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## Schools Now Echo With Laughter, Not Stones: LG

Says Huge Sacrifices Made In Last 5 Years To Make J&K Peaceful



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that Jammu and Kashmir has undergone a major transformation in the last five years, where walls of schools that once echoed with stones now resonate with laughter, innovation and education.

He was speaking at a two-day International Symposium on "Peace, People and Possibilities in Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory" organised by Vishwagram, a non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting education,

compassion, art and service across India.

In his keynote address, the Lieutenant Governor spoke about the government's vision of a peaceful, prosperous and fear-free Jammu and Kashmir where every citizen is empowered and part of India's rapid progress.

"The peace visible in Jammu Kashmir today has given an opportunity to all to flourish with mutual respect. Everyone is getting equal opportunity to live a dignified life," Sinha said. "Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, we have followed the principles | [More on P6](#)

**TOWNS LIKE PULWAMA, SHOPIAN AND KULGAM**, once shrouded in silence, have transformed into cultural and literary centres for the youth.

## Para Questions Govt Over 'Selective' SM Monitoring

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: PDP MLA Waheed Para on Wednesday criticised the government's fresh orders seeking to monitor and restrict social media activities in Jammu and Kashmir, saying such measures go against the very spirit of the recently held Assembly elections, which people fought to end "silence, fear, and suffocation."

"The election in Jammu & Kashmir was fought to end silence, fear, and suffocation. People didn't vote for control, they voted for dignity, and the right to speak without fear. One of the loudest promises made was to scrap the media, social media gag policy," Para said in a post on X.

He was reacting to a new exercise launched by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), which has sought details of individuals operating digital news portals

or associated with any media outlet. Officials said the initiative aims to identify and take action against those spreading fake news or engaging in black-mail and other malpractices.

However, Para questioned the intent behind the move, arguing that "fresh orders to monitor and restrict social media are being issued selectively only in Jammu & Kashmir, nowhere else in India."

The MLA from Pulwama also sought a response from the Chief Minister, who holds the Information portfolio. "What is the Chief Minister's stand on this? What does the @CM\_InK, who also holds the Information portfolio, have to say?" he asked.

Para further asserted that using "vigilance and monitoring" as a pretext to intimidate journalists and silence public expression exposes a "disturbing intent to control narratives, muzzle truth, and drag Jammu and Kashmir | [More on P6](#)



Fresh snowfall blankets Gulmarg, turning the popular ski resort into a winter wonderland. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

## Op Sindoor Will Resume If Needed: DM

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday said that India has dismantled terror networks both in Jammu and Kashmir and across the border in Pakistan following the April 22 Pahalgam attack, asserting that the counter-operation, codenamed Operation Sindoor, was "not over, only paused."

Addressing a public rally in Bihar's Jamui district, Singh accused the Congress of failing to deal firmly with terrorism for decades. "Congress allowed the country to bleed, but under Prime Minister Modi, terrorists and their handlers have been taught a lesson," he said.

Referring to the Pahalgam terror strike, Singh said the attackers had entered the Valley covertly and | [More on P6](#)

BUDGAM BYPOLLS

## Postal Ballot, Home Voting Begin

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The process of postal ballot and home voting began on Wednesday in Budgam Assembly constituency, where bypolls are scheduled to be held on November 11.

The bypoll was necessitated after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who won from both Budgam and Ganderbal constituencies in last year's Assembly elections, decided to retain his family stronghold of Ganderbal and vacated the Budgam seat.

According to officials, the postal ballot voting for 27-AC Budgam commenced at the Block Development Office (BDO) Budgam. The process aims to facilitate employees in essential services who may not be able to reach polling



stations on the day of voting.

Budgam District Election Officer (DEO) Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat said that all arrangements have been made to ensure a free, fair and smooth voting experience. "The postal voting ballot facility at the BDO office in Budgam is well-organised, providing a streamlined process for employees to cast their votes

and strengthen democracy," he said.

He added that as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of India (ECI), the district administration has worked diligently to assist voters in casting their votes via postal ballots while maintaining the integrity of the system. The postal ballot process | [More on P6](#)

## Fresh Snowfall Shuts Key J&K Roads

Dry Weather Expected Till Nov 16: MeT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Fresh snowfall in the higher reaches of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday forced the closure of key mountain roads, including the Mughal road, Gurez-Bandipora road and the Srinagar-Leh highway, while the Meteorological Department predicted a prolonged dry spell across the Union Territory till November 16.

In north Kashmir, the Gurez-Bandipora road was closed for traffic after overnight snowfall at Razdhan Pass rendered the stretch slippery and unsafe. Officials said the road has been closed as a precautionary measure due to poor visibility and hazardous conditions. "The road surface has turned extremely slippery, making vehicular movement risky. Only emergency vehicles are being allowed under strict | [More on P6](#)

## Gunfight Reported From Kishtwar

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A gun battle broke out between terrorists and security forces on Wednesday in Kishtwar district, officials said.

