged Russian woman, a Kashmiri land broker and a Mumbai taxi driver? On the face of it, nothing. But probe deeper, a connection emerges, that of capitalism.

Russian woman first. I conversed casually with the woman during my travels recently. Corresponding a little to Sigmund Freud's 'melancholia' and 'trauma,' the woman conversationally meandered to Gorbachev's 'perestroika'. Her working-class family during perestroika 'could only afford enough to eat' and she could buy only one cigarette, the woman techie said wistfully, puffing stylishly on her expensive cigarette.

Fast forward to Kashmir. A land broker acquaintance of mine, who hailed my car, complimented me on my SUV and suggested that I should have bought a high-end automatic transmission one. 'I am buying the automatic one,' he said.

Now rewind to Mumbai. The cab driver, originally from Uttar Pradesh, had made Mumbai his home. While he obviously wanted to make more money, but in the main, the highly intelligent cabbie who became my tour guide of sorts, was more or less content. But he missed talking to his children and ageing mother.

How, the question is, does capitalism connect the three 'lived experiences'?

The 'quest' and the determining

conceptual, quasi-emotionally gratifying consumptive aspect of millennial capitalism connect the Russian and the Kashmiri. The quest for a livelihood, rooted and anchored in family, tradition, and dignity, defines the cabbie.

While the Russian and the Kashmiri appear to seek happiness in conspicuous consumption, made possible by an 'abundance of capital,' the cabbie desires stability, a dignified life, and family - all proving elusive, and perhaps, in the nature of a chimeric illusion, because of the skill gap between his set of skills and those valued by capitalism.

The Russian and the Kashmiri may be emblematic of capitalism's growth and the cabbie's quest, a probability that might accrue if development becomes the norm. All, in varying permutations, combinations, and intensities, emanate from 'false consciousness.'

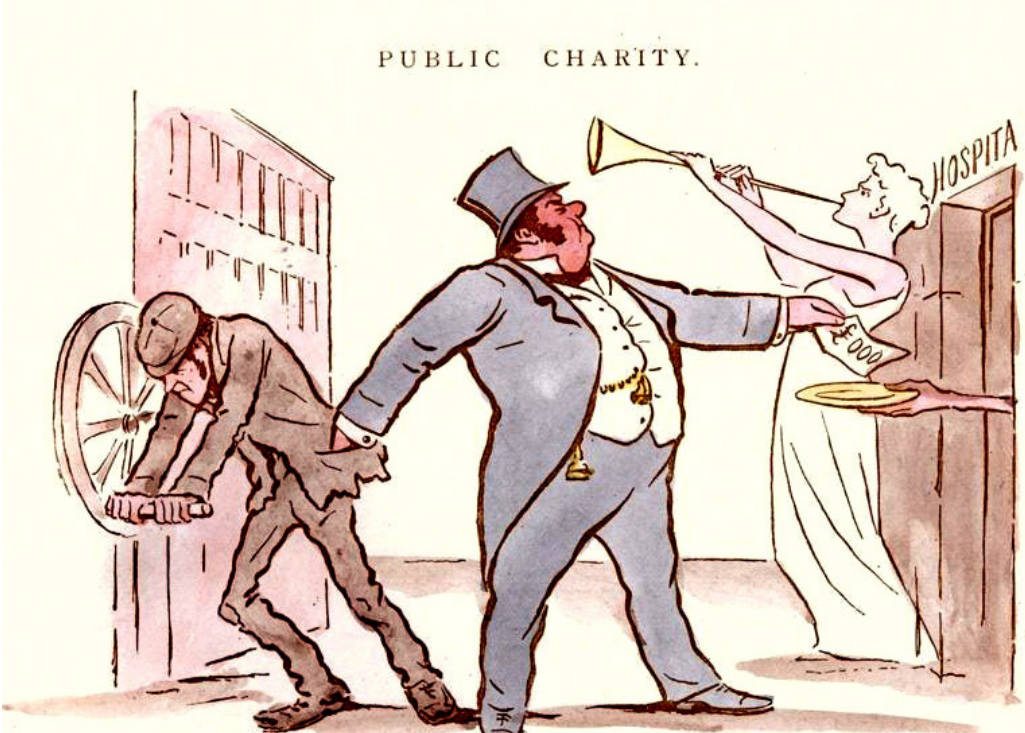
This is primarily because millennial capitalism, one, creates the illusion of choice, and two, elevates consumption as the correlate of happiness.

But, to make a wee digression, can 'true' happiness ever be found? Does it lie in authenticity, the rustic life of the village, so to speak? Perhaps true happiness can be found by spiritually connecting with oneself. But this can be an arduous endeavour, meant for the select few. Happiness in material consumption, what about that?

Consumption knows no bounds. It is, in principle, limitless and a function of an abundance of capital. (The real world, as it is, is defined by scarcity.)

Happiness, and its quest, is then the ultimate Sisyphean endeavour. Both the Russian and the Kashmiri are bound to be disappointed. Ephemeral, gratification may be attained, but only momentarily.

However, the cabbie's quest may be real. Alas, bounded and limited by the lack of opportunity and the wage structure in the industry he works in.



"When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."



TO RESTORE EQUIPOISE AND EQUILIBRIUM TO POLITICS, ECONOMICS, and political economy, a deft measure of sobriety is called for. This can lie in economic modernization where equitable development is the norm, and where the nature and form of modernity, or romanticism, becomes a choice available to most. The time to make haste slowly is now!

Broadly, the Russian's and Kashmiri's quest can only be realized under conditions of unbounded economic growth. But that is as chimeric as it is impossible. There may perhaps never be unbounded economic growth for all.

