

EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMY  
FOR IAS/JKAS/11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>/NET/JEE

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

Hello, Kashmir

DON'T MAKE IAS/JKAS A 5 YEAR PLAN...

RATHER START EARLY AFTER CLASS 12TH

Join EXCEPTIONAL'S 03 Year Foundation Course



New Batch's commencing on

25 November 2025



Register Now

## Hopes For Statehood Restoration Fading: CM Omar



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday admitted that his hopes for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood were fading as the issue continued to linger without resolution.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Omar said, "I was hopeful from day one, but that hope is diminishing. The longer this issue drags on, the less hopeful we become. Still, there is some hope left — and it would be better if statehood is restored while that hope remains."

When asked about his next step if statehood was not restored, the chief minister replied, "Let's get to that point

first. We will talk then." He declined to comment on reports claiming he might resign if the Centre failed to restore statehood within a set timeframe.

"I have nothing more to say on that. The interviewer asked me the same question, and I didn't answer her either," Omar said.

Explaining why statehood was crucial, Omar said governance under the Union Territory (UT) setup was fraught with challenges. "If there were no obstacles in running a UT, am I mad to demand statehood? If it was easier to govern a UT, every state would want to become one. There are departments where officers are not of my choice, even though I am answerable | [More on P6](#)

## CM Tables J&K Rent Authority Bill

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday introduced the Jammu and Kashmir Rent Authority Bill, 2025 (LA Bill No. 4 of 2025) in the Legislative Assembly. "I rise to introduce a Bill to establish a Rent Authority to regulate the renting of premises, to protect the interests of landlords and tenants, and to provide a speedy adjudication mechanism for the resolution of disputes and matters connected therewith or | [More on P6](#)

## '5 Marlas Land for Landless Flood Victims'

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday announced that landless people affected by the recent floods in the Union Territory would be allotted five marlas of land each, with the | [More on P6](#)

## Rajnath: Stay Prepared For War, Keep Introspecting

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said India must stay prepared for a "war-like situation" at all times, citing lessons from Operation Sindoor, the four-day military conflict with Pakistan in May that underscored the volatility along the country's borders.

Addressing an event in New Delhi, Singh said that although India gave a "firm response" during the May 7-10 conflict, the episode should serve as a learning experience for shaping future national security



strategies.

"Operation Sindoor should serve as a case study from which we can learn and chart our future course. This incident has once again shown that anything can happen at our borders, anywhere, | [More on P6](#)

J&amp;K Assembly Session

## Reservation, Cross-Voting, PSA Issues Dominate Proceedings

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Monday witnessed noisy scenes as issues related to the reservation policy, cross-voting in the recent Rajya Sabha polls, and the detention of an AAP MLA under the Public Safety Act (PSA) dominated the proceedings.

Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone sought to move an adjournment motion to discuss the government's "failure" to rationalize the reservation policy.

## Speaker Nominates Panel Of Chairmen



Calling it a "post-dated cheque for disaster," Lone pressed for a discussion, but

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather rejected the motion, citing procedural | [More on P6](#)

The Speaker Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather announced the panel of Chairmen for the ensuing

Assembly session. The Speaker nominated MLA Eidgah, Mubarak Gul; MLA Central Shalteng, Tariq Hameed Karra | [More on P6](#)

## SC Orders JKCA Polls In 12 Weeks

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday directed that the elections to the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) be held within 12 weeks under the supervision of a former chief election commissioner.

A bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gava and Justice K Vinod Chandran took note of the submissions that A K Joti, a former CEC, has agreed to supervise the JKCA polls.

The bench ordered that irrespective of whether the constitution of the JKCA is registered, the polls will be held as per the provisions of the constitution.

It was apprised that the former CEC has sought 12 weeks' time for conducting | [More on P6](#)

## A Rift Too Wide?

## Ruhullah-Omar Fallout Deepens

Dabirah Hassan

Srinagar: The simmering tensions within the National Conference (NC) have burst into the open, with a public war of words between party MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah intensifying ahead of the Budgam by-polls. Their sharp exchanges over the past few days have laid bare a widening rift within the party.

The discord escalated on Monday when Omar Abdullah, responding to questions from reporters, reacted sharply upon hearing Ruhullah's name.

"Don't talk about Aga Ruhullah. Whom are you talking about? There is no



comparison between Mian Altaf and Aga Ruhullah — there's simply no match," Omar said.

Omar also responded to reports that Ruhullah had refused to join the Budgam by-poll campaign, saying that the party has enough leaders to carry on its political outreach.

"No one is being forced to campaign," he said. "We have plenty of people willing to go out and work. Whoever wants to stay away can do so."

Hours later, NC legislator Majeed Larmi added fuel to the fire. Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Larmi, took direct aim at Ruhullah's | [More on P6](#)

## LG Vows To Make J&K A Hub of Innovation & Learning Says Govt Schools Will Lead India's Education Reforms

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that government schools will be at the forefront of India's education reforms, as Jammu and Kashmir continues to transform its learning ecosystem to become an "Oasis of Talent."

The LG was speaking at the inauguration of the DREAM School Project at the Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothi Bagh, Srinagar — a landmark initiative aimed at modernizing public education through digital innovation and global-standard



facilities.

The Developing Resilient Education and Aspirational Mindsets (DREAM) project

is a collaboration between the Jammu and Kashmir government and the Faizal and Shabana | [More on P6](#)

## MARRIAGE ASSISTANCE SCHEME

## Govt Relaxes Qualification Bar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has relaxed the minimum qualification requirement under the Marriage Assistance Scheme for poor girls.

As per a fresh order issued by the Social Welfare Department, the minimum eligibility of being Class 8th pass or equivalent has been relaxed up to March 31, 2028.

The decision, made with the concurrence of the Finance Department and approval of the Council of Ministers, modifies an earlier order | [More on P6](#)

## Man Booked For Illegal 'Centre For Narendra Modi Studies'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against an Aligarh-based man for allegedly setting up a "Centre for Narendra Modi Studies" without obtaining approval from the Central government or the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), officials said on Monday.

The agency initiated action following a complaint from the PMO, which had forwarded a petition filed by an Aligarh-based advocate. The complainant alleged that Jasim Mohammad was

running the centre without mandatory permission, thereby violating the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950.

According to officials, the CBI launched a preliminary inquiry in April this year after receiving a communication from an assistant director in the PMO. The inquiry found that the "Centre for Narendra Modi Studies" had been registered on January 25, 2021, under the Indian Trusts Act, 1860, by Jasim Mohammad, without any approval from the Central government or the PMO. | [More on P6](#)

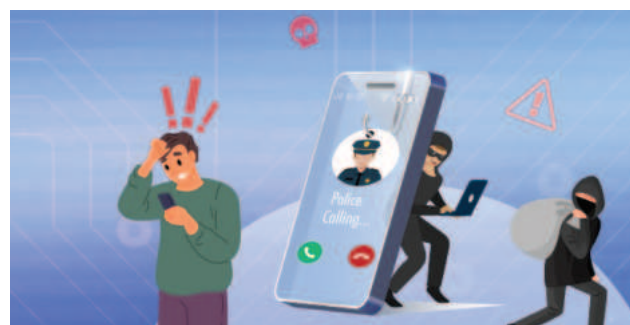
## 'Digital Arrest' Among Most Dreaded Threats: President

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Oct 27: Asserting that technology has substantially altered the space of policing, President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said "digital arrest" has become one of the most dreaded threats to citizens.

Addressing a group of probationers of the Indian Police Service (IPS), who called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Murmu said people, especially the marginalised, should look at police as a source of support and not as a fearsome entity.

The president said India



is the fastest growing major economy in the world, and "we need increasingly larger public and private investments for sustaining and accelerating

our economic growth".

"Law and order is a necessary pre-condition for attracting investment in any state or region. Effective | [More on P6](#)

## CIK Foils Online Radicalisation Bid Saves 2 Kashmiri Teens from Terror Trap

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) has thwarted an online radicalisation attempt and prevented two Kashmiri teenagers from being drawn into a terror network operating through social media platforms.

According to a statement, the CIK said it had "dismantled a digital radicalisation network" that was using multiple online platforms to propagate extremist ideologies and lure vulnerable youth toward violence. | [More on P6](#)









## ₹792 Cr Spent On Srinagar Smart City Works Since 2018

No Phase-II Planned Yet: Govt



Observer News Service

The Jammu and Kashmir government has spent more than ₹792 crore on the execution of various works under the Srinagar Smart City Project since its inception in 2018, the Housing and Urban Development Department has revealed.

In a written reply to a question by MLA Ali Mohammad Sagar, the department provided a year-wise breakup of the expenditure, showing a consistent rise in spending over the years. According to official data, ₹8.86 crore was spent in 2018–19, followed by a gradual increase in subsequent years. The expenditure reached ₹91.80 crore in 2022–23 and ₹247.02 crore in 2023–24. For the ongoing financial year 2024–25, the projected spending stands

at ₹265.08 crore, while ₹78.98 crore has been earmarked for 2025–26.

This takes the cumulative expenditure under the Srinagar Smart City Project to ₹792.92 crore.

However, the government clarified that there is currently no proposal for a Srinagar Smart City Project Part-II under consideration.

The Smart City initiative in Srinagar focuses on urban mobility, beautification, heritage conservation, and strengthening public infrastructure. Over the past few years, several projects under the scheme — including riverfront development, traffic management systems, and façade restoration in key city areas — have been taken up to transform the summer capital into a more livable and sustainable city.

## Encroachment Narrows Baba Demb–Naqashpora Road

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Encroachment by vested interest groups, allegedly including local mechanics, has partially occupied a section of the Baba Demb–Naqashpora road in Srinagar, triggering public concern over the shrinking width of what was once a double-lane stretch.

Locals said the mechanics and vehicle repair units have extended their workspaces onto the main road, leaving little space for vehicular movement. “They have virtually converted a portion of the road into an open workshop. If action is not taken, this double-lane road will soon be reduced to a single lane,” a local said.