"In an intelligence-based operation, launched in coordination with the Jammu and Kashmir Police early this morning, alert troops of the White Knight Corps established contact with terrorists in the general area of Chhatru," the White Knight Corps said in a post on X. "The operation is in progress," it said.

The forces are battling against at least two to three terrorists, and there was a report of one jawan sustaining a minor injury.

Security forces are continuously monitoring the movement of terrorists | [More on P6](#)

## HC Dismisses Plea By Daily Wagers Seeking Regularisation

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has dismissed two petitions filed by a group of daily wagers seeking regularisation under SRO 520 of 2017, which lays down the rules for regularising the services of daily wagers, casual labourers, and other similar categories of workers in government departments.

A bench of Justice Javed

Iqbal Wani observed the authorities cannot be said to have faulted in the matter or infringed any of the rights of the petitioners in views of an inquiry report which has not been objected or challenged by them.

The court observed that fundamental grievance projected by the petitioners in both the petitions was that they were engaged and have been working as daily rated workers with the authorities | [More on P6](#)



'FAKE CHARM & CHEQUES'

## How A Woman Conned Srinagar's Jewellers Of ₹17 Lakh

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a shocking case of deception, a woman has allegedly cheated multiple jewellers across Srinagar of gold and copper ornaments worth over ₹17 lakh, using a mix of fake cheques, false assurances, and calculated charm.

Over the past few months, at least three jewellery stores—Shah-e-Hamdan Ornaments at Lal Bazar, Magdooi Zevraat near Nawa Kadal, and Zarger Jewellers at Soura—have reported falling prey to the same fraudster. The incidents, which



took place between late July and late August, have sent ripples of alarm through the city's jewellery trade.

According to the victims, the woman would walk into the shops claiming to be interested in buying | [More on P6](#)

Zohran Mamdani  
Is Elected Mayor  
Of New York City



## Zohran Mamdani Wins Historic NYC Mayoral Election

Press Trust Of India

New York: Zohran Mamdani, the 34-year-old Indian-origin democratic socialist, pulled off a stunning victory in the fiercely contested New York city mayoral elections, riding on an electrifying campaign to become the first South Asian, Muslim and youngest in a century to helm the administration of the world's financial capital.

Mamdani, the son of filmmaker Mira Nair and Indian-origin scholar Mahmood Mamdani, defeated former New York

**NEW YORK WILL REMAIN A CITY OF IMMIGRANTS: A CITY BUILT BY IMMIGRANTS**, powered by immigrants, and, as of tonight, led by an immigrant. So hear me, President Trump, when I say this: to get to any of us, you will have to get through all of us."

Governor Andrew Cuomo, a scandal-hit Democrat who ran as an independent, and Republican nominee Curtis Sliwa in the keenly watched contest that grabbed global attention.

His historic victory to run the city of more than 8.4 million people is seen as a comeback

progressive politics, with Mamdani vowing to prioritise working-class issues as he proposed initiatives like free childcare, rent freeze, free bus services, and government-run grocery stores to make New York affordable to live in.

In a fiery speech, Mamdani described his

victory as the dawn of a "new age" for New York and said, "Together, we will usher in a generation of change."

"New York, tonight you have delivered a mandate for change, a mandate for a new kind of politics, a mandate for a city we can afford," the Uganda-born state lawmaker told his supporters at Brooklyn Paramount Theatre.

He will be inaugurated as the 111th mayor of New York in January. Currently a member of the Queens State Assembly, Mamdani emerged | [More on P6](#)

## Railways Fast-Tracks Jammu-Srinagar Train Link

Agencies

Srinagar: The Northern Railways has accelerated operational and redevelopment works in the Jammu division to pave the way for a direct train service between Jammu and Srinagar, a move that will mark a major milestone in Jammu and Kashmir's railway connectivity.

A senior railway official said that trains, which currently operate from Katra in Reasi district to Srinagar, are expected to start from Jammu railway station soon. "Work is underway to make the direct

service possible. Flash floods earlier slowed down progress and shifted our targets, but the project is now being pushed aggressively," the official said.

According to officials, the major challenges lie on the Jammu-Katra stretch, where construction of bridges, laying of tracks, and station redevelopment are in progress.