The resources of the world are finite, and despite demographics

being touted as a form of capital, in a rough formulation of Malthus, a growing population may be deleterious. Unbounded consumption is then improbable and unsustainable.

The Russian and the Kashmiris, while ubiquitous, are both untenable and an aberration.

There is also a cost: the Russian woman was single, adrift in a culture that was not hers, far from family, but somewhat happy here (because it was not Russia?). While the Kashmiri was a family man, the march of capitalism would, at some point, decimate his traditions and family.

The cabbie, what about him?

His quest, while real and more substantive, is defined more by nostalgia and yearning. Could his quest be made real for him?

Probably.

How?

Instead of untrammelled growth, a rounded form of economic development, defined by equality of both opportunity and outcome, balanced consumption, and ambition that corresponds to reality, may be optimal.

This could create a condition where the cabbie might not even have to migrate to earn his meager wage. He could perhaps make the same or more in his hometown, stay with and nurture his family, thereby living his life the way he wants. He would be happier (if not fully happy), anchored in family and tradition, living a life of contentment and dignity.

Against the backdrop of a world where reactions to market fundamentalism and its concomitant globalism have led to political angst and backlash, recalibrating capitalism and orienting it toward development has acquired urgent salience.

To restore equipoise and equilibrium to politics, economics, and political economy, a deft measure of sobriety is called for.

This can lie in economic modernization where equitable development is the norm, and where the nature and form of modernity, or romanticism, becomes a choice available to most.

The time to make haste slowly is now!

— Wajahat Qazi holds a *Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and brings a rare blend of scholarship and real-world engagement to global affairs. His work spans academia and media, including his tenure as Associate Editor at Kashmir Observer.*

Threads of Time: Kashmir's Wardrobe of History

From medieval cloaks to Pashmina shawls and modern fusion styles, Kashmir's clothing carries the weight of centuries, blending artistry and identity in every fold.



Saima Rashid Khan

In urban pockets or a remote bazaar, you can read history on every body: elders in woolen pherans, young women pairing embroidered cloaks with jeans, and men in sharp coats.

Every layer carries a story. The roots of Kashmiri clothing trace back to medieval times, when Persian influence began to shape life in the valley.

The pheran, a long flowing cloak, arrived as both a practical garment and a symbol of modesty. Its name comes from the Persian pherahan, meaning cloak, and it became central to Kashmiri life.

Women's pherans grew long, embroidered along necklines and sleeves with delicate patterns, while men's were shorter, designed for ease of movement. Simple footwear like pulharoo and khraw complemented these garments, grounded in functionality and local materials.

The mountain robes shifted with the tides of history.

Afghan and Sikh rule brought taxation, in-

stability, and scarcity. In response, garments became utilitarian.

But the pheran endured, a constant amidst upheaval.

During the Dogra period, Kashmiri shawl industry flourished, producing Pashmina and Kani shawls that travelled to Europe, carrying the valley's craftsmanship across continents.

Fashion intertwined with social and religious identities: Hindu women paired flowing taranga headgear with pherans, while Muslim women favoured lighter veils.

British colonial influence introduced trousers, coats, and boots, largely adopted by the elite, hinting at global styles without permeating daily life.

By the mid-twentieth century, fashion in Kashmir began to shift.

Urban women embraced salwar kameez for daily wear, and sarees entered wardrobes for formal occasions. Men increasingly wore Western-style shirts, trousers, and suits, saving the pheran for winter.

Despite these changes, the pheran retained its symbolic power, becoming a cul-

tural emblem worn during festivals, weddings, and even political gatherings. Its evolution reflects Kashmir's negotiation between history and modernity.

Today, young Kashmiris experiment boldly, blending traditional and contemporary styles.

Jeans meet pherans, sneakers accompany embroidered scarves. Craftsmanship such as aari, tilla, and sozni embroidery thrives on modern garments and accessories, connecting centuries-old techniques with contemporary aesthetics.

Pashmina, once a necessity for warmth, has become a global brand symbol, coveted from Paris to Tokyo.

Social media and Bollywood may introduce daily trends, but Kashmiri artisans ensure that local identity endures, stitched into every garment.

Fashion in Kashmir narrates survival during Afghan rule, artistic flourishing under Dogra patronage, adaptation under colonial influence, and modern fusion in a globalized era.

— The author is a staffer at Kashmir Observer.



The native industry is an intimate blend of survival, elegance, and strength. From medieval cloaks to modern fusion garments, from the intricate weaves of Pashmina to the bold experimentation of youth, the valley's wardrobe tells stories that go beyond fabric and thread.

Trump Sets Off for the Mideast to Mark a Ceasefire Deal

Agencies

Washington: President Donald Trump set off for Israel and Egypt on Sunday to celebrate the US-brokered ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas and urge Middle East allies to seize the opportunity to build a durable peace in the volatile region.

It's a fragile moment with Israel and Hamas only in the early stages of implementing the first phase of the Trump agreement, designed to bring a permanent end to the war sparked by the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas-led militants.

Trump thinks there is a narrow window to reshape the Mideast and reset long-fraught relations between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

It is a moment, the Republican president says, that has been helped along by his administration's support of Israel's decimation of Iranian proxies, including Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon

"Very excited about this

moment in time," Trump told reporters before Air Force One took off.

He said many people in both Israel and Arab countries were "cheering" the agreement, adding that "everybody's amazed and they are thrilled and we're going to have an amazing time."

The White House says momentum is also building because Arab and Muslim states are demonstrating a renewed focus on resolving the broader, decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, in some cases, deepening relations with the United States.