The encroachment has led to frequent traffic congestion, forcing school buses and commuters to navigate through a narrow passage. The situation, inhabitants said, has been

worsening each day due to inaction by authorities.

“The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and the Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LC&MA) are acting as mute spectators. There is absolutely no accountability or regulation on ground,” another local complained.

The affected stretch, which connects several busy localities, was recently blacktopped but has now turned into a partial parking and repair zone, defeating the purpose of road improvement.

Locals have urged the administration to immediately clear the encroachments and restore the full width of the road to prevent further inconvenience and ensure traffic safety. “We appeal to the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar to take strict action before this route becomes completely unusable,” they said. (KNT)

## DC Srinagar Reviews Implementation Of Mission YUVA



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** To review the status and progress of the implementation of the Mission YUVA scheme in the district, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Monday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting focused on assessing the achievements made so far under the scheme and formulating a future roadmap in consultation with concerned departments and stakeholders to further enhance the progress of Mission YUVA in Srinagar.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed review of various components of the scheme, including pendency of cases at different levels, establishment of Model Single Block Development Units (SBDUs), conduct of awareness programmes under Udyam Jagriti-4.0, and initiation of output tracking mechanisms aimed at improving the overall implementation of the Mission.

The DC directed the Employment Department and J&K Bank to adopt proactive measures to meet the targets set for the current financial year. Emphasiz-

ing the significance of grass-roots-level support systems, he instructed that SBDUs, Block Handholding Desks (BHDs), and YUVA Doots be optimally utilized to facilitate on-ground execution of the scheme.

The DC stressed the need to further streamline the approval process, ensure timely sanction and disbursal of loans, and closely monitor the establishment of enterprises by beneficiaries. He further directed that processes from District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) approvals to bank sanctions and loan disbursals be further expedited.

Highlighting the importance of Udyam Jagriti-4.0, the DC emphasized close coordination between colleges and the District Employment Department to organize awareness programmes and sensitize students about the entrepreneurial ecosystem under Mission YUVA, enabling youth to pursue self-employment opportunities.

The DC also instructed the concerned departments to ensure the establishment of Model SBDUs in the district and initiate a robust output tracking mechanism under the scheme.



Traffic Chaos

## Govt Plans Pedestrian Bridge, Mulls Flyover At SKIMS Soura

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Acknowledging the long-pending issue of traffic congestion outside the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) in Soura, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has initiated measures to ease vehicular movement and improve pedestrian safety in the area.

In a written reply to a starred question by NC leader Tanvir Sadiq, the Public Works (R&B) Department admitted that heavy traffic inflow from Buchpora, 90-Foot Road, Nowshera and adjoining areas has been caus-

**6** The department informed that it has already sanctioned the construction of a pedestrian bridge in front of SKIMS Soura at an estimated cost of ₹219.98 lakh, with ₹12.50 lakh released to the Chief Engineer, Central Kashmir.

ing frequent jams at the main chowk, causing inconvenience to patients and commuters.

The department informed that it has already sanctioned the construction of a pedestrian bridge in front of SKIMS Soura at an estimated cost of ₹219.98 lakh, with ₹12.50 lakh released to the Chief Engineer, Central Kashmir.

Officials said the bridge is expected to be completed by the next financial year, while the government is also considering the construction of a flyover to further decongest traffic and ensure smooth movement around the hospital premises.

## Ambulance Services Proposed For Zakura, Khimber NTPHCs

Agencies

To strengthen emergency medical transport services in Srinagar's peripheral areas, the Jammu and Kashmir government has proposed ambulances for NTPHC Zakura and NTPHC Khimber under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) Yojana.

According to the Health and Medical Education Department, which issued a written reply to MLA Salman Sagar, the two health centres currently have no dedicated ambulances. However, one ambulance each has been proposed under PMJVK to enhance emergency response and referral services.

In the interim, two ambulances from PHC Zadibal are being deployed as and when required to cater to the needs of NTPHC Zakura and NTPHC Khimber, ensuring no centre

remains unattended during medical emergencies,” the department stated.

It further said that one ambulance is already stationed at NTPHC Faqir Gujri to serve adjoining habitations, while a



Critical Care Ambulance (108) has been stationed at Darbagh Harwan to cover the entire Block Hazratbal and Zone Harwan, including Harwan New Theed, Faqir Gujri and Mulnar.

The department maintained that these arrangements ensure timely and efficient medical evacuation and patient transport during critical health emergencies. (KNO)

## Revised DPR for New CD Hospital Building Being Prepared

Observer News Service

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday said that the revised Detailed Project Report (DPR) for constructing a G+4 building for the Chest Diseases Hospital in Srinagar is being prepared and further action will follow once it is finalised.

Health Minister Sakeena Itoo informed the Assembly that the existing hospital operates in an old heritage building, but necessary infrastructure is being maintained within available resources. She said the initial DPR, costing ₹19.93 crore, was returned for revisions due to certain gaps.

The minister added that proposals for new medical blocks at Kralgund and Qalamabad in Langate are under examination, while the demand for ambulances at NTPHC Zakura and Khimber has been projected under PMJVK. In the meantime, ambulances from PHC Zadibal are being temporarily deployed to these centres to meet emergency needs.

In Loving Memory  
1st Year Remembrance  
Of Late Ajaz Ahmad Shah  
Resident of Alamdar Colony, Gopalpora

Who left us for his heavenly abode on  
28th October 2024  
“Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raji’un”  
(Surely, we belong to Allah and to Him shall we return)  
[Surah Al-Baqarah 2:156]

A year has passed, yet your memories remain fresh in our hearts,  
Your gentle voice, kind smile, and loving presence continue to  
gild and inspire us every day. Life has not been the same without  
you, but your teachings and prayers remain our strength.

‘O Allah, forgive him, have mercy on him, grant  
him peace, and make his grave a garden from  
the gardens of Paradise.”  
Deeply Remembered & Missed By:  
All Family Members

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092, 2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488, 2452222, 2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBERHA: 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  
05 Jumada al-Awwal  
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	5:21
ZUHR	12:15
ASR	4:07
Magrib	5:48
ISHA	7:09

## This Day In History

- 306 - Maxentius proclaimed Emperor of Rome
- 312 - Emperor Constantine the Great beats rival Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge
- 1420 - Beijing is declared the capital of the Ming dynasty under the Yongle Emperor
- 1492 - Christopher Columbus sights Cuba and claims it for Spain under the name "Juana"
- 1516 - Battle of Yarnis Khan: Turkish forces under the Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha defeat the Mameluks near Gaza
- 1531 - Battle of Amba Sel: Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi again defeats the army of Lebna Dengel, Emperor of Ethiopia. The southern part of Ethiopia falls under Imam
- 1740 - Ivan VI becomes Tsar of Russia [OS=Oct 17]
- 1831 - Michael Faraday demonstrates his dynamo invention, an electrical generator
- 1864 - Second Battle at Fair Oaks, Virginia, ends with 1554 casualties
- 1864 - Battle of Wauhatchie, Tennessee
- 1886 - Statue of Liberty dedicated by US President Grover Cleveland, celebrated by first confetti (ticker tape) parade in New York City
- 1914 - German battle cruiser Goeben enters Black Sea
- 1916 - Australian government holds a national referendum seeking support for the proposal of compulsory conscription; it is rejected
- 1918 - Czechoslovakia gains independence as Austria-Hungary breaks up
- 1922 - Benito Mussolini takes control of Italy's government
- 1924 - French-Russian trade agreement signed
- 1943 - German submarine U-220 sunk by US aircraft in the Atlantic
- 1944 - Russia & Bulgaria sign weapons pact
- 1946 - German rocket engineers begin work in USSR
- 1948 - Flag of Israel is adopted
- 1954 - Nobel Prize for Literature is awarded to Ernest Hemingway

From KO Archives

## MoU Contained Some Deficiencies

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a candid admission, the chief minister, Dr Fa-rooq Abdullah, today said the Centre had taken him for a ride when the former union energy Minister P K Kumaramanglam, obtained his signatures on the memorandum of understanding (MoU) whose contents later turned out to be detrimental to the state's interests

According to a CNS report Dr Abdullah told the state assembly during an obituary reference to the late Kumaramanglam that a MoU had been signed between him and union minister. However, when the documents were prepared the union energy minister allegedly with malafide intentions, obtained his signatures on such papers which, on closer scrutiny later revealed that these were against the interests of the state.

However an official handout issued today said the chief minister had said “the MoU signed by him with the then union energy minister had been signed in good faith to benefit the State.” However the handout said “Later on the state officials pointed out some deficiencies.” He said he immediately up the matter with Kumaramanglam who “readily agreed”. But before correction could be effected, the union Minister passed away. “These clauses have to be modified to protest the interests of the State” Dr. Abdullah added.

When contacted the principal secretary power development department Ajit Kumar told Observer News Service, the “deficiencies pertained to the state's claim for reimbursement of the expenditure it had already incurred on the power projects. The MoU did not mention this. However, Kumar said the Centre had agreed to reimburse the expenditure and necessary modifications would be incorporated in the MoU shortly.

(Kashmir Observer, October 28, 2000)



KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP  
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam  
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K  
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider  
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo  
News Editor: Farzana Nisar  
Online Editor: Syed Hamid  
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,  
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah  
Distribution & Advertising: Firdos Ali  
RNI Registration No: 69503/98  
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16  
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja  
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 1947969705  
Editorial: (0194) 2502327  
Email: editor@kashmirobserver.net

KO VIEW

The New Kashmiri Aesthetic

Go inside a newly built home in Srinagar and it tells a different story now. The ceilings are plain, the walls white, and the rooms open and bright. The walnut wood, papier-mâché panels, and Kashmiri carpets that once filled homes with colour and craft are disappearing. In their place stands a new idea of beauty.

For generations, Kashmiri homes told stories. The hand-carved bed, the copper samovar, and the woven rug spoke of memory and place. A home was not just shelter but a living museum of family life.

Today, that sense of rootedness is being replaced by minimalism. The new Kashmiri homeowner wants space that feels light, manageable, and modern.