"At Jammu station, there are two categories of work — civil structure and track-related. The track work is almost complete, while civil structures, including new platforms and station facilities, are nearing completion. The | [More on P6](#)



# Study Links Common Antibiotic Use To Reduced Schizophrenia Risk

Press Trust Of India

Doxycycline, a common antibiotic, could help lower the risk of developing schizophrenia in young adults, a new study suggests. The drug is prescribed for treating bacterial infections, including those of the respiratory tract and skin, and has been shown to reduce inflammation in brain cells in previous studies. Schizophrenia is a mental disorder in which one harbours delusions and may have hallucinations. Symptoms can include an unpredictable behaviour or inappropriate emotional responses. Researchers from institutes in the UK, Finland and Ireland analysed data from 56,400 adults born between 1987 and 1997 who availed psychiatric services during ages 13-18 and had consumed antibiotics. The analysis was based on information from the Finnish national health register. Risk of schizophrenia after 10 years of follow-up was found to be 30-35 per cent lower among adults treated with doxycycline as an adolescent, compared to those treated with other antibiotics. The findings are published in the American Journal of Psychiatry. Schizophrenia is considered a 'thought disorder', in which disorganised thought processes interfere with one's ability to interpret infor-



mation and perceive reality. The condition is estimated to affect one in every 200 people around the world, and in its acute state, can be the most impairing of all health conditions, according to the World Health Organization. Lead researcher Ian Kelleher, professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the UK's University of Edinburgh, explained synaptic pruning in the brain as a normal process in which connections are refined by shearing away links between specific brain cells. "In schizophrenia, this pruning process seems to go into overdrive, resulting in too much pruning. Think of it like faulty electrical wiring: too many crucial connections are cut, disrupting communication between different brain regions," Kelleher said in an email to PTI. Doxycycline, which can cross the blood-brain barrier and directly impact the central nervous system,

has been shown to have anti-inflammatory effects and impact the brain's pruning process, the lead researcher said. The team thus hypothesised that the antibiotic "could be a powerful candidate for preventing schizophrenia from developing in the first place". Kelleher added that adolescence and early 20s are critical periods for brain development with a huge amount of synaptic pruning happening to make the brain efficient for the complex cognitive tasks of adulthood. "We think it's probably quite important to intervene during this developmental window," he said, even as the team looks to figure out the ideal age for doxycycline treatment. Further, the study was an observational one, meaning no firm conclusions on cause-and-effect links could be drawn, he said. Dr R. Mangala, joint director-

residential services at Chennai's Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF) and not involved with the study, said the link between doxycycline and schizophrenia is a fairly recently researched topic and there is no conclusive evidence yet. She told PTI that the study is well-designed with a robust methodology and clearly identifies the right kind of population. Dr Mangala added that the study looks at Finland's population registry, "which is among the best in the world. They have access to complete health data of people and so this is just possible for them to do that." The database presents an attractive opportunity for researchers to observe the antibiotic and schizophrenia link, she said. Further, the 'target trial emulation' methodology employed in the study "will strengthen the causal inference, which is probably why the team chose it. They are trying to show there is a strong association between the use of doxycycline and a reduced risk of schizophrenia". "Most tetracyclines (class of antibiotics) such as minocycline (treats respiratory and skin infection) have been considered to produce an action similar to doxycycline, especially because of their anti-inflammatory properties. This can help explain the theory of inflammation being a cause for psychosis," Dr Mangala said.

# IT Delhi Study Reveals Unseen Side Of GPS: 'Fine-Grained' Data Expose Far More Than Just Location

Press Trust Of India

GPS guides us to places or help us track our online orders. But the "fine-grained" data collected by it on Android smartphones can reveal far more than just the location, quietly exposing a person's activity, environment or even layout of the room they are in, according to a study conducted by IIT-Delhi. The study titled, "AndroCon: An Android Phone-based Sensor for Ambient, Human Activity and Layout Sensing using Fine-Grained GPS Information" has been published in ACM Transactions on Sensor Networks, a top journal in the field of privacy-aware sensing. The researchers proposed AndroCon, the first system to demonstrate that the "fine-grained" Global Positioning System (GPS) data already accessible to Android apps with precise location permissions can act as a covert sensor. Without using the camera, microphone, or motion sensors, AndroCon interprets nine low-level GPS parameters -- such as the Doppler shift, signal power, and multipath interference -- to infer whether someone is sitting, standing, lying down, inside a metro, on a flight, in a park, or in a crowded outdoor space. They can also infer if the room is crowded or empty. To turn this noisy raw data into clear insights, they combined classical signal processing with modern machine learning. "Across a year-long study spanning