Trump's comments as the trip began followed him saying Friday that, "I think you are going to have tremendous success and Gaza is going to be rebuilt" and that "you have some very wealthy countries, as you know, over there. It would take a small fraction of their wealth to do that. And I think they want to do it."

A tenuous point in the agreement

The first phase of the ceasefire agreement calls for the release



of the final 48 hostages held by Hamas, including about 20 believed to be alive; the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel; a surge of humanitarian aid to Gaza; and a partial pullback by Israeli forces from Gaza's main cities.

Israeli troops on Friday finished withdrawing from parts of Gaza, triggering a 72-hour countdown under the deal for Hamas to release the Israeli hostages, potentially while Trump is

on the ground there. He said he expected their return to be completed on Monday or Tuesday.

Trump will visit Israel first to meet with hostage families and address the Knesset, or parliament, an honour last extended to President George W Bush during a visit in 2008. Vice President JD Vance on Sunday said Trump also was likely to meet with newly-freed hostages, too.

"Knock on wood, but we feel very confident the hostages will

be released and this president is actually travelling to the Middle East, likely this evening, in order to meet them and greet them in person," Vance told CBS' "Face the Nation."

Trump then stops in Egypt, where he and Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi will lead a summit in Sharm el-Sheikh with leaders from more than 20 countries on peace in Gaza and the broader Middle East.

It is a tenuous truce, and it is unclear whether the sides have reached any agreement on Gaza's postwar governance, the territory's reconstruction and Israel's demand that Hamas disarm. Negotiations over those issues could break down, and Israel has hinted it may resume military operations if its demands are not met.

"I think the chances of (Hamas) disarming themselves, you know, are pretty close to zero," H R McMaster, a national security adviser during Trump's first term, said at an event hosted by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies on

Thursday. He said he thought what probably would happen in the coming months is that the Israeli military "is going to have to destroy them."

Israel continues to rule over millions of Palestinians without basic rights as settlements expand rapidly across the occupied West Bank. Despite growing international recognition, Palestinian statehood appears exceedingly remote because of Israel's opposition and actions on the ground.

The war has left Israel isolated internationally and facing allegations of genocide, which it denies. International arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister are in effect, and the United Nations' highest court is considering allegations of genocide brought by South Africa.

Hamas has been militarily decimated and has given up its only bargaining chip with Israel by releasing the hostages. But the Islamic militant group is still intact and could eventually

rebuild if there's an extended period of calm.

Netanyahu reiterated that Israel would continue with its demilitarisation of Hamas after the hostages are returned.

"Hamas agreed to the deal only when it felt that the sword was on its neck — and it is still on its neck," Netanyahu said Friday as Israel began to pull back its troops.

Trump wants to expand the Abraham Accords

Much of Gaza has been reduced to rubble, and rebuilding is expected to take years. The territory's roughly 2 million residents continue to struggle in desperate conditions.

Under the deal, Israel agreed to reopen five border crossings, which will help ease the flow of food and other supplies into Gaza, parts of which are experiencing famine.

Trump is also standing up a US-led civil-military coordination centre in Israel to help facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid as well as logistical and security assistance into Gaza.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

4 NC, 3 BJP

Kashmir after the Congress, which is part of the ruling alliance, declined to nominate anyone.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the NC decided to field its candidate for the fourth seat after the Congress declined to field a candidate.

Congress general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Mir said the Congress had sought a safe seat from its alliance partner but received no response.

"We wanted to field a candidate for the first three seats but they offered us the fourth seat which was not safe. Therefore, the Congress party decided that it will not field a candidate for the fourth seat," he added.

The Election Commission of India has issued three notifications for the four Rajya Sabha seats, holding elections separately for two seats, while the other two are being conducted under a common notification.

Under the first notification, NC's Choudhary Muhammad Ramzan and BJP's Ali Muhammad Mir filed their papers, along with independent candidate Prabhakar Dada.

Ramzan, backed by the NC-led alliance comprising 53 MLAs, is poised to win the seat, even without support from the Congress, which is reportedly upset over being denied a safe seat. BJP, with 28 MLAs, faces stiff competition, while the non-BJP opposition bloc of seven MLAs has remained non-committal.

For the second notification, NC's Sajad Kichloo and BJP's Ali Muhammad Mir have filed nominations for one seat. Kichloo is expected to win, with voting patterns likely to mirror the first seat.

The third notification, covering two seats, saw nominations from NC's Gurwinder Singh Oberoi (Shammi Oberoi) and Imran Dar, along with BJP's Sat Pal Sharma. Non-local candidate Kante Sayanna also filed papers.

The two candidates receiving the highest votes will win the seats. NC's plan is expected to allocate 29 votes to Oberoi and the remaining 24 to Dar, while BJP MLAs are expected to vote all 28 in favor of Sat Sharma.

Sources said that the nomination forms of both non-local candidates are likely to be rejected by the Returning Officer due to the absence of mandatory proposers

Speaking to reporters, senior BJP leader and Leader of Opposition in the J&K Assembly Sunil Sharma said, "We will do whatever it takes to win all three seats on which we have fielded candidates."

EC Starts Nomination

candidates can file their nomination papers until October 20 for 27-Budgam and 77 Nagrota.

The poll-body announced that scrutiny of nominations will take place on October 22, while the last date for withdrawal of candidature is October 24.

The voting is scheduled for November 11, with counting set to take place on November 14.

The Budgam seat fell vacant on October 21, 2024 after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chose to retain Ganderbal constituency following his victory from both seats in 2024 Assembly elections. The Nagrota seat was vacated due to the demise of BJP MLA Devinder Singh Rana on October 31, 2024.