This shift mirrors the mood of a generation raised in change and uncertainty. Many young Kashmiris see minimalism as a kind of relief, a way to create calm when the world outside feels unstable. Clean walls and simple furniture give them control over at least one part of life. As a young designer in Srinagar said, “We grew up surrounded by heaviness. Minimalism feels like air.”

Interior design studios across the valley confirm this change. They receive daily requests for “European-style” or “Scandinavian” interiors: pale colours, sleek lines, and little decoration. Social media fuels this trend, shaping taste through a steady stream of curated images.

The result is a new Kashmiri aesthetic that looks outward for inspiration and inward for peace.

But this transformation carries an emotional cost. The craftsmen who painted papier-mâché patterns or carved walnut latticework now face uncertain futures. Their skills, once passed from father to son, risk fading from memory. Losing these crafts means losing a link to heritage and community.

Every culture evolves, and change brings freshness. But something essential goes missing when beauty becomes uniform. A Kashmiri home once reflected its land: textured, layered, and full of stories. The new homes, clean and global, risk feeling unanchored.

The challenge for Kashmir is balance. Modernity need not erase memory. A space can feel light and still hold warmth. A room can look simple and still tell a story.

The future of Kashmiri design may lie in blending both, the comfort of now and the culture of what once was.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

The Smart Money Revolution

The new generation’s wealth will come from wisdom.

Irshad Mushtaq

Money often finds its safest home in land or gold in the valley. Many still trust word-of-mouth stock tips over data.

The fear of fraud and bad experiences keeps people away from new investment avenues, even when the world around them is changing fast.

To move forward, we need to begin with financial education.

When people understand how compounding works, they start seeing the power of patience. When they learn about diversification, they start making choices that protect and grow their savings.

Kashmir economy has long relied on government jobs and traditional business, leaving little space for financial literacy. But, the landscape is shifting. With digital access, investment platforms and mutual funds are now within reach of anyone with a smartphone.

This is a chance to bridge the income gap and reduce dependence on single sources of earning.

Courage and patience are the new cornerstones of financial progress. Courage to explore what feels unfamiliar, and patience to allow investments to mature.

A small start, guided by knowledge, not impulse, can grow into long-term stability.

— The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The Great Kashmiri Wedding Race

The growing obsession with extravagant ceremonies is reshaping traditions and bankrupting families across the valley.



Rameez Rasool Mir

The wedding scene in Kashmir these days feels almost unreal, like a show designed more for display than for celebration.

Crystal chandeliers hang from the ceilings, flower arrangements line the walls, and guests pose for professional photographers as if attending a film premiere.

The bride changes outfits several times. The groom arrives in a convoy of cars. The meal stretches into a long parade of wazwan courses.

What was once a simple religious union has become a theatre of extravagance.

In Islam, marriage is meant to be a contract built on sincerity and simplicity. The Prophet (ﷺ) urged his followers to marry for faith, not for display. But Kashmiri weddings have drifted far from this principle.

The modern celebration has become an exhibition of wealth, and many families now spend years recovering from the costs of a single day.

Some sell land, livestock, or even take loans to meet these rising expectations. A sacred ceremony has become a social burden.

Older Kashmiris remember a very different time. Weddings

were held at home or in the neighbourhood, with a handful of guests and a modest meal. The focus was on the nikah and the blessings of elders. Clothes were borrowed or hand-stitched. Music came from the voices of friends, not sound systems.

Those gatherings may have been small, but they carried warmth and worth. Today, that simplicity feels like a relic from another world.

The economic impact of this change is visible everywhere.

A middle-class family in Srinagar now spends between ₹15 and ₹25 lakh on an average wedding, according to local event planners. Even government employees earning modest salaries often feel pressured to match that standard. Many young men delay marriage because they cannot afford it, while girls remain unmarried due to rising dowry and mehar expectations.

The financial strain feeds into anxiety, unemployment, and resentment within families.

The cultural shift is equally troubling. Western wedding trends and social media aesthetics have entered Kashmiri homes. Theme-based functions, destination pre-shoots, and designer trousseaus now dominate the wedding season.

The idea of togetherness has been replaced by competition.

Social acceptance is no longer about character but about spectacle.

There are families who still choose modesty. They hold small weddings, share simple meals, and use their savings for education or community welfare.

These examples are few, but they remind us that humility and happiness can coexist. Every rupee saved from wasteful spending could fund a scholarship, support a neighbour’s wedding, or secure a child’s future.

If society is to heal from this obsession, it needs honest conversations. Religious leaders, community elders, and civil institutions should speak against this growing consumerism.

Marriage should never be a reason to fall into debt. It should unite families, not divide them by financial strain.

The time has come to reclaim the meaning of nikah as a spiritual bond rooted in equality and compassion. A wedding should celebrate faith and commitment, not wealth and vanity.

The return to simplicity will not only restore balance to our homes but also peace to our hearts.

— The author is a columnist from Lolab Valley. He can be reached at rameezmasa@gmail.com

Letter to Editor

Rajya Sabha Polls Expose Cracks Within Kashmir’s Old Guard

After four long years, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed the return of Rajya Sabha elections, an indirect poll where elected legislators, not citizens, cast their votes. While the process itself appeared procedural, the results opened a new chapter in Kashmir’s political story, marked by whispers of betrayal, shifting loyalties, and uneasy alliances.

It began when the Leader of the Opposition alleged that several National Conference (NC) legislators were ready to switch sides to the BJP. The charge created ripples across the valley, especially with Rajya Sabha polls just days away. Suddenly, drawing rooms and newsrooms alike were buzzing: would cross-voting actually happen?

The NC, the ruling party in the state, found itself in a difficult spot. Its ally, the Congress, accused it of monopolizing the seats. Out of four seats, NC kept three and left one for the Congress, a seat Congress leaders believed was unwinnable. Feeling sidelined, the state Congress chief said the decision on supporting NC’s candidate would be left to the central leadership, exposing clear cracks within the alliance.

Realizing the growing tension, the NC shifted its tone from arrogance to appeal. It began reaching out not only to Congress but also to the PDP, a party it had recently accused of flirting with the BJP.

Ironically, the PDP, despite its reduced strength, became the unexpected kingmaker. Its chief, Mehbooba Mufti, announced support for NC but with a strategic twist: the PDP would prioritize its third preference vote instead of the fourth. She made it clear that her party

would not bear the burden if the NC failed to secure a seat.

When the votes were counted, the results shocked many. NC comfortably secured three seats, but the fourth slipped to the BJP, which bagged 33 votes despite lacking the numbers on paper. NC’s candidate received only 21 votes. Questions arose instantly: where did those extra BJP votes come from?

Neither the PDP nor the Congress could be blamed, both had issued whips directing their legislators to vote for NC. Independents like Shabir Kullay and Sheikh Khurshid publicly stated they had voted for NC. This left only one logical place to look: inside the NC itself.

Even the Chief Minister admitted that some within the party voted against official candidates. But no one

seems ready to name names. Farooq Abdullah’s cryptic remark that he needed to “see things at home” added to the sense that internal rifts are deeper than they appear.

History reminds Kashmiris how political betrayals once changed governments overnight. The last thing the valley needs now is a repeat of those turbulent years. The NC, if it wishes to preserve credibility, must look inward and fix what’s broken. Kashmiri people have endured too much political instability to watch another “Gul Shah” moment unfold.

It’s time the old guard remembers that democracy means service, not entitlement, and that loyalty, once lost, is rarely regained.

Sincerely, Raqif Makhdoomi raqifmakhdoomi818@gmail.com



# Growing Minds in Pulwama's Apple Fields

## Through apple picking, farm walks, and nature workshops, a new kind of education is taking root in Pulwama.

Afshan Rashid

The morning mist still floats over Pulwama as the first cars pull into a small farmhouse nestled in the gentle folds of South Kashmir's apple country.

The air smells of dew and fresh hay. Somewhere nearby, a cow calls out. Time feels slower here, softer, as if it moves with the sway of the trees.

Children step out of their cars, rubbing sleep from their eyes. They look at the orchard that stretches before them: rows of apple trees glistening in the golden light.

Within moments, their hesitation gives way to curiosity. They run across the grass, their laughter spilling through the air like birdsong. Parents follow with hesitant smiles, some still carrying the city's hurry in their step.

The farm's name, Bagamanzuk, meaning "garden of joy", feels true to its spirit. Once, it was simply a family orchard, known for its crisp apples and a sense of calm that only the countryside could offer. Today, it has become a living classroom for children and families, a place where nature is both teacher and companion.

The hosts, a local homesteading family, have reimagined their ancestral land into a space for learning and belonging.

"We wanted children to know what real food looks like, where it grows, and how it tastes," says one of them, adjusting a wooden ladder against an apple tree. "Our generation knew the smell of soil and the patience of trees. We wanted to pass that on."

The idea took root slowly, nurtured by people who believed that a farm could be an emotional space than merely an economic zone. That belief brought Dr. Rumana Masudi, founder of Booyin Breeze Kashmir, into the story.

Dr. Masudi, a physician by training, had watched her own child grow up surrounded by screens. She began to wonder what it meant for children to lose touch with the living world.

"Nature is our first teacher," she says softly, standing by the orchard gate, watching a group of children climb onto a hay cart. "It teaches patience, observation, and empathy, things no classroom can replace."

Her organization, Booyin Breeze, creates nature immersion programs that allow children to explore freely and learn through play. She believes that a child's connection to nature is essential to mental well-being.

"We're living in a time when attention spans are shrinking and anxiety is growing," she explains. "When children dig in the soil or chase butterflies, something shifts. Their nervous systems calm down. They begin to see beauty in small things again."

The collaboration between Booyin Breeze and Bagamanzuk began last year with a simple apple-picking event. It was meant as a one-day retreat. It became a movement.

Since then, the farm has hosted everything from kiwi harvesting and compost-making to kite flying under the blue Pulwama sky. Children learn how to prune a branch, recognize fruit ripeness, and even taste the difference between early and late harvest apples.

Each activity is small and sensory. A child crouches to examine earthworms. Another presses fallen petals into a scrapbook. A father wipes soil off his son's hands, laughing at the mud stains on his kurta.