40,000 sq km and a lot of different phones, AndroCon achieved up to 99 pc accuracy in detecting surroundings and over 87 pc accuracy in recognizing human activities, even subtle ones like hand-waving near the phone," said Smruti R Sarangi, Professor, Computer Science and Engineering Department, IIT Delhi. The same framework can also sketch indoor floor maps -- identifying rooms, staircases, and elevators -- with a margin of error under 4 meters, using only GPS patterns and user trajectories. While AndroCon opens exciting possibilities for context-aware, privacy-respecting smart services, it also exposes a critical security gap. Any Android app with precise location permissions could potentially infer sensitive contextual information without explicit user consent. "This study reveals an unseen side of GPS. A powerful but silent channel that can sense the world around us. AndroCon turns the everyday smartphone into an unexpectedly precise scientific instrument and a reminder that even the most familiar technologies still hold hidden secrets that can be misused by malicious entities," Sarangi added.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE TEHSILDAR SRINAGAR NORTH

Subject: Application on behalf of Shri Javid Ahmad Shah S/o Late Gulam Rasool Shah R/o Lane 4 Umer Colony B Lal Bazar Srinagar Tehsil Srinagar for issuance of Legal Heir Certificate to the NOKs of deceased person namely Peer Gulam Rasool Shah S/o Late Gulam Hassan Shah R/o H. No. 12 Lane 1 Mo.3 Umer Colony B Lal Bazar Srinagar Tehsil Srinagar North.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given for the information of public in general that Shri Peer Gulam Rasool Shah S/o Late Gulam Hassan Shah R/o H. No. 12 Lane No.3 Umer Colony B Lal Bazar Srinagar Tehsil Srinagar North, who passed away on 07.03.2006 leaving behind the following tabulated legal heirs:

S.No	Name of Legal Heir	Relation with Deceased	Age	Status	Marital	Occupation
01	Parveen Akhter	Daughter	69		Married	Retired Govt. Employee
02	Mohammad Hussain	Son	69		Married	Retired Govt. Employee
03	Tariq Ahmad Shah	Son	66		Married	Retired Govt. Employee
04	Javid Ahmad Shah	Son	62		Married	Retired Bank Employee
05	Mohammad Syed Shah	Son	60		Married	Retired Bank Employee
06	Gowhar Yasmeen	Daughter	53		Married	Govt. Employee

Any person or persons having any right title or interest by way of inheritance or claim against the subject matter submit their claims in writing to the undersigned along with the documentary evidence in support of his/their claims thereof within a period of seven days of the publication of said notice, failing which the claims if any shall be deemed to have waived.

**Tehsildar Srinagar North**

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Umer Bilal Ganaie, hereby inform the general public that the name of my ward in Aadhaar Card is wrongly recorded as Arhaan Bilal Ganaie (old name). I intend to correct his name in his Aadhaar records to Arhan Bin Umer (new name). If any person has any objection to the above name change, he/she may file the same with the concerned Aadhaar authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

**Umer Bilal Ganaie**  
**F/O Arhaan Bilal**  
**R/O Nangirpora Mughama Tehsil Kunzer**

**fko**

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, Saayim Feroz Bhat, S/O Feroz Ahmad Bhat, and Shazia Feroz Bhat, W/O Feroz Ahmad Bhat, both residents of Hyderpora, Srinagar – 190014, and partners of M/S SSF CONSTRUCTIONS AND SUPPLY ENTERPRISES (Registered Office: Lethpora National Highway, Pulwama – 192122), hereby give public notice that we are applying for registration as a Class AAY Civil Contractor with the competent authority; we are already registered taxpayers with GSTIN: 01AEJFS4751FZ7 and PAN: AEJFS4751F; if any person having any objection to the grant of such registration is requested to submit the same in writing, along with supporting evidence, to the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objections shall be entertained.

**fko**

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mrs. Sara Bano, W/o Late Mohammad Akbar Thoker, R/o Bugroo, Khansahib, Budgam, hereby inform the general public that the electricity connection bearing Account ID: 0206010029039 is presently registered in the name of my late husband Mohammad Akbar Thoker. As he has expired, I am applying for the transfer of the said electricity connection to my name Mrs. Sara Bano, being his lawful successor. If anybody has any objection to the same, he/she may file the objections in the office of the concerned PDD/ JKPD Department within 7 days from the publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated time, no objections shall be entertained.

**Mrs. Sara Bano**  
**R/o Bugroo, Khansahib, Budgam**

**mcb**

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## Minor Fire at J&K Bank Rajbagh Office, No Damage Reported

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A minor fire broke out on Monday at a building in Rajbagh, Srinagar that houses the Jammu and Kashmir Bank's Air Cargo Branch and Cluster Office.

According to officials, the blaze was swiftly contained before it could cause any damage. Fire and emergency services responded promptly, ensuring the situation remained under control.