173 Polling Stations

ensure smooth conduct of the election. District Election Officer (DEO) Budgam, Dr Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, presented a comprehensive report on the district's preparedness, covering logistics, staff deployment, and training.

The meeting was attended by Joint CEO Anil Salgotra, ADC Budgam, ASP Budgam, ACR and Returning Officer for 27-AC Budgam, Deputy DEO Budgam, and other key officials.

The CEO emphasized strict adherence to the Model Code of Conduct and timely implementation of election guidelines. He directed officers to boost voter awareness through door-to-door campaigns under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) initiative, ensure monitoring of election expenditure and media activity, and popularize Election Commission of India (ECI) apps among the public. Booth-level committees were also instructed to be formed to encourage voter participation.

Dr Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat informed that all polling locations have been equipped with

Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs), including electricity, drinking water, toilets, ramps, and proper signage. The DEO confirmed that EVM and VVPAT functionality, control room operations, and accessibility provisions for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) have been thoroughly checked.

The DEO assured that adequate deployment of polling and security personnel has been planned in coordination with law enforcement agencies, ensuring a free, fair, and inclusive election. He added that each polling station would reflect the ECI's commitment to voter facilitation, transparency, and accessibility.

HC Rejects Bail

and heinous offences punishable with death or life imprisonment."

The court also underlined that it was a settled position that when there is prima facie material suggesting the involvement of the accused in a serious offence, bail may be denied to prevent the risk of tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses.

"In this case, several key witnesses remain to be examined. The trial is ongoing, and releasing the petitioner on bail at this critical stage may prejudice the proceedings."

The Court concluded that the order passed by the Session Judge denying bail was not unlawful, irrational or a failure to apply judicial reasoning. "On the contrary, the reasoning therein is cogent, legally sound and supported by judicial precedents."

While Sharma had raised the issue of delay in the trial, the court said that "the same cannot be viewed in isolation."

"No such delay exists, as evidenced by the fact that 18 out of 29 prosecution witnesses have already been examined, clearly indicating that the trial is progressing in a diligent and timely manner."

The prosecution, the court said, has demonstrated sustained efforts to conclude the trial.

"Given the seriousness of the offences involved, the stage of the trial assumes great significance in the bail determination," the court said, adding, "The argument of delay is therefore factually and legally unsustainable."

Granting bail at this stage would not only be premature but may also impede the proper completion of the trial, especially since several material witnesses are yet to be examined, the court added.

Congress Claims

New Delhi.

During these talks, Congress leaders claimed that Farooq Abdullah had offered a safe seat to the party, although there was no independent confirmation of this.

In a handout issued to the media on Sunday evening, Congress reiterated its claim. "The meeting expressed dismay over the unilateral announcement by senior coalition partner National Conference of its three candidates and the offer of a fourth seat to Congress, despite an assurance to the top leadership of Congress of leaving a secure seat for our party," the handout stated.

Sources also said that Congress MP and general secretary in-charge of J&K, Syed Nasir Hussain, had planned to travel to Srinagar to discuss the seat-sharing arrangement. "He was advised to meet Omar Abdullah in Delhi, who was scheduled to arrive the following day," sources added.

The meeting between Omar Abdullah and Nasir Hussain reportedly took place on October 9 in New Delhi.

During the meeting, Omar Abdullah is said to have told Hussain that the NC had not offered a safe seat to Congress. "The NC leadership did not maintain communication with Congress after the meeting. There was complete silence between the two sides from October 9 to October 12," sources said.

Fear of cross-voting derailed final push for unity

Last-ditch efforts to bring NC and Congress together for the Rajya Sabha polls failed due to disagreements over the voting conditions of independent MLAs, who are not required to disclose their votes to authorized polling agents.

Discussions between the two parties continued late into the night, following Congress's public refusal on Sunday evening to contest the riskier seat offered by NC.

"We made it clear to the NC leadership that we cannot afford to depend on independents to vote for our candidate. We requested that they

spare five of their MLAs for us and, in return, ask the independents to vote for the NC candidate contesting under the third notification, which involves a combined election," a senior Congress leader said.

However, the proposal was reportedly rejected by NC. "The independents are not bound to show their marked ballots to anyone. If they do, their votes are liable to be cancelled. In contrast, NC MLAs, being part of a political party, are required to show their marked ballots to authorized polling agents," the Congress leader added.

Of the 53 MLAs supporting the ruling alliance, five are independents: Satish Sharma (Minister, Chamb segment), Pyare Lal (Inderwal), Dr. Rameshwar Singh (Bani), Muzaffar Khan (Rajouri), and Choudhary Akram (Surankote).

As per election rules, independent MLAs are not required to display their marked ballots, unlike party-affiliated MLAs who must show their votes to authorized agents.

These voting conditions raised concerns within Congress about the possibility of cross-voting. "How can we rely on independents when we are not in power and are merely offering outside support?" a Congress leader questioned. (KNO)

Gaza Deal Signed

and displaced about 90 per cent of its some 2 million residents. It has also triggered other conflicts in the region, sparked worldwide protests and led to allegations of genocide that Israel denies.

"Much of Gaza is a wasteland," UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher told the AP on Sunday. Hostages and prisoners released

Tens of thousands of Israelis watched the hostage transfers at public screenings across the country. In Tel Aviv, families and friends of the hostages broke into wild cheers as television channels announced that the first group was in the hands of the Red Cross.

The freed hostages, all men, were later reunited with their families, and footage released by Israeli authorities showed tearful reunions. The bodies of the remaining 28 dead hostages are also to be handed over as part of the deal, although the exact timing remained unclear.