The air hums with stories of farming, childhoods long gone, and a generation trying to return to something it lost in the rush of modern life.

For Dr. Masudi, this feels more like healing than just a day of fun.

"We have to remind ourselves that mental health is beyond therapy or medication. It's essentially about how connected we feel to the world around us," she says. "Our workshops are built around that idea."

The team at Bagamanzuk agrees. Their goal is to make the farm a bridge between the old and the new, and to merge traditional wisdom with modern sustainability.

"Farming in Kashmir is changing," says one



**BEYOND FARM, BAGAMANZUK TODAY IS A CONVERSATION BETWEEN GENERATIONS. It's a reminder that nature doesn't belong in textbooks. It lives in every leaf, seed, and breath of wind. It's a place where children learn to see again, and parents learn to slow down.**



of the hosts, leading visitors to a small kitchen garden. "Pesticides, market pressures, and adulteration have taken over. We want the next generation to understand food from seed to plate. It's not nostalgia. It's survival."

The farm has also become a hub for small local businesses that share the same philosophy.

For their latest event, Bagamanzuk collaborated with The Juicery, a local restaurant known for its fresh fruit blends and ice creams. Under a canopy of apple branches, the eatery serves chilled smoothies made

from freshly picked apples, tangy kiwi pop-sicles, and honey-glazed nuts sourced from nearby farms.

"The idea is to keep everything local," says the café's owner, arranging cups on a wooden counter. "When families see how much effort goes into growing food, they start valuing it differently. It's about trust and taste, and passing that understanding to our children."

He believes that events like these also strengthen the rural economy. "It's not just about sales. It's about connection. We want people to see Pulwama as more than head-



**AS EVENING FALLS AND THE FAMILIES PREPARE TO LEAVE,** one little boy tugs at his mother's sleeve. "Can we come again next week?" he asks, his fingers still sticky with apple juice. She smiles, knowing the answer.

lines. It's a place of learning, and life."

As the day unfolds, the farm becomes a mosaic of moments. A child releases a kite into the wind, her hair flickering with sunlight. Another stands on tiptoe to pluck a red apple. Mothers chat under walnut trees, while fathers help carry baskets back to the barn. The scent of fresh juice and damp soil blends in the breeze.

By afternoon, the sun begins to soften, and the orchard glows amber. The children sit in a circle on woven mats, sharing fruit slices and stories.

There's a hush, like the land is listening. "Every time we do this," says Dr. Masudi, "I see children rediscovering joy. That's what keeps us going."

A few feet away, the host family tends to the farm animals. They speak of future plans: expanding the garden, adding night camps, hosting parents-and-kids retreats. They dream of a Kashmir where learning happens under the open sky.

Beyond farm, Bagamanzuk today is a conversation between generations. It's a reminder that nature doesn't belong in textbooks. It lives in every leaf, seed, and breath of wind. It's a place where children learn to see again, and parents learn to slow down.

As evening falls and the families prepare to leave, one little boy tugs at his mother's sleeve. "Can we come again next week?" he asks, his fingers still sticky with apple juice. She smiles, knowing the answer.

In the fading light, the orchard hums softly. The land seems to breathe, alive with laughter, roots, and renewal. In Bagamanzuk, joy grows the way it always has, from the ground up.

— The author is a senior scribe from Kashmir. Her works have appeared in different regional and national publications.



## Drive Home with Confidence

As festive car sales soar, choosing the right motor insurance can make all the difference between joy and anxiety on the road.

Subhasish Mazumder

Every Diwali, India's car showrooms light up almost as brightly as the homes around them. Across cities and towns, families gather to take delivery of their new cars — garlands on the bonnet, sweets in hand, and hopes for smoother journeys ahead. This year, the energy feels no different. With car registrations touching over 4.25 lakh by October-end last year, the festive boom is set to continue in 2025.

But, amid the celebration and glitter, an important decision often takes a back seat — motor insurance. For many, it feels like a formality, another box to tick before driving out of the showroom. In reality, it's the one thing that protects your happiness long after the celebrations fade.

Under the Indian Motor Vehicles Act, every vehicle on the road must have third-party insurance. This basic cover protects others — the person whose car you might bump into, or whose fence you might accidentally damage. What it doesn't protect is your own car. That's where an Own Damage Cover becomes essential. It shields you from losses due to accidents, theft, fire, or even a sudden flood. In Kashmir, where weather and terrain add their own risks, this kind of cover is more necessity than choice.

For complete peace of mind, comprehensive insurance goes a step further. It combines third-party and own-damage coverage, adding personal accident protection for the driver. Whether your vehicle is on the road, being ferried by rail,

or caught in a storm, this plan keeps your investment safe.

Today's policies also allow you to customize your protection. Add-on options like zero-depreciation cover, engine and battery protection, or roadside assistance can turn a basic plan into a strong safety net. For electric vehicle owners — a small but growing group in Kashmir — battery protection is proving particularly useful as the EV market expands.

Good driving habits also come with rewards. The No Claim Bonus (NCB) offers discounts on renewals if you don't file claims through the year — a small incentive that adds up to big savings over time. In the end, the strength of any insurance policy depends on the service behind it. Reputed insurers with high claim settlement ratios and wide networks of garages are worth every extra rupee. They're the difference between a smooth recovery and a drawn-out struggle when something goes wrong.

So, as you bring home your new car this Diwali, think beyond the shine and scent of fresh upholstery. A well-chosen insurance plan doesn't just meet a legal requirement — it ensures that every drive begins and ends with confidence.

After all, true celebration lies in knowing that your joy is protected, mile after mile.

— The author heads Motor Distribution at Bajaj General Insurance Limited, previously known as Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited.

# The Century That Spoke Bhaderwahi

From handwritten field notes in 1908 to digital preservation in 2025, Bhaderwahi's journey shows how language can survive history, politics, and neglect through the resilience of its people.

Sadaket Ali Malik

Listen closely in Bhaderwah and you'll hear a melody that doesn't belong to Urdu or Kashmiri.

It's Bhaderwahi, a language shaped by the hills, trade routes, and memory. Its sound carries traces of ancient Indo-Aryan speech, but its rhythm belongs to the Chenab Valley alone.

The story of Bhaderwahi is a story of a small language that refused to disappear.

In 1908, a Scottish linguist and missionary, T. Grahame Bailey, made the first known record of Bhaderwahi in The Languages of the Northern Himalayas. He travelled through rugged terrains, collecting words, sounds, and stories from the locals. His discovery was significant.

Bhaderwahi, he concluded, was part of the Indo-Aryan family, distinct from the neighbouring Dardic or Tibeto-Burman languages. He noticed features that were rare even among Indo-Aryan tongues: a full set of voiced aspirated consonants, a neuter gender, and vowel lengths that could change a word's meaning.

A decade later, Sir George Abraham Grierson confirmed Bailey's work in the Linguistic Survey of India (1919). He placed Bhaderwahi under the Western Pahari subgroup and described it as a "transitional language," standing between Indo-Aryan and Dardic families.

That single insight gave Bhaderwahi its rightful place in India's linguistic map and hinted at the region's layered cultural identity, where influences from the plains and the mountains meet and mingle.

The mid-20th century brought renewed academic focus. Dr. Siddheshwar Varma studied the language in depth, documenting its verb systems, genders, and growing vocabulary. His work gave scholars a clearer understanding of Bhaderwahi's structure.

But, as political unrest spread across the region in later decades, research slowed and



institutions turned their gaze elsewhere.

The language retreated to the mountains, held together by oral tradition: songs sung at weddings, plays performed in villages, and proverbs passed from elders to children.

Bhaderwahi survived because its people kept speaking it, not because anyone was studying it.

The tide began to turn again in the 21st century. In 2010, Dr. Sanjay Sharma at the University of Jammu published A Descriptive Grammar of Bhaderwahi, the first detailed academic work in nearly a century.

Modern linguists began using technology, including recordings, acoustic analysis, and digital corpora, to measure its sound patterns and track changes in pronunciation.

Studies by researchers such as Sheikh, Zargar, and Rakesh Kumar confirmed Bailey's early findings, while new work showed how Bhaderwahi speech was absorbing tones from Urdu and Kashmiri in urban areas.

For the first time, science met storytelling. Recognition soon followed. The University of Jammu launched a certificate course in Bhaderwahi in 2022. A year later, the Central Institute of Indian Languages included it in its official survey. Local writers published collections like Bhaderwah

ki Kahautin, a compilation of traditional proverbs, and began reviving the old Bhaderwahi script.

Across villages, people started recording folk songs and oral histories on their phones, creating their own informal archives.

Now, in 2025, Bhaderwahi has entered the digital age. The Indian Languages Data Consortium is developing online repositories and standardizing its orthography, ensuring that future generations can read and learn it anywhere in the world.

For a language once confined to the slopes of the Chenab Valley, this is no small achievement.

Bhaderwahi's journey from a missionary's field notes to an officially recognized digital language is a reminder of what cultural persistence looks like. It also challenges the way we think about linguistic heritage in Kashmir.

Each valley here speaks differently, linguistically and emotionally. To preserve these languages is to preserve the diversity of thought, rhythm, and identity that defines the region.

— The author is a researcher documenting the languages and cultural heritage of the Chenab Valley. He writes at sadaketmalik.blogspot.com.



# Northern Railway Launches Vigilance Awareness Week

## General Manager, Northern Railway administers Oath of Integrity to officials

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The Vigilance Awareness Week for the year 2025 was launched by Northern Railway at its headquarters, Baroda House, New Delhi on 27.10.2025. The week is observed by all government bodies and seeks to spread awareness about the necessity of probity and upright-ness. The theme of the week this year is 'Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility'. On the first day, the inaugural session featured Vigilance Commissioner Sh. A.S. Rajeev as the Chief Guest, alongside the Chairman & CEO of the Railway Board Sh. Satish Kumar, Vigilance



officers from Railway Board and Northern railway, and Principal department heads from Northern Railway. The Chief Guest unveiled Vigilance Chronicle 2025, Booklet on Fake UTS Identification, NR Vigilance Bulletin 2025. Oath of integrity was administered to all the Railway officials by General Manager, Northern Railway Ashok Kumar Verna. The event featured a vibrant Nukkad Natak performance by NR Cultural team, poem recitation by students of Oak Grove School, Mussorie and an engaging poster exhibition.