In a statement, J&K Bank confirmed that its offices were completely

safe and secure. "We wish to reassure the public, our customers, and stakeholders that both the branch and the cluster office are fully safe. Although today was a holiday, banking operations will resume as normal tomorrow. There is absolutely no cause for concern or panic," a bank spokesperson said.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known, but an unconfirmed report said the fire was caused by a short circuit in the lift area. Police, meanwhile, said an investigation was underway.

## Paras Health Highlights Need for Early Cancer Detection

Observer News Service

Srinagar: With Jammu & Kashmir witnessing a steady rise in cancer cases over the past decade, Paras Health Srinagar on Tuesday hosted a multidisciplinary



symposium titled "Beating Cancer Together – Early Diagnosis, Prevention & Treatment" to highlight the importance of early detection and coordinated, patient-centric cancer care.

The event brought together leading specialists from across oncology and allied disciplines, including Dr. Altaf Ramzan (Brain Tumors), Dr. Saquib Bandy (Medical Oncology), Dr. Azhar Jan (Head & Neck Oncology), Dr. Shabnum (Breast and Colorectal Oncology), Dr. Hamza (Gastrointestinal Oncology), Dr. Yasir (Uro Oncology), Dr. Adil Ashraf (Gastroenterology), Dr. Nayeem (Pulmonology), Dr. Sadia (Gynaecology), Dr. Irshad

(Interventional Radiology), and Dr. Suhail (Pathology).

Data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) indicates that the region has seen noticeable increases particularly in breast, colorectal, and lung can-

cers. Experts caution that nearly 60-70% of cases in J&K are still being diagnosed at advanced stages, significantly affecting survival rates. The symposium therefore focused on bridging this gap through awareness, screening, and integrated care pathways.

"Cancer care today is not just about treatment, it's about teamwork and timeliness," said Dr. Murtuza Habib, Facility Director, Paras Health Srinagar. "We are working to create an ecosystem where specialists collaborate seamlessly so that patients receive timely diagnosis, advanced interventions, and emotional support—without needing to leave the region."



KO Photo : Abid Bhat

## Chrysanthemum Garden Becomes Major Autumn Attraction in City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The newly established Chrysanthemum Garden in Srinagar has emerged as a major draw for visitors this autumn, attracting a steady stream of tourists and local residents. Spread over more than 100 kanals near the Botanical Garden, the vibrant floral park offers sweeping views of Dal Lake framed by the Zabarwan Range, making it one of the Valley's most scenic seasonal attractions.

Named Bagh-e-Gul-e-Dawood, the garden is being described as Asia's largest chrysanthemum-themed landscape, featuring thousands of blooms in a spectrum of yellow, red, pink, white and violet. Meticulously arranged flower beds and artistic floral patterns have turned the space into a striking tapestry of colour, prompting many to call it the "autumn counterpart" of the famed Tulip Garden.

Officials from the Floriculture Department said the initiative aims to extend Kashmir's tourism

“

**Families from across Kashmir can be seen strolling along the garden pathways, taking photographs and enjoying the cool November air. Tourists from various states have also included the garden in their itineraries, with many calling it an unexpected highlight of their trip.”**

season beyond spring. "For years, visitors associated floral tourism here only with tulips. The Chrysanthemum Garden offers a new

seasonal experience and the response has been extraordinary," an official said.

According to KNT, families from across the Valley can be seen strolling along the garden pathways, taking photographs and enjoying the cool November air. Tourists from various states have also included the garden in their itineraries, with many calling it an unexpected highlight of their trip.

Tour operators and local businesses report a noticeable rise in tourist activity in the area. Vendors selling kehwa, snacks, and Kashmiri handicrafts near the entrance say the garden has brought welcome earnings during what has traditionally been considered a quieter tourism phase.

Officials say the garden reflects the region's expanding floral tourism efforts, demonstrating that Kashmir's charm is not limited to any single season. The Chrysanthemum Garden, they added, symbolizes the Valley's evolving approach to showcasing its natural beauty all year round.

## Guru Parv Celebrated in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The 556th Prakash Diwas of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was marked with devotion and vibrant participation in Srinagar on Wednesday, with senior police and civil administration officials visiting Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi at Rainawari to offer prayers and convey greetings to the Sikh community.

IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, and SSP Srinagar Dr. G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarthy, among others, paid obeisance and interacted with devotees during the celebrations. The shrine echoed with shabad kirtan as people gathered to honour the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Speaking on the occasion, IGP Birdi prayed for peace and prosperity in the region. DC Srinagar Akshay Labroo extended greetings on behalf of the district administration and assured continued cooperation with the Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee to maintain and preserve the historic shrine.

SSP Srinagar said adequate arrangements had been put in

place to ensure smooth and peaceful celebrations.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg, in his message, underscored the Guru's universal message of peace, equality, and unity, stating that the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji continue to guide society towards compassion and brotherhood.