Palestinians in the occupied West Bank rejoiced as buses carrying dozens of released prisoners from Ofer Prison arrived in Beitunia, near Ramallah, as Israel began releasing more than 1,900 prisoners and detainees as part of the ceasefire deal.

Later, giant crowds gathered to greet buses carrying other prisoners arriving at Nasser Hospital in Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis.

The prisoners include 250 people serving life sentences for convictions in attacks on Israelis, in addition to 1,700 seized from Gaza during the war and held without charge. They will be returned to the West Bank or Gaza or sent into exile.

More than 150 prisoners were sent to Egypt by Israel and arrived at Gaza's Rafah crossing with Egypt early Monday afternoon, according to an Egyptian official, who had direct knowledge of the deal's implementation. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to brief the media.

Meanwhile, the Hostages Family Forum, a grassroots organisation representing many of the hostage families, said four bodies were expected to return to Israel on Monday. The group said it was "shocked and dismayed" that so few were coming back.

An international task force will work to locate deceased hostages who are not returned within 72 hours, said Gal Hirsch, Israel's coordinator for the hostages and the missing.

A painful chapter

The hostages' return caps a painful chapter for Israel. Since they were captured in the attack that ignited the war, newscasts have marked their days in captivity, and Israelis have worn yellow pins and ribbons in solidarity. Tens of thousands have joined their families in weekly demonstrations calling for their release.

As the war dragged on, demonstrators accused Netanyahu of dragging his feet for political purposes, even as he accused Hamas of intransigence. Last week, under heavy international pressure and increasing isolation for Israel, the bitter enemies agreed to the ceasefire.

Trump in Israel and Egypt

In his Knesset speech, Trump told Israeli

lawmakers their country had no more to achieve on the battlefield and must work toward peace after two years of war against Hamas and conflicts with Hezbollah and Iran.

"Generations from now, this will be remembered as the moment that everything began to change," he declared.

"Israel, with our help, has won all that they can by force of arms," Trump said. "Now it is time to translate these victories against terrorists on the battlefield into the ultimate prize of peace and prosperity for the entire Middle East."

His speech was briefly interrupted when two members of the Knesset staged a protest and were subsequently removed from the chamber. One held up a small sign reading, "Recognise Palestine."

Despite the optimism expressed by Trump, many thorny questions remain. Among the most difficult is Israel's insistence that a weakened Hamas disarm. Hamas refuses to do that and wants to ensure Israel pulls its troops completely out of Gaza.

So far, the Israeli military has withdrawn from much of Gaza City, the southern city of Khan Younis and other areas. Troops remain in most of the southern city of Rafah, towns of Gaza's far north, and the wide strip along the length of Gaza's border with Israel.

The future governance of Gaza also remains unclear. Under the US plan, an international body will govern the territory, overseeing Palestinian technocrats running day-to-day affairs. Hamas has said that Gaza's government should be worked out among Palestinians.

Later Monday, Trump will head to Egypt, where he and Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi will lead a summit with leaders from more than 20 countries on the future of Gaza and the broader Middle East.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas arrived in Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh resort town to attend the meeting.

The plan envisions an eventual role for Abbas' Palestinian Authority — something Netanyahu has long opposed. But it requires the authority, which administers parts of the West Bank, to undergo a sweeping reform program that could take years.

The plan also calls for an Arab-led international security force in Gaza, along with Palestinian police trained by Egypt and Jordan. It said Israeli forces would leave areas as those forces deploy. About 200 US troops are now in Israel to monitor the ceasefire.

The plan also mentions the possibility of a future Palestinian state, another nonstarter for Netanyahu. -AP

Traffic Restored

enables two-way movement of all types of vehicles, reducing congestion and ensuring uninterrupted flow of traffic along the critical Lakhampur-Jammu-Srinagar corridor.

"NHAI also requested the local administration on October 9 to resume two-way movement of all types of vehicles on the Lakhampur-Jammu-Srinagar Highway to ensure smooth traffic flow and avoid congestion along the route," the official added.

NHAI remains fully committed to maintaining the operational efficiency of the highway, which serves as the lifeline of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, especially during the ongoing fruit season, they said.

"Regular monitoring and maintenance teams have been deployed along the corridor to ensure smooth and safe travel for all road users," a NHAI spokesperson said.

Introduce Specialised

enhancement through short-term courses, research, innovation, patents, and faculty strengthening.

The LG also instructed the university to establish a specialized faculty for Hindi, Dogri, French, and German, encouraging students in foreign languages and technical courses to also pursue Hindi and Dogri. He directed the complete digitalization of all university records and reviewed ongoing projects, admissions, recruitment, faculty career advancement, and non-functional promotions for non-teaching staff.

The council was informed that SMVDU has been designated a 'TCS Priority College' by Tata Consultancy Services for three years under its campus placement program. The meeting was attended by vice chancellors, directors, senior officials, and members of the J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra.

The meeting was attended by Prof. (Dr.)

Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor Jammu University; Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor Kashmir University; Prof. Pankaj Chandra, Vice Chancellor and Chairman, Board of Management, Ahmedabad University; Prof. A.S.K. Sinha, Director, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology, Amethi; Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT, Jammu; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO, SMVDSB; Ajay Kumar Sharma, Registrar, SMVDU and other members of Executive Council.

No Power Can

secondly, to create an inclusive environment that helps them in independent thinking and taking independent decisions, thirdly, to provide full support to their decision-making abilities and fourthly, to create a conducive environment for self-learning and self-improvement.

The Lieutenant Governor also paid homage to Dr. R.R. Khajuria, founder of J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra and commended all the members of the organisation for their selfless service to the society.

He assured every possible support and assistance to J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra for the smooth functioning of the school. He called upon the corporate houses, business community, and citizens to come forward and contribute to this noble endeavour.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the children with special abilities for presenting enthralling performances to mark the occasion.