### Hopes For Statehood

in the House. Several institutions that should be under the elected government's control are still not with us," he said.

The chief minister said he wanted the issue of statehood to be discussed in the Assembly to reveal the BJP's stance. "We wanted to debate it, but it seems the Speaker has barred it. I know where I stand — if a resolution for restoration of statehood comes, I know how we will vote. But what about the party with 28 MLAs that sought votes on statehood but hasn't spoken about it since?" he remarked.

Omar also said that the proposed business rules of the UT government were still awaiting approval from the Centre. "A couple of rounds of discussions have taken place. The Centre raised some questions, but our rules are fully in line with the J&K Reorganisation Act," he said.

On the Public Safety Act (PSA) against AAP MLA Mehraj Malik, Omar said, "It was unjustified. Whatever Mehraj Malik did didn't warrant a PSA. When a Union minister branded the entire Muslim community disloyal and got away with it, what wrong did Mehraj Malik do?"

He also criticized the Speaker's stand that no sub judice matter could be discussed in the Assembly. "If that's the case, people will rush to courts just to stop us from debating issues," he warned.

Reacting to BJP MLAs' allegations that his government ignored flood-affected areas in Jammu because of their Hindu-majority population, Omar said, "The BJP thinks we govern like they do. They have no Muslim MPs in either House of Parliament. We'll distribute relief based on losses, not religion or region."

Speaking about the upcoming Budgam bypoll, Omar acknowledged internal party issues. "Every by-election is a challenge, and Budgam's voter distribution adds to that. Internal politics has complicated things further. Still, I believe the people of Budgam will make the right choice," he said.

Without naming NC MP Aga Ruhullah, Omar hinted at his differences with the former Budgam MLA. "People often say Budgam's proximity to Srinagar hasn't translated into development. Those who represented Budgam for years are responsible for that. If they couldn't do it, we will," he said.

Omar, however, expressed respect for senior NC leader and Anantnag-Rajouri MP Mian Altaf Ahmad, who recently advised him to be more cautious in his statements. "I respect Altaf Sahib a lot. After reading his remarks, I spoke to him. Even my father tells me the same thing — so there's no difference between my father and Mian Sahib. I see him as a father figure," Omar said.

Asked about Ruhullah's criticism, Omar curtly replied, "I don't want to talk about him. Who are you bringing on the same platform? There's a vast difference between the two."

### CM Tables J&K

incidental thereto. The Bill has already been published in an extraordinary issue of the Official Gazette," the Chief Minister said while introducing the Bill.

Subsequently, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, placed the Bill before the House for consideration.

### '5 Marlas Land for

documentation process already underway.

Responding to a question by BJP MLA from Jammu North, Sham Lal Sharma, in the Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the government had not framed a new rehabilitation policy but was working to provide land to those who had lost everything in the floods.

"Landless people affected by the flood will be given five marlas of land on lease wherever available. The documentary process is on," Omar said.

The Chief Minister dismissed the suggestion that his government's approach to relief was region-specific. "We don't indulge in regional politics like the member does," he remarked.

Omar informed the House that a central team had already visited the Union Territory to assess the flood damage, following which the report was submitted to the Centre.

"The team did an assessment and went back. The Union Home Minister also visited. We found that there were more losses in Jammu region than in Kashmir. We have prepared a detailed report which will be sent to the Centre. Once funds are released, compensation will be distributed accordingly," the Chief Minister added.

### Reservation, Cross-Voting

rules and the matter's sub-judice status.

The Speaker explained that an adjournment motion can only be brought on matters of recent occurrence. "This is not a matter of recent occurrence. The issue has already been discussed in the House. The government has formed a committee to address it, and you have previously raised it," the

Speaker said.

Tensions escalated when cross-voting during the Rajya Sabha elections was raised during the question hour. Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary accused the BJP of "stealing four votes," prompting sharp reactions from BJP members.

NC legislators shouted "vote chor" (vote stealers), while Lone alleged "match-fixing" between the NC and BJP, leading to a brief uproar in the House.

Later, the detention of AAP MLA Mehraj Malik under the PSA also triggered protests.

NC MLA from Banihal, Sajjad Shahane, demanded a one-hour discussion on the Doda MLAs' detention last month under the stringent act.

However, BJP MLA from Udhampur East, R S Pathania, said invoking PSA is a district magistrate's prerogative.

This led to an uproar from many members from the treasury benches, and the lone Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) MLA from Langate, Sheikh Khurshed. The members were up on their seats.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather rose from his chair, directing the members to take their seats.

Independent MLA from Shopian, Shabir Kullay, protested and tried to enter the well of the House.

However, the Speaker said nobody will enter the well, asking the members to keep the decorum of the House.

"Let him (Pathania) speak even if you don't like what he says," the Speaker added, and allowed the BJP MLA to continue.

Pathania said an issue that is pending adjudication before the court of law cannot be discussed in the House.

Responding to this, NC MLA from Gurez, Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, asked, "Will this state be run by DCs?"

A person can be booked under the PSA with an administrative order passed either by the divisional commissioner (DC) or the district magistrate (DM).

"If Malik had done something anti-national, we never supported it and will never support. (But), can a DC send anyone to jail? Today, it is Malik; tomorrow, it can be anybody. It can be you. This House is supreme. We can discuss the issue," Gurezi said.

He also demanded that a committee be formed to probe whether Malik warranted the detention.

People's Conference (PC) MLA from Handwara, Sajad Lone, called PSA a "black law".

"PSA against Malik is unjustified," Lone added. Amidst the din, Speaker Rather said if anything is pending before the court of law, "it cannot be allowed (to be discussed) in the House".

The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act is a preventive detention law that allows the state government to detain a person for up to two years without a trial.

### 41 Private Member

The Liquor Ban Bill was submitted by MLA Kupwara Mir Muhammad Fayaz during the last budget session. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had actively campaigned in support of the bill submitted by Mir. A few other MLAs have also submitted similar bills.

The bill for regularisation of services of employees working on a contractual basis, including casual labourers and daily wagers, was submitted by National Conference's Mir Saifullah. His bill has been listed at serial number 3.

A similar bill, listed at serial number 20, was submitted by PDP's Waheed-ur-Rehman Para. (KNO)

### Speaker Nominates

and MLA, Jammu North, Sham Lal Sharma as Chairmen.

### Crop Worth Rs 209 Cr

minister said.

He informed the House that Kashmir Valley produces around 23 lakh metric tonnes of fruit annually, of which 1.75 lakh metric tonnes had been dispatched before the highway closure, while around 22,000 metric tonnes remained stuck en route.

Responding to Para's starred question regarding crop insurance for apple growers, the government said the tendering process for selecting an insurance company under the Re-structured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) was underway.

"Under the scheme, apple, saffron, mango, and litchi crops have been notified for coverage. The tendering process to select an empanelled insurance company, as notified by the Government of India, is in progress," the minister stated in a written reply.

On the issue of cold storage, Dar said the estimated requirement for Controlled Atmosphere (CA) storage facilities in the Union Territory is six lakh metric tonnes—about 30% of the total fruit production. Currently, the available capacity stands at 2.92 lakh metric tonnes, and the

government aims to increase it gradually over the next five years.

He added that awareness seminars are being held in each district to encourage youth to set up cold storage and other post-harvest infrastructure.

"While most CA storage units are concentrated in the Industrial Growth Centre at Lassipora, Pulwama, and the Industrial Estate at Aglar, Shopian, we are working to establish sector-specific industrial estates for horticulture in other districts as well," Dar said.

The minister also informed the House that two fruit and vegetable markets—at Prichoo in Pulwama and Pachhar in Rajpora—have been established and are fully functional.

"Both mandis have the necessary infrastructure, and upgradation is a continuous process. Funds of 1.28 crore for Prichoo and 3.68 crore for Pachhar have been earmarked under NABARD for 2025–26 to upgrade these markets," he said.

### Over 22,000

were affected in Kashmir division during the recent weather-related disasters.

The government said that 152 people, including 151 in Jammu and one in Kashmir, lost their lives due to rain-related incidents, flash floods, and cloudbursts that affected several districts, especially in hilly and remote areas. Livestock and standing crops also suffered significant losses, it added.

A total compensation of Rs. 5,246.47 lakhs has been paid for damages in Jammu division, while Rs. 1,914.44 lakh has been disbursed in Kashmir so far, the government said.

Relief efforts included organising relief and medical camps across the affected areas, providing shelter, food, and household essentials to flood-affected families, the minister said.

He said immediate restoration work was undertaken to restore power, water supply, and road connectivity to support rehabilitation.

The minister said that relief was provided to affected individuals and families as per the guidelines of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

He said rehabilitation and restoration of public infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, have been initiated in accordance with SDRF norms. (KNO)

### Ruhullah-Omar Fallout

criticism of the Chief Minister, suggesting that if the MP truly believed the government has failed, he should resign from his seat and face the people again.

"If he says the Chief Minister has done nothing, then let him resign and contest again," Larmi said. "He won on the party's ticket. If he thinks the leadership failed, he should have the courage to go back to the voters."

Larmi said every representative has a right to speak for their people but argued that public criticism of the leadership was damaging to the party's unity.

He pointed out that many decisions affecting daily life, including the installation of smart meters, were taken under the Lieutenant Governor's administration, not by the elected government. "The order for smart meters came from the LG government, not ours. When our government has full control, we will deal with it differently," he added.

He also suggested that major policy decisions could only be made once statehood was restored. "When there is no money and no administrative power in the state's hands, how can anyone promise miracles?" he asked.

Hours later, Ruhullah hit back, describing the issue as much larger than a personal feud.

"There is no time for a personal fight here. Kashmir is currently facing an existential crisis," he told reporters.