The district administration had deployed teams from multiple departments to ensure facilities for devotees, including arrangements at the langar and other service areas of the Gurudwara. Senior officials and officers from the administration were also present during the visit.

## KU Holds Lecture for Civil Services Aspirants

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Students' Welfare (DSW), University of Kashmir (KU), organised a special lecture on "Inspiring Young Minds for Public Service" for civil services aspirants at the Main Campus. The event aimed to motivate aspirants towards a career in public service and familiarise them with strategies, perspectives, and essential approaches required for cracking competitive examinations.

Vice-Chancellor, KU, Prof. Nilofer Khan, in her message, said that the University is committed to nurturing young talent and encouraging them to take leadership roles in public service.

"Our goal is to provide meaningful guidance and create an enabling ecosystem where students are inspired to serve society with integrity, empathy and vision," she said.

Delivering the lecture, Anil Swarup (IAS Retd.), former Coal Secretary, Government of India, said that dedication, discipline and clarity of purpose remain the most powerful tools in an aspirant's journey.

"If you build the ability to think clearly, stay consistent and



remain rooted in values, the service will become not just a career but a responsibility towards society," he remarked.

Khurshid Ganai (IAS Retd.), former Advisor to the Governor J&K, in his address, said that the civil services offer a unique opportunity to transform governance on the ground and encouraged aspirants to prepare with sincerity and focused effort.

Earlier, Dean DSW KU, Prof. Parvez Ahmad welcomed the guests and said that the University is continuously creating platforms that guide aspirants and strengthen their prepara-

tion journey.

Director, Centre for Career Counselling, Coaching and Placement (CCCP) KU, Prof. Nazir Ahmad said such sessions play a vital role in shaping the mindset of youth and giving them clarity on the demands and expectations of civil services.

The event concluded with an interactive question-answer session, during which students engaged with the speakers on preparation strategies, challenges, and their experiences in public service. The session was moderated by Dr. Shahid Ali Khan, Cultural Officer, DSW KU.

### From Office of the Advocate M.A Sofi

In the case of

1. Nisar Ahmad Malik 2. Mohammad Shafi Malik  
Both Sons of Abdul Jabbar Malik  
Both Residents of Oam Buran Pattan.

3. Shakeel Ahmad Malik S/o Ghulam Hassan Malik.  
4. Tanveer Ahmad Malik

5. Mohammad Rafi Malik (Alias Mudasir)  
Sons of Ali Mohammad Malik

6. Shazia Bano D/o Jabbar Malik

7. Mst Shazia Bano Daughter of Abdul Jabbar Malik  
Residents of Ganjipora Buran Pattan & District Baramulla.

8. Fayaz Ahmad Malik S/o Mohammad Malik

9. Bilal Ahmad Malik S/o Mohammad Shafi Malik

10. Irfan Ahmad Malik S/o Fayaz Ahmad Malik

11. Manzoor Ahmad Wani S/o Ghulam Mohammad Wani  
Residents of Singhpora Tehsil Singhpora District Baramulla.

( Caveators/Applicant's).

Versus

Public At Large.

( Non-Caveators/Non-Applicants )

In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

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

Sd/advocate

- 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
- BIJBERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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



### PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 29
ZUHR	12:14
ASR	3: 57
Magrib	5:38
ISHA	7: 58

## This Day In History

- 1918 - WWI: On the Western Front, Germany is now retreating as French and American troops cross the Meuse and move to take Sedan
- 1928 - Republican candidate Herbert Hoover is elected President of the United States, defeating Democrat candidate Al Smith
- 1940 - Franklin Roosevelt re-elected US President
- 1945 - The first landing of a jet on a carrier takes place on USS Wake Island when an FR-1 Fireball touches down
- 1949 - Greek civil war ends after 3 years with defeat of communist factions
- 1956 - Netherlands and Spain withdraw from Olympics in protest against Soviet actions in the Hungarian Revolution.
- 1967 - US launches Surveyor 6; makes soft landing on Moon Nov 9
- 1968 - Nixon elected 37th President of US, defeating Hubert Humphrey
- 1978 - Shah of Iran places Iran under military rule; General Gholan Reza Azhari forms government.
- 1979 - Ayatollah Khomeini takes over in Iran
- 1983 - Turkey Turgut Özal Moederland party wins elections
- 1985 - 22nd Space Shuttle Mission (61A) -Challenger 9- lands at Edwards AFB
- 1985 - M-19 guerrillas occupy Palace of Justice Bogota Colombia
- 1985 - Space shuttle Challenger lands at Edwards Air Force Base, California
- 1990 - Iran's oil-producing region suffers a serious earthquake
- 1995 - Israel buries Yitzhak Rabin, assassinated by Jewish extremist Yigal Amir who opposed peace with Palestinians.
- 2001 - Crude oil for December delivery on the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) falls to

## From KO Archives

## Taj Mahal Vanishes Under Magic Spell

Agencies

AGRA- The elegant 16th century embodiment of love, Taj Mahal, today had an altogether different date when noted magic wizard, P.C Sorcar junior, made it vanish.