K.B. Jandial, President, J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra; Dr. Rakesh Khajuria, Vice President; J.K. Vaidya, General Secretary, and other members of J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra, special educators and students were present.

Dr Ashok Bhan, Gunjan Rana and Suresh Kumar Sharma – Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; BR Sharma, Chairman, Indian Institute of Public Administration, J&K and senior officers also attended the foundation day ceremony.

J&K F&ES

is advised to immediately call Fire & Emergency Services toll-free number 101, or contact the Srinagar Control Room at 0194-2452155/2452222, Jammu Control Room at 0191-2457705/2435283, or the nearest fire station.

India's System

The new laws introduce time-bound procedures, video conferencing for accused persons, police officers, forensic experts, and others, reducing the need for physical court appearances. Provisions like e-FIR and Zero FIR are expected to simplify the initial stages of filing complaints.

The Union Home Minister also presided over a virtual ground-breaking ceremony for development projects worth Rs 4 lakh crore in Rajasthan, stemming from the 'Rising Rajasthan' investment summit last year.

During the event, Shah flagged off 56 Forensic Science Laboratory vehicles and 100 patrol two-wheelers for women's safety. He said the reforms and initiatives reflect the government's commitment to efficiency, accountability, and the welfare of citizens.

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, Deputy CMs Prem Chand Bairwa and Diya Kumari, acting Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, Chief Secretary Sudhansh Pant, and DGP Rajeev Sharma were also present.

The exhibition, originally scheduled to conclude on October 18, may be extended to allow more public participation, Shah suggested.

J&K Forests Dept

Bandipora, and Ramban, and reaffirmed alignment with the campaign's five key interventions: water conservation and rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional and other water bodies, reuse of water and recharge structures, watershed development, and intensive afforestation.

Officials said the campaign leverages existing resources through MGNREGS, Finance Commission Grants, and local funds, avoiding separate JSA funding. The initiative aims to strengthen climate resilience and ensure long-term water security under the guiding principle: "Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls."

HC Notice To Govt On Pleas Against Forfeiture Of 25 Books

M Ahmad

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,

SRINAGAR: A Full Bench of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Monday issued notice to the government on five separate petitions challenging the administration's notification that declared 25 books as "forfeited" in Jammu and Kashmir.

The government forfeited 25 books on Kashmir's political and social history for allegedly promoting false narratives and secessionism under Section 98 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023 on August 5.

The bench headed by Chief Justice Arun Palli and comprising Justice Rajnesh Oswal and Justice Shahzad Azeem asked the government to file objections to the petitions by a week before the adjourned date on December 4.

The petitions have been filed by Shakir Shabir, Swastik Singh, David Devadas, CPI(M) leader Mu-

hammad Yousuf Tarigami, Air Vice Marshal Kapil Kak and others.

The books were ordered to be forfeited by virtue of notification on 5 August this year, as per the government, to propagate false narratives 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, has invoked Section 99 of BNSS to set aside the order of forfeiture.

"The conspectus 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 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 in the 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 verbos-

ity 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.

Arthritis Can Severely Affect Quality of Life, Doctors Warn

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Arthritis - a group of diseases causing joint pain and inflammation - continues to affect millions of people across the globe, significantly reducing their quality of life and making even simple daily tasks a challenge.

Doctors in Kashmir have expressed concern over the growing number of arthritis cases, attributing them largely to obesity, lack of exercise, and smoking.

Health experts said that arthritis is not a single disease but a broad term encompassing over a hundred different conditions that affect the joints. The two most common types are Osteoarthritis (OA), a degenerative joint disease caused by wear and tear, and Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA), an autoimmune disorder where the body's immune system attacks its own joints.

Dr Murtaza Wani, an orthopaedic at the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), said that the causes of arthritis are multifactorial, including genetic predisposition, ageing, joint injuries, infections, obesity, immune system dysfunction, and lifestyle choices.

"Excess body weight puts additional strain on weight-bearing joints like the knees, hips, and spine, leading to quicker

wear and tear of cartilage. Obesity also increases inflammation in the body, which can accelerate joint damage," he said.

Dr Wani further added that smoking and a sedentary lifestyle are major contributors to arthritis, particularly rheumatoid arthritis.

"Smoking can trigger inflammatory responses in the body, while lack of physical activity weakens muscles and causes stiffness in the joints. Together, these factors create an environment conducive to arthritis," he said. Dr Sameer, a rheumatologist, said that arthritis, though common, is largely manageable with timely intervention and lifestyle modifications.

"Maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in regular physical activity, eating a balanced diet rich in nutrients, and avoiding smoking are key preventive measures," he said. "Regular medical checkups and early diagnosis are crucial, as early treatment can significantly slow disease progression and improve quality of life."

Doctors said that symptoms of arthritis include joint pain, stiffness, swelling, redness, fatigue, weakness, and a reduced range of motion. Ignoring these symptoms, they cautioned, can lead to worsening of the condition, permanent joint damage, and even disability.

Ladakh Set to Become India's Top Winter Sports Hub: LG Gupta

Observer News Service

LEH: Ladakh has immense potential to become a premier winter sports destination driven by its geographical terrain and extreme winter conditions. The region needs adequate winter sports infrastructure and connectivity to attract both domestic and international winter sports lovers, thereby promoting Ladakh as an adventure and winter sports destination, with a special focus on boosting winter tourism to boost livelihood opportunities of the locals.