Ruhullah also criticized the party leadership for failing to deliver on key promises made during the 2024 elections — including the restoration of Article 370 and the creation of one lakh jobs in five years

"In one year, where has that fight gone? Where are the 100,000 jobs that were promised? Only 20,000 have been given. Can anyone tell me their addresses?" he asked.

He further raised concerns over the detention of Kashmiri youth, stating that "thousands are locked up in jails without trials."

"If the National Conference wants to make this personal, I'm ready to fight," Ruhullah said.

Following Omar Abdullah's remarks, protests broke out in several areas of Kashmir, including Sonawari, where people chanted slogans against the Chief Minister, expressing solidarity with Ruhullah:

"Ruhullah sahab aagey bado, hum tumhare saath hain! Kirdar ka Ghazi Ruhullah!"

Social media was soon flooded with posts condemning the Chief Minister's comments against Aga Ruhullah.

Adding to the chorus of criticism, Aga Mujtaba, brother of PDP candidate Aga Muntazir — who is contesting the Budgam by-election — called Omar Abdullah's remarks "inappropriate and disrespectful."

"It is astonishing that such an inappropriate statement has come from someone like Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. This is not only an insult to Aga Syed Ruhullah but to the entire Musafiri family," Mujtaba said.

"If Aga Ruhullah was a 'nobody,' then why was his presence and counsel considered essential during the Assembly elections? The people of Budgam are not so cheap that they can be used when needed and then see their leaders disrespected afterward. Mr. Omar Abdullah should publicly apologize. We will never compromise on the honor of our elders, leaders, and martyrs," he added.

On October 25, Ruhullah posted a tweet that further fueled speculation about his political future.

"Asking out of curiosity — this question is for the people of Jammu, Kashmir, and our own Ladakh. Who are the local heroes in your societies? People across gender, religious identities, social or economic backgrounds — individuals whose conduct, work, integrity, conviction, and wisdom inspire you," Ruhullah wrote, inviting people to share names privately if they preferred.

The post triggered widespread curiosity, with many suggesting that Ruhullah might be planning to form his own political outfit, as several users proposed possible names for it in the comments section.

The tensions trace back to the reservation protest led by Aga Ruhullah earlier this year, when he

headed a demonstration of students outside the Chief Minister's residence. Since then, Ruhullah has noticeably distanced himself from party activities, with several of his public statements hinting at differences with the NC's official stance.

Political observers say the growing rift could have significant implications for the upcoming Budgam by-election where Aga Mehmood is contesting on the NC ticket. Ruhullah has categorically refused to campaign for Mehmood, signaling a deepening internal divide within the party.

As the tension continues to mount, questions remain: will Aga Ruhullah part ways with the NC to launch his own political front — and could this internal discord cost the party crucial votes in Budgam?

### SC Orders JKCA

the JKCA polls.

The bench also asked the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to render all assistance to the former CEC for conducting the polls for the cricket body of the Union territory.

Earlier, the top court upheld the new constitution of the JKCA, which was drafted under the supervision of the BCCI.

To implement the constitution, the BCCI appointed a sub-committee in June 2021, consisting of Brigadier Anil Gupta, former cricketer and present BCCI president Mithun Manhas, and senior advocate Sunil Sethi.

### LG Vows To Make

Foundation, initiated through an MoU signed in March 2023. Under this project, the Foundation has constructed a new middle school block equipped with state-of-the-art robotics and STEM labs, smart classrooms, air-conditioned rooms, and a dedicated lunch area with a separate kitchen and storeroom.

"The Robotics Lab, STEM innovation centres, smart classrooms, advanced digital infrastructure, professional development for teachers, and holistic learning spaces will unlock the potential of every child," the Lieutenant Governor said, adding that "government schools will lead the future of India's learning reforms."

Sinha said the DREAM initiative builds on the success of Kerala's Nadakkavu School model, which ranks among India's top government day schools, and reflects the administration's commitment to providing global-standard education and a progressive learning environment for every child in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Our goal is to ensure that every school in Jammu and Kashmir becomes a hub of innovation, inclusion, and inspiration — nurturing the youth who will shape the nation's future," the LG said.

He also urged schools and teachers to cultivate a system that values creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking over rote learning, adding that the focus must be on "learning, originality, and experimentation — where creativity and individuality matter more than marks."

Highlighting reforms in the education sector under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sinha said the administration has taken major steps to ensure equal access, improved infrastructure, inclusivity, and alignment of education with modern skill requirements.

"Our youth are our greatest strength, and their talent and potential will drive our vision for the future. Over the past few years, we have invested deeply in transforming our education ecosystem to make Jammu and Kashmir an 'Oasis of Talent,'" he said.

The LG also gave five mantras to students: find inspiration, think big, dream big, take risks with courage, and act with compassion and sensitivity.

Among those present at the inaugural ceremony were Faizal E. Kottikollon, Founder of the Faizal and Shabana Foundation and Chairman of the UAE India Business Council (UIBC-UC); Shabana Faizal, Co-Founder of the Foundation; Ram Niwas Sharma, Secretary, School Education Department; Dr. Aman Puri, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs; Maj. Gen. Sharafuddin Sharaf (Retd.), Vice-Chairman, UIBC-UC; Sunjay Sudhir, former Indian Ambassador to the UAE; Dr. Ghulam Nabi Itoo, Director General, School Education, Kashmir; besides senior officials, principals, teachers, and students.

### Airport In Kishtwar

at Kishtwar, the town will get a round-the-year facility for aircraft landing and take-off.

### Rajnath: Stay

at any time," Singh said.

The defence minister noted that India's effective use of indigenous military systems — including the Akash missile, BrahMos, and the Akashteer air defence control system — during the operation had strengthened the country's reputation both regionally and globally.

"Although we responded with firm resolve and our forces are fully prepared to defend the country's borders, we must continue to introspect. Our preparedness must be based on our own foundation," he emphasised.

Highlighting the evolving global security environment, Singh said that the weakening world order and increasing conflict zones demand a reassessment of India's strategic and defence posture. "Indigenisation is the only way forward. It's time for India to redefine its security and strategy," he said.

### Govt Relaxes

issued in 2022.

Officials said the relaxation aims to ensure that eligible applicants who were earlier denied benefits due to the qualification bar can now avail assistance under the scheme from April 1, 2025.

### Man Booked For

Based on these findings, the CBI sought permission from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at the Rouse Avenue District Court (RADC) in New Delhi to proceed with a formal investigation. The court granted approval on October 14, following which the agency registered an FIR against Mohammad.

Officials said the CBI is now investigating the circumstances under which the trust was formed and whether it misused the Prime Minister's name for personal or organisational benefit.

### 'Digital Arrest' Among

policing is as important as economic incentives in promoting investment and growth," she said.

Murmu said a future-ready police force led by young officers like the IPS probationers will play a

major role in the making of 'Viksit Bharat'.

Stating that technology has substantially altered the space of policing, Murmu ssaid, "Just about 10 years ago, the expression 'digital arrest' would have been impossible to understand. Today, it is one of the most dreaded threats to citizens."

Digital arrest is a scam aimed at extorting money from victims using fear, deceit and intimidation.

Fraudsters impersonate law enforcement officials, using threats of arrest and freezing of bank accounts, among others, to force the victims into paying money as "fine" or sort of "security deposit" to avoid legal action. The scammers use video calls to impersonate as law enforcement officers and target the victims.

Murmu also said that India has one of the largest and fastest-growing Artificial Intelligence (AI) user-bases.

"This is going to impact policing also. You have to be several steps ahead in adopting new technologies, including AI, compared to those who use these technologies with wrongful intent," she said.

The president also said that "colonial powers" in their own countries developed policing systems based on the participation of citizens.

"But they built policing systems based on fear, distrust and distancing in colonies such as India. The process of cultural de-colonisation in policing began with changing the IP or Indian Police to the IPS or the Indian Police Service. The change was meant to bring a new approach based on the idea of serving, and not of ruling," she said.

The culture of Indian policing would mean maintaining the spirit of service, sensitivity and sympathy, especially for the vulnerable segments of society, Murmu said.

"People, especially the marginalised, should look at police as a source of support and not as a fearsome entity," the president said.

A police officer deals with crime and criminals almost all the time and this may have a "desensitising effect on you and blunt your humanness," she told the probationers.

"In the course of becoming an effective officer, you should make a special effort to keep your own compassionate core intact. This sensitivity should extend to the public you will serve, and also to the members of your team," Murmu said.

As they (probationers) occupy positions of power and authority, their actions and conduct will always be under public scrutiny, she said.

"You should remember to choose what is ethical and not what is expedient. Just and fair procedures should be followed even when dealing with exigencies. While you derive a lot of powers from the laws and systems, the real authority will come from your personal and professional integrity. Moral authority will earn you everyone's respect and trust," Murmu said.

The president also said that the Indian Police Service has made immense contributions in pre-serving and strengthening the unity of the country shaped by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the country's first deputy prime minister and home minister.

"The IPS, along with other all-India services, has been instrumental in holding our federal structure together and strengthening the unity and integrity of the nation. Officers of the IPS work with a national perspective wherever they are posted," the president said.

With 62 lady officer trainees in this batch of 174 probationers, it has the highest gender representation so far, she said.

"I am sure that representation of lady IPS officers will only get larger. In several batches of the IPS during the last few years, including your batch, lady officer trainees have been awarded as the best probationers. The accomplishments of lady police officers highlight that excellence is gender neutral," Murmu said.

### CIK Foils Online

"Acting on precise cyber intelligence, CIK identified two radical social media accounts — faithful\_warrior57 and Gurboru.08 — which were circulating propaganda content, glorifying terrorism, and attempting to recruit young boys," the statement read.

Following a detailed technical analysis, the operators of these accounts were identified as Hashim Mashood Lone (17) of Khawjabagh, Maloora, and Mohammad Hazik Ahanger (15) of Railway Colony, Nowgam. Both were traced, detained for questioning, and later found to be juveniles.

A digital forensic examination confirmed that Hashim was operating Gurboru.08 under the direct guidance of a Pakistan-based handler known as Saqib (real name Ahmad Salar), associated with The Resistance Front (TRF). Salar had allegedly been running an indoctrination campaign from across the border, using encrypted platforms and VPNs to manipulate and recruit young minds.