Sorcar, master of the Indrajala magic snow, performed the feat at 1450 hours for over two minutes from a distance of about 400 metres behind Taj at a pot called Eachpura across the river Yamuna.

The mysterious entertainment, as Sorcar described it later, left hundreds of onlookers including policemen, administration officials and mediapersons absolutely stunned. The magic made the Mughal architectural marvel disappear in the thin air leaving a blank space at the site.

The magician was assisted by his daughter, Mane- ka, who made the historic monument reappear after two minutes. No it was not mass hypnotism, a jubilant Sorcar told PTI, adding on the contrary, it was a case of Application of 'Adrishya' (disappearance) Rasa' of the science of magic.

I just kept the Taj away from your eyes, it was a perfect illusion, the 53-year-old magician, whose late father had several incredible feats to his credit, said. This was the junior Sorcar's first major performance since 1992 when he had made a running train disappear at Khana junction near Bardhaman in West Bengal.

Sorcar is also credited with having made Kolkata's famous- victoria memorial vanish in 1990 and an aircraft at Hamamata in Japan.

I don't possess any supernatural powers. I perform with the blessings of God and goodwishes of the people, the magician., who had challenged a famous godman of the south in the eighties, said. A beaming Sorcar, who says magic was in his blood since eight generations, maintained that there was nothing supernatural in his feat.

This is all science, the science of controlling the mind and the willpower to create a psychic balance with the environment, he added.

(Kashmir Observer, November 06, 2000)



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KO VIEW

The Burning of  
Srinagar's Soul

Every winter, as the cold settles over Srinagar's Old City, flames rise somewhere in its narrow lanes. A spark from a heater, a short circuit, or a burning ember is enough to set entire wooden homes on fire. Firefighters struggle to reach the spot through crowded streets. By the time the blaze dies down, families stand before ashes, and another part of history is lost.

These fires erase the identity of a city known for its centuries-old architecture and Central Asian charm. Old Srinagar was built with carved wooden windows, lattice balconies, and brick facades that told stories of trade, art, and faith. When fire hits, those memories vanish too.

Over the years, fires have swept through areas like Khanyar, Nowhatta, and Fateh Kadal. Many homes have been replaced with plain concrete structures that have little connection to the city's heritage.

The transformation is changing how Srinagar looks and feels. As the government pushes ahead with the Smart City Project, it must remember that a truly smart city also protects its past.

The repeated fires should push both citizens and the government to act. A special heritage protection task force is needed to prevent such disasters. It should ensure extra vigilance, stop risky fire practices, and spread awareness about safety in old neighbourhoods.

Fire protection should be a clear part of the urban-welfare plan.

Srinagar's old quarters hold the roots of Kashmiri life. If the fires continue unchecked, the city will lose its soul. Protecting that heritage is the only way to keep Srinagar's story alive for the generations to come.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

From Setback to Seedbed

A job loss in South Kashmir turned one man into an entrepreneur, and offered a lesson in how Kashmir's soil can grow both crops and courage.

Irshad Mushtaq

In South Kashmir, a man once lost his job in the forest department. It was a modest post, the kind that offered little security but some comfort. When it ended, he had two choices: sink into despair or start again. He chose the harder, braver path. He looked at the land around him and saw what others missed: possibility. Farmers across the valley struggled to find good seeds. He saw a need, not a problem.

With no degree, savings, and safety net, he began selling vegetable seeds and saplings, the nihali Kashmiris plant each spring. He packed them himself, traveled to Srinagar to sell them, and returned home with hope.

Each sale was proof that effort can outgrow circumstance. His business soon took root, serving farmers across the region. What started as survival became purpose.

His story is a reminder to young Kashmiris that opportunity doesn't always arrive. It's cultivated. The valley's future won't be built only in offices or through exams. It will be built by those who can see growth where others see loss.

In a place that has weathered more than its share of uncertainty, his journey stands as a simple truth: resilience, when planted deep, always finds a way to bloom.

The author is a Srinagar-based  
reputed financial advisor.



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

“  
The protection  
of child rights  
begins with  
protecting the  
integrity of those  
who enforce them.  
If the Jammu  
and Kashmir  
government  
fails to correct  
this process, the  
commission risks  
starting its life  
already stripped  
of moral authority.  
For the children it  
claims to defend,  
that would be the  
cruellest injustice  
of all.