This was stated by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, while chairing a meeting to discuss the upcoming development projects related to Winter Sports at Drass and Zaskar. The meeting was attended by Chairman, LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun; Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Er Panchok Tashi; Councillors from Drass and Zaskar; Administrative Secretary, YSS, Bhanu Prabha; Joint Director, YSS, Tahr Hussain; government officials and members from Ski Association and Zaskar Ski School.

The Lt Governor emphasised tapping Ladakh's winter sports potential to develop the region as a premier winter sports destina-



tion for skiers and winter sports lovers on the lines of Gulmarg. He stressed that the establishment of the Winter Sports Academy and the installation of Chair Lift/Ski Drag Lift would also boost tourism and provide economic opportunities for local residents. He underlined UT Administration's commitment to developing Ladakh into a top winter sports destination, with Khelo India Winter Games and other winter sports events, particularly those related to ice hockey, being organised annually in Ladakh during the peak winter months.

The Lt Governor also mentioned key notable initiatives taken by the UT Administration, with the support of the Government of India, including the installation of the chilling plant for the ice hockey rink at NDS Stadium in Leh and

also in Kargil to create year-round artificial ice for the benefit of local players. The development of such infrastructure would help in nurturing local talent for national and international competitions, including the Winter Olympics.

The stakeholders, including the CEC/Chairman, Executive Councillor, and Councillors from LAHDC Kargil, along with members of the Ski Association, requested the Lt. Governor to initiate work on winter sports development at the earliest, highlighting the potential for Ladakh to become a hub for winter sports in India while empowering local talent.

Earlier, officials from Ronmas Pvt India, the consultancy firm, apprised about the project, with Chair Lift/Ski Drag Lift to be established in the first phase and Winter Sports Academy in the second.

Ruhullah Declines to Campaign for NC in Budgam, Cites Unfulfilled Promises

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) leader and Member of Parliament from Srinagar, Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, on Monday announced that he will not take part in campaigning for the party in the upcoming Budgam Assembly bypolls, citing unfulfilled promises and his commitment to political principles over expediency.

Ruhullah, who has represented the Budgam constituency multiple times, said his decision stems from the party's failure to deliver on commitments made during the previous Assembly term. "If the party wants me to

go in front of people, there are a few points I want to see addressed immediately. Only after that will I consider my participation," he said, stressing that his stance was guided by principles, not political calculations.

The MP emphasized that his engagement with voters has always been based on trust, accountability, and delivery rather than party pressure. "My responsibility has always been towards the institution I worked for and the people who trusted me with their votes," he said.

Ruhullah expressed disappointment over the lack of follow-up on promises and manifesto commitments made to his



constituents. "I asked them, 'What work did you do in the Assembly? What commitments did you make for yourselves? Until these are addressed, why should I go in front of people?'" he remarked.

On speculation that the NC may field an outsider from Bud-

gam, Ruhullah said he will exercise his franchise independently. "Whoever wants to contest from here, let them contest. I have a vote. I am the owner of my vote. I will make my decision and work with the people," he said, adding that his loyalty remains with the voters rather than with party dictates.

He further noted that his participation in any campaign would depend on the party taking concrete action on pending issues, including Cabinet decisions on reservation and promises made to the constituency. "If I see serious intention from the party to act on these issues, then I will evaluate my participation. Until

then, I cannot involve myself in any campaign," he maintained.

Ruhullah reaffirmed that his political journey is guided by ideology and ethics. "I have followed the principles of politics. I do not want to break my principles or my commitments. I promised people that I would stand with them only if commitments made were honored. I will not abandon that promise for anyone," he asserted.

On the autonomy of voters in Budgam, the MP said that people are the true owners of their votes. While he may offer advice if asked, he emphasized that he will not influence or dictate anyone's choice.

BJP Can't Win Single Seat Without Horse Trading: CM

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that the Bharatiya Janata Party cannot even win a single Rajya Sabha seat without horse trading and that these elections will show who stands with the saffron party and who opposes it.

Speaking with reporters, the Chief Minister said that the BJP falls short of two legislators as they need almost 30 to win the fourth seat, but they have only 28. "There is not a single MLA other than 28 who have supported them in the last one year," he said.

He added that if the BJP claims to win four seats then it is money power, muscle power and the power of the agencies. "If they are really going to win by using muscle and money power then they will prove that whatever the people in Bihar claim is a fact."

He said that as numbers go, BJP is not in a position to win even a single seat. "These Rajya Sabha elections will show us who are the supporters and opponents of BJP. Anyone who abstains is a friend of BJP and anyone who votes for the BJP is their friend," he said. (Observer News Service)

Mega Blood Donation Camp Organized in Srinagar

A Mega Blood Donation Camp was organized under the Student For Seva, Srinagar initiative in collaboration with the Government Medical College, Srinagar and Exceptional Academy. The event aimed to promote the spirit of social responsibility and humanitarian service among the youth.

The camp was sponsored by Exceptional Academy, Parraypora, Srinagar, whose directors actively participated by donating blood themselves and motivating others to contribute to this noble cause. Director Owais Ali Bhat, while interacting with the media and students, appreciated the overwhelming participation and encouraged everyone to continue contributing towards such humanitarian initiatives. His words of inspiration emphasized the value of compassion, service, and collective responsibility in building a better society.

Held under the theme "Donate Blood, Save Life," the event witnessed encouraging participation from students, volunteers, and members of the community. The initiative highlighted how collective efforts can help save countless lives and strengthen the culture of compassion within society. (Observer News Service)

Four Drug Peddlers Arrested in Awantipora & Kupwara

Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from society, J&K Police on Monday said to have arrested 04 drug peddlers in Awantipora & Kupwara and recovered contraband substance from their possession.