Investigations also revealed that Hazik, using the handle faithful\_warrior57, was being influenced by the same handler through emotional manipulation and ideological grooming.

CIK said it swiftly intervened to prevent the radicalisation of the two juveniles and neutralised the network before further harm could be done. To aid rehabilitation, the agency organised counselling sessions involving the boys' families, community elders, and religious scholars to help them understand the dangers of extremist propaganda and the need for responsible online engagement.

The agency urged parents, teachers, and community leaders to stay alert and report any suspicious online activity promoting extremist ideas.

"CIK remains committed to shielding young minds from radical influences and ensuring peace and security across Jammu and Kashmir," the spokesman said.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (Old name) MUZAFFAR AHMED BANDAY to (New name) MUZAFFAR AHMAD BANDAY. In future I will be known as (New Name) MUZAFFAR AHMAD BANDAY.

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



# Govt Awaits NIA Clearance For Baisaran Cable Car

KO Web Desk

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday said it has approached the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for permission to resume work on the proposed Baisaran cable car project in Pahalgam, the site of the April 22 terror attack that claimed 26 lives, mostly tourists.

In a written reply to MLA Altaf Ahmad Wani, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the tourism portfolio, said that while the project has been allotted to Ronmas India Pvt. Ltd, work remains suspended "in view of the post-Pahalgam scenario."

The Jammu and Kashmir



REPRESENTATIONAL PIC

Cable Car Corporation (JKCC) has identified the project alignment, stretching 1.4 km from near Yatri Niwas in Pahalgam to

Baisaran, with 9.13 hectares of required land belonging to the Forest Department.

The government said tenders

for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) and technical documents have already been finalized, and an agreement signed with the executing agency. However, the firm has sought clearance to conduct topographical and geotechnical studies at the site.

"The matter has been referred to the NIA through the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag for approval," the government said, adding that once permission is granted, the consultancy work will begin immediately.

The project, estimated to cost between Rs 100-120 crore, is expected to be completed within 18 months once work resumes, the Tourism Department said.

**CHIEF MINISTER OMAR ABDULLAH, WHO ALSO HOLDS THE TOURISM PORTFOLIO, said that while the project has been allotted to Ronmas India Pvt. Ltd, work remains suspended "in view of the post-Pahalgam scenario."**

## Capex Allocation For J&K Municipalities Cut By ₹44.41 Cr

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has marginally reduced the Capex allocation for municipalities in the Union Territory for the financial year 2025-26.

According to the Housing and Urban Development Department, an amount of Rs 634.53 crore has been allocated under

the BE Capex Budget 2025-26 compared to Rs 678.94 crore in 2024-25, marking a reduction of Rs 44.41 crore.

The department, while responding to MLA Surinder Kumar Choudhary's query, attributed the decrease to the rationalization and prioritization of available resources and the need to maintain overall fiscal discipline.

## No Special Grants From Centre For Offbeat Tourism Destinations: J&K Govt

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** The Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department on Monday said that the Government of India has not introduced any specific scheme or budget allocation exclusively for the development of offbeat tourist destinations.

In response to a query by MLA Nazir Ahmad Khan, the department stated that it is not aware of any exclusive central scheme aimed at promoting or funding offbeat destinations.

It also said that Gurez Valley was conferred the "Best Off-

beat Destination in India (Gold)" award in 2022 for its pristine beauty, unique landscape and sustainable tourism practices.

It added that Gurez has already been identified as a potential offbeat destination by the J&K Tourism Department. A dedicated project for its upgradation and development is underway under the Capex Budget for the current financial year 2025-26.

"The Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir, is executing the project and necessary formalities are being completed in coordination with the District Administration, Bandipora," it said.

## Reveal Names Of Your 4 MLAs Who Voted For BJP: Lone To Omar

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Peoples Conference (PC) Chairman Sajad Gani Lone on Monday accused the ruling National Conference (NC) of striking a "secret deal" with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the recent Rajya Sabha elections, alleging that the party facilitated the BJP's victory for the fourth seat.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar, Lone cited NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah's own remarks as evidence of backchannel talks between the two parties. "If there wasn't a deal, why did Farooq Sahib himself admit that there were parleys between his party and the BJP regarding Rajya Sabha seats?" he asked.

Lone questioned the voting pattern, alleging that 31 votes were deliberately cast for candidate number three to make it easier for the BJP to secure a win. "If NC was confident of sweeping all four seats, why didn't they offer even one to the Congress? Was there an understanding—something like, give two, take two?" he asked.

Referring to Dr. Farooq Abdullah's statement that the BJP had offered NC "ek seat do, teen lo" (give one seat, take three), Lone said the remark itself confirmed ongoing dialogue. "If he knows who the four people are, as he claims, he



**If there wasn't a deal, why did Farooq Sahib himself admit that there were parleys between his party and the BJP regarding Rajya Sabha seats?"**

should name them—even if they belong to his own party," he said.

Defending his party's abstention from voting, Lone said, "They accuse us of helping BJP by abstaining. Allah maaf kare, if we had voted, they would still have blamed us. For us, there's no dif-

ference between NC and BJP—what one does, the other follows."

He also raised doubts over the rejection of certain votes, hinting at irregularities. "How does a vote get rejected? It's clear—when there's match-fixing, anything can happen," he said, quoting a verse: 'Idhar udhar ki baat na kar, yeh bata qafila kyun loota; mujhe rahznon se gila nahi, teri rahbari ka sawaal hai' (Don't distract from the main issue—tell me why the caravan was looted; my complaint is not with the robbers, but with your leadership).

Lone asserted that the Peoples Conference's electoral strength lay in its opposition to the NC. "We got nearly two lakh votes in the last elections—all against the National Conference. Why would Kashmiris vote for those responsible for bringing BSF, killing thousands, and jailing our people? If NC looks into its conscience, it will see stains of Kashmiri blood," he said.

On the issue of daily wagers, Lone said successive governments, including the present one, had only deceived them. "Everyone has betrayed daily wagers. Even during my time in government, committees were formed but no real action was taken. The problem lies in financial overburdening; the government simply doesn't have the resources to fulfill its promises," he added.

## NC Only Party Taking BJP Head On: CM Omar

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday asserted that his party, the National Conference (NC), stands alone in actively confronting the BJP, while sharply criticising rivals for forging covert or outright ties with the saffron party.

Talking to reporters here, Abdullah emphatically dismissed speculation of any alliance between the NC and the BJP, and sought to draw a clear distinction between his government's necessity for cordial ties with the Centre for effective governance and his party's political equation with the BJP.

"The National Conference is the only party which is taking the BJP head on and nobody else is doing that," the chief minister said, rubbing allegations of his party entertaining a tie-up, a move he suggested others pursue "behind



curtains".

He cited an example of the upcoming assembly bypoll in Nagrota where the NC is the only party contesting the BJP candidate. "Why did the PDP not field a candidate," he asked.

Abdullah clarified that while his administration seeks "cordial relations with the Centre so that governance is not affected", his party's political stance is unwavering.

"There is a huge difference in relations between governments and relations between the NC and the

BJP. There is no relation between the NC and the BJP, and it will not form in future also," he said.

He also dismissed suggestions that there was an understanding between the NC and the BJP for the election to the four Rajya Sabha seats in J&K.

While the NC won three seats, the BJP managed to bag one seat in the polling held last week.

There were newspapers screaming headlines that the outcome of the Rajya Sabha polls would be 3-1 but my party contested on all seats and made attempts to secure all the four, Abdullah said.

"You (media) had declared the outcome much before the voting began. Were you also part of the match-fixing? We still fought it out. The difficulty started with Handwara MLA sitting out. The BJP needed only 29 after that, and they had 28. One or two would have been easy for them, but I didn't

think they would get four. Now those four who sold their conscience will have to answer to their Allah or Bhagwan," he said.

The chief minister said he would like the names of the MLAs who cross-voted or deliberately wasted their votes to come out in public.

"Four votes went in favour of the BJP, three deliberately destroyed their votes. Clearly, the BJP attempted to lure people. On what basis they were lured, only the BJP can answer," he added.

He said his party was not among those who entered into "secret pacts".

"If we had to do it, we would have done it openly. I did not support the Vajpayee government behind closed doors; I joined the NDA. Whether it was right or wrong, is another issue," the chief minister said.

Responding to Handwara MLA Sajad Gani Lone's accusation that

the Rajya Sabha polls were a "fixed match", Abdullah said he did not understand why a person would comment on an election when he was not even ready to take part.

"Let him first say what was his compulsion to help the BJP. If he did not want match fixing to take place, he should have used his vote," he said.

Lone was an ally in the BJP-PDP government and he got his ministerial berth out of the saffron party's quota then.

The chief minister said certain leaders, including Sajad Lone, indirectly helped the BJP during the Rajya Sabha elections by staying silent or abstaining from voting and added that the people of Handwara did not elect representatives to remain inactive or to divide their loyalty.

"The voters of Handwara deserve to know whether their representative stood," he said.

## Daily Wage Workers' Regularisation

All MLAs Must Unite :Mufti

KO Web Desk

**SRINAGAR:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Monday said it is crucial for all MLAs, including those of the ruling NC, to unite to address the issue of regularising daily wage workers in Jammu and Kashmir.

"As the J&K Assembly reconvenes, one of the most pressing issues that requires immediate attention is the plight of nearly one lakh daily wagers," Mufti said in a post on X.

The former chief minister of the erstwhile state said the workers, often from the most marginalised sections of society, have been the backbone of many government departments, ensuring their smooth functioning.

All MLAs must unite so that the workers can receive the dignity and job security they rightfully deserve, she added.

In March this year, the Jammu and Kashmir government constituted a six-member committee to examine the issues related to the regularisation of daily wage workers in the Union Territory.

## J&K Bank Launches Vigilance Week with Integrity Pledge

Vigilance is a mindset that must guide our actions every single day: MD & CEO

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In line with the nation-wide campaign led by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), J&K Bank today marked the commencement of Vigilance Awareness Week 2025.

MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee presided over the event from Delhi through VC, while Executive Director Sudhir Gupta and CGM Sunit Kumar joined from Jammu. At CHQ, the event was attended by CGM Imtiyaz Ahmad, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) Ambrish Kumar Mishra, General Managers, Deputy General Managers, and other senior officers of the Bank.

The observance began with MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee administering the Integrity Pledge to the officers and staff of the bank.



This year, the Vigilance Awareness Week is being observed from 27th October to 2nd November 2025 with the theme "Vigilance: Our Shared Responsibility", underscoring the collective duty of all stakeholders to promote integrity and transparency in every sphere of public life.

Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee highlighted the importance of individual and institutional commitment to ethical conduct.

He said, "Integrity is the

foundation of trust and the lifeblood of sustainable growth. As a leading financial institution, it is our shared duty to ensure that every process, every transaction, and every decision reflects fairness, honesty, and accountability."

"This week reminds us that vigilance is not just a policy—it's a mindset that must guide our actions every single day," he added.

Reaffirming the Bank's commitment to preventive

vigilance, CVO Ambrish Kumar Mishra emphasized the need for proactive participation by every employee.

"Vigilance is most effective when it becomes part of our organizational culture. Each one of us has a role to play in ensuring transparency, compliance, and ethical governance," the CVO said.

"The true strength of our vigilance system lies in awareness, collaboration, and a shared resolve to uphold integrity in all our dealings," he remarked.

As part of the week-long observance, the Bank has planned to organize several initiatives including an Online quiz on anti-corruption and preventive vigilance measures through its intranet besides awareness campaigns on its social media platforms besides radio programs.

## Over 19,500 Hectares Of Forest Land Encroached In J&K

The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Monday revealed that over 19,501 hectares of forest land are under illegal occupation across the Union Territory as of September 30, 2025.

The Minister in charge of the Forest, Ecology, and Environment Department, Javed Rana, informed that a total of 27,712 cases of encroachment have been identified in the Kashmir region alone, covering 5,891.49 hectares of forest land.

According to the data shared by the government in response to MLA Dr Narinder Singh Raina's query, shows that the highest number of encroachments were reported from the South Circle, including divisions such as Anantnag, Lidder, Shopian, Kulgam, and Awantipora, with 14,902 cases involving 3,268.05 hectares.

Among these divisions, Anantnag tops the list with 7,060 cases covering 1,535.035 hectares, followed by Shopian with 3,872 cases over 1,011.29 hectares, Lidder with 2,336 cases over 314.13 hectares, Kulgam with 1,096 cases across 279.19 hectares, and Awantipora with 560 cases involving 132.10 hectares.

The North Circle reported 6,492 cases covering 1,452.530 hectares. Specifically, Kehmil recorded 1,785 cases over 445.00 hectares, Kamraj 1,268 cases over 261.42 hectares, Langate 2,042 cases over 434.70 hectares, and JV Division 1,397 cases covering 311.41 hectares.

In the Srinagar Circle, 6,318 encroachment cases were reported on 1,170.9134 hectares. Pir Panjal recorded 2,959 cases over 623.0939 hectares, Sindh 2,065 cases covering 377.8145 hectares, Bandipora 943 cases over 135.2125 hectares, and Tangmarg 351 cases over 34.7925 hectares. The Urban Division reported no encroachments.

Eviction drives conducted so far have reclaimed about 44.82 hectares of land from 230 cases across several divisions.

The government said that multiple measures have been initiated to recover the encroached land, including detailed boundary surveys, issuance of eviction notices under Section 79(A) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, and regular eviction operations. Once recovered, the land is fenced, restored with indigenous species, and returned to its forest status to prevent re-encroachment.

The department has also intensified vigilance through joint operations by the Forest Protection Force and local territorial staff, the minister said.

He added that modern technologies such as GPS and drone-based monitoring are being employed for better protection and mapping of forest land.(KNO)

==

## 3 Absconders Arrested In Kulgam, Sopore

Continuing its sustained efforts to bring absconders to justice, Police on Monday said to have arrested three absconders in Kulgam & Sopore who were evading their arrest for years.

The arrested individual has been identified as Mohd Aslam Hajam son of Siraj-ud-Din Hajam resident of Dalwas Nashri, Batote, who was wanted in case FIR No. 138/2004 under sections 15/18 of the NDPS Act of Police Station Qazigund, a police spokesman said in a statement.

Meanwhile Police in Sopore have arrested two absconders who have been evading arrest for years in separate cases. One of the absconders, Mohammad Yousuf Sheikh son of Noor Mohammad Sheikh resident of Khawajabagh Baramulla, was wanted in Case FIR No. 327/2006 under Sections 366, 376, and 109 RPC of Police Station Sopore.

The accused had been on the run since 2018. The second absconder, Nissar Ahmad Mir son of Mohammad Afzal Mir resident of Khahmoh Rafiabad was wanted in case FIR No. 12/2010 under sections 363, 376, and 109 RPC of Police Station Panzalla. He had been absconding since 2015. After completion of legal formalities, both accused will be produced before the Courts of competent jurisdiction.

(Observe News Service)

=====

## 3 Detained For Damaging Ambedkar's Statue

Three people have been detained for allegedly damaging the statue of B R Ambedkar in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said on Monday.

An FIR was registered under section 196 and 324(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Bani police station following a complaint about the desecration of the statue at a public park, the officials said.

Section 196 criminalises promoting hatred, disharmony, or enmity between different groups based on religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste, or community, while Section 324(2) deals with the offence of mischief.

The statue was found damaged in the Bani area on Sunday, sparking protests by local residents, including of Dalit community who demanded stern action against the culprits, the officials said.

Meanwhile, Congress leader and former minister Yashpal Kundal condemned the incident and said, "It is not merely the destruction of stone and metal, but an assault on the self-respect of marginalized communities and the principles enshrined in the Constitution." (PTI)

## Srinagar-Bandipora-Gurez Road To Get NH Status Soon

Bandipora is all set to get National Highway status for the Srinagar-Bandipora-Gurez Road, marking a major breakthrough in regional connectivity and infrastructure development.

This progress comes as a result of the persistent efforts of MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat, who has been pursuing the proposal with the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

The latest communication from Union Minister Nitin Gadkari confirms that the proposal is under active consideration by the Ministry.

MLA Bhat, while making the development public to dispel doubts surrounding the issue, expressed gratitude to the Union Minister for his positive response and active consideration of the long-pending demand..(KNO)



# Chris Gayle’s Srinagar Show Steals Spotlight

**Agencies**

SRINAGAR: The “Universe Boss”, Chris Gayle brought Bakshi Stadium alive on Monday evening as he stepped onto Kashmir’s soil to bat for the ongoing Indian Heaven Premier League 2025.

Although the turnout was initially modest, with only a few hundred spectators occupying the stands, the atmosphere shifted dramatically when Gayle walked out to bat.

Within minutes, the crowd grew to an estimated 2,000–4,000 as fans poured in, waving sweaters, dancing and shouting his name. With the music turning crazy, several were seen standing on seats and railings, phones raised high to capture the moment.

Eyewitnesses said the league officials later decided to open the stadium gates to the public, allowing free entry in a bid to fill the stands and ensure the cricketers received the reception he deserved.

“The moment Chris Gayle stepped on the field, the ground erupted,” said a local fan from Srinagar’s old city. “We have only watched him on TV, but seeing him live in Kashmir feels unbelievable.”

As Gayle took guard, chants of “Gayle! Gayle!” echoed through the air. Every short strike drew thunderous applause and when he hit a six, the “Universe Boss” spread his arms wide, acknowledging the cheering crowd, turning the IHPL into a full-blown celebration.

Chris Gayle is playing for Pulwama Titans in the league.

Monday’s match was played between Pulwama Titans and Patnitop Warriors. The high-energy encounter saw Patnitop Warriors post a total of 173 for 7 in 20 overs. Chasing the target, Pulwama Titans were anchored by the West Indies batting legend, Chris Gayle, who turned back the clock with his game, including seven boundaries and one six. (KNO)



EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMY

FOR IAS/JKAS/11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>/NEET/JEE

In Collaboration with

District Administration, Budgam

&

Career Counselling Cell,

Institution’s Innovation Council & Placements,

Govt. Degree College, Budgam

Is organising Free Seminar on:

How to Prepare for

IAS/JKAS Examination

Date: 28 October 25

Time: 11:30 am Onwards

Venue: SAM College Auditorium

Chief Guest

PATRON  
PROF. SHAKIL AHMAD ROMSHOO  
HONOURABLE VICE-CHANCELLOR, IUST

Guest Of Honour

Sanjeev Kumar  
JKAS 2024 – Rank 1  
UPSC CSE 2024 – Qualified

Principal

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Amin Malik

Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat (IAS)  
Deputy Commissioner Budgam

7051539017-7051539019

WWW.EXCEPTIONALACADEMY.CO.IN

FOLLOW US ON

NEAR GINGER HOTEL, PARRAYPORA, SRINAGAR, JAMMU & KASHMIR.

MEDIA PARTNER

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, KASHMIR

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMM.

organises

Film Festival

2025

TUE  
28  
OCTOBER, 2025

Travelling FSA 2025 coming to IUST

In collaboration with

Film Southasia

PATRON  
PROF. SHAKIL AHMAD ROMSHOO  
HONOURABLE VICE-CHANCELLOR, IUST

SPECIAL GUEST  
MS. MITU VARMA  
DIRECTOR, FILM SOUTHASIA

SPECIAL GUEST  
MR. AKMAL HANAN,  
PRODUCER, EMRC, UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR

COORDINATOR  
DR. RABIA NOOR  
HEAD, DJMC-IUST

VENUE: RUMI LIBRARY CONFERENCE HALL, IUST

MIRAE ASSET Sharekhan

Achieve financial freedom

Set up Systematic Investment Plans in Exchange Traded Funds (Shariah Based ETF)

Contact: M I Securities - 9906518342 / 9906684475

1, 10 Samad Complex, Ma Link Road, Srinagar, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar – 190001