According to a statement, in Awantipora, a Police team of Police Post Toll Plaza headed by Incharge Police Post Toll Plaza at a checkpoint established at Kaigam Crossing intercepted a vehicle (Tavera) bearing registration number RJ14TB-6291 with 02 persons onboard. They have been identified as Zahid Ahmad Sheikh son of Bashir Ahmad Sheikh and Mehraj Ahmad Ragga son of Mohd Yousuf Ragga both residents of Hamdani Colony Bemina. During search, 65 grams of Charas like substance was recovered from their possession. They have been arrested and a case vide FIR Number 213/2025 under relevant sections of law has been registered at Police Station Awantipora and investigation has been initiated. Vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

In Kupwara, a Police team of Police Station Sogam at a checkpoint established at Tekipora near Eid-Gah intercepted 02 suspicious persons. They have been identified as Nisar Ahmad Magray son of Abdul Gaffar Magray resident of Wani Doursa and Arshid Ahmad Khan son of Mohd Mussa Khan resident of Tekipora. Upon their personal search, charas-like substance wrapped in green polythene was recovered from their possession. They have been arrested and a case vide FIR No. 56/2025 under Sections 8/20 and 29 of the NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Sogam and investigation has been taken up. (Observer News Service)

F&ES Issues Safety Advisory

With the onset of winter season in the valley, Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) of Jammu and Kashmir Monday issued a public advisory urging people to remain vigilant and adopt precautionary measures to prevent fire-related mishaps.

According to the advisory, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer states that the department has urged residents to ensure that all electrical heating gadgets, stoves, Bukharies and LPG cooking gas stoves are properly switched off and unplugged before going to bed or leaving home.

People have also been advised to use Kangris with utmost care and to keep them in safe places during the night to avoid accidents.

The department further cautioned against storing dry grass, wood, or other combustible materials in residential areas, recommending to keep such items in isolated places away from homes.

The advisory further warns using of faulty or sub-standard electrical appliances, including defective heaters and blankets that could cause short circuits and fires.

It stresses the importance of using quality fuses, miniature circuit breakers (MCB) and earth leakage circuit breakers.

"Electric wires should be kept away from hot and wet surfaces. While cooking, people should remain in the kitchen and ensure the LPG cylinder and stove knob are switched off when not in use," reads the advisory.

The department has also called for keeping proper ventilation when using LPG heaters and also emphasized for keeping escape routes and water access points clear especially in residential and market areas. Citizens have been urged not to throw live cigarette butts carelessly.

"In case of any fire incident, people have been asked to immediately contact the Fire and Emergency Services through toll-free number 101 or the control rooms at 0194-2452155, 2452222 (Srinagar) and 0191-2457705, 2435283 (Jammu), or report to the nearest fire station," it reads. (Observer News Service)

September Floods Leave Hundreds of Sheep Starving

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of sheep are on verge of starvation as the grazing area near Khadermuh-Kandizal bund in Pulwama district remains inundated under two feet of water.

The water had entered the area last month when the Kashmir region was lashed by heavy rains for several days, swelling Jhelum river to rise above danger mark.

A breach of Jhelum's embankment had caused the water to deluge the agriculture land around Khadermuh and Kandizal villages. The locals said a patch of land, spread over 100 kanals along the Khadermuh-Kandizal bund which served as a grazing area for sheep, continues to remain inundated under two feet of water.

"We have been grazing our sheep in this area for decades. It served as a grazing area during autumn and spring but now the area is under water and sheep have nowhere to go," a local resident said.

The sheep returned from highland meadows in late September, where they spent nearly five months.

The local residents urged the Pulwama district administration to drain the flood water from the patch of land along the Khadermuh-Kandizal bund, fearing any delay would cause damage death of sheep due to starvation—(KNO)

IUST Observes International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2025

Observer News Service

AWANTIPORA: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) observed the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (ID-DRR) 2025 by organizing a one-day workshop on the theme "Fund Resilience, Not Disasters." The event was organized by the Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR), IUST, in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Government of India.

Dr. Afroz Ahmad, Member, National Green Tribunal (NGT), was the Chief Guest on the occasion. In his address, Dr. Ahmad emphasized the importance of extensive research and community awareness in disaster risk



reduction. He noted that disasters become more devastating due to unsustainable human activities and short-term interests, and called for stronger laws and mass sensitization to ensure resilience and sustainable development.

In his presidential address, Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo, Vice Chancellor, IUST, reaffirmed the university's commitment to building a disaster-conscious and resilient society in J&K through capacity development across all segments

of the community. Referring to this year's International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction theme, he emphasized the need for proactive investment in preparedness and resilience rather than spending on disaster response. "At IUST, with the support of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), we are working to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders and institutions to enhance disaster risk reduction across society," he said.

Prof. A.H. Moon, Dean Academic Affairs, highlighted IUST's outreach-driven approach in addressing societal challenges. "As a responsible institution, IUST engages with stakeholders on issues like disasters, education, languages, and artificial intelligence," he said.

Prof. Abdul Wahid Makhdoomi, Registrar IUST, spoke about the university's initiatives through its Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction and expressed hope that the year's theme would inspire collective action toward resilience-building. Prof. Shakeel Ahmad, Consultant IUST, presented the theme of this year's IDDRR and underscored the importance of risk-informed and resilient investments in both development and private sectors.

India 58 Runs Away From Victory In 2nd Test



West Indies 248 and 390 in 118.5 overs (John Campbell 115, Shai Hope 103; Kuldeep Yadav 3/104, Jasprit Bumrah 3/44).

"Her pace, consistency, and racecraft under pressure were outstanding. This is a significant moment for the team, and we're incredibly proud of the effort from everyone involved," he said.



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