Restore Fair Play

The credibility of Jammu and Kashmir's Child Rights Commission is at stake. A flawed selection process risks turning an institution meant to protect children into one more casualty of political convenience.

The Jammu and Kashmir government's long-awaited decision to constitute a Child Rights Commission should have been a landmark in social governance. For years, children in the region have lacked an independent body to defend their welfare, education, and safety.

The October 18 advertisement by the Social Welfare Department inviting applications for the positions of Chairperson and Members was therefore a welcome step.

The accompanying rules, drawn from the Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, and the J&K Commission for Protection of Child Rights Rules, 2022, laid out a transparent and merit-based framework. A week later, the optimism faded.

The shortlist of candidates, published on October 25, raised immediate doubts. Many qualified applicants, some with PhDs and decades of field experience, had been dropped. Others, lacking even the minimum prescribed qualifications or experience, found their names included.

The fairness promised in the advertisement appeared to have evaporated.

The advertisement itself could not have been clearer. It set a total of 100 marks to be awarded under three heads: 60 for academic merit, 20 for experience, and 20 for viva voce.

Within this, 40 marks were allotted for graduation, 10 for post-graduation, and 10 for higher qualifications such as M.Phil or PhD. Fifteen marks were set aside for ten years of relevant experience, with one additional point per extra year of service, capped at five.

This detailed structure was meant to remove discretion and ensure that the most deserving candidates naturally rose to the top.

But the published shortlist defied that structure.

Candidates with higher academic qualifications, who by simple calculation should have scored better, were inexplicably omitted. Those with weaker profiles appeared instead.

Such a departure from clear evaluation criteria suggests that the shortlisting committee either ignored or misapplied its own rules.

The consequences go beyond administrative error.

The Commission for Protection of Child Rights is not a ceremonial body. It investigates violations, monitors child care institutions, and advises the government on policy. Its members must combine professional competence with integrity. Any suspicion of bias in the selection process undermines both the commission's authority and the public's trust.

The opacity of the current procedure compounds the problem. The Social Welfare Department has not disclosed how marks were awarded or what method was used to screen applicants. The criteria for exclusion

have not been shared.

Without transparency, the process invites allegations of favouritism and political influence. For a body charged with upholding justice, such doubts are damaging.

The situation calls for immediate correction.

The interviews scheduled for November 10 and 11 should be cancelled. The department must

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Every public appointment shapes  
how citizens perceive the state. When  
fairness is compromised, even the best  
institutions lose meaning.

review all applications afresh in strict accordance with Advertisement Notice No. SWD-ICPS/55/2021 dated October 18, 2024. A revised shortlist should be issued publicly, displaying the qualifications and experience of each candidate alongside their scores.

This is standard practice in fair public recruitment and would restore credibility to the process.

There are strong reasons for speedy course-correction. Jammu and Kashmir's children face some of the toughest developmental and psychological challenges in India. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), nearly 29 per cent of children under five in the region are stunted. UNICEF's reports highlight increasing psychosocial distress among adolescents exposed to conflict, displacement, and poverty.

A strong, impartial Child Rights Commission could have been a turning point, an institution capable of giving voice to those who have none.

Instead, its very foundation appears compromised. A flawed appointment process risks creating a weak, politicised body incapable of holding institutions accountable. Such an outcome would be worse than delay. It would erode confidence in the idea of justice itself.

Chief Minister Omar Abdul-

this commission. Across India, appointments to statutory bodies are often reduced to bureaucratic rituals, guided more by discretion than by design. In a region like Jammu and Kashmir, where governance still struggles to earn public trust, such carelessness is costly.

Institutions gain legitimacy only when their creation reflects the values they are meant to protect.

The government still has a narrow window to restore confidence. A transparent reassessment will not delay progress. It will legitimise it.

Every public appointment shapes how citizens perceive the state. When fairness is compromised, even the best institutions lose meaning.

The protection of child rights begins with protecting the integrity of those who enforce them. If the Jammu and Kashmir government fails to correct this process, the commission risks starting its life already stripped of moral authority.

For the children it claims to defend, that would be the cruellest injustice of all.

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an  
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Letter to Editor

The Myth of Merit in Kashmir Campus

I can still picture myself sitting in my 10th-grade classroom in Srinagar, the blackboard covered with neat notes written in white chalk. The teacher said, "This will all show up on the exam," and suddenly, every pen in the room began to move faster. They weren't writing out of curiosity or reflection, but out of fear of forgetting, losing marks, and disappointing someone waiting at home.

That moment stayed with me. It revealed something about how we, as a society, mistake remembering for understanding.

From our earliest years, we are trained to value correctness over curiosity. The child who asks why is often silenced with a familiar reply: "Because it's in the syllabus."

We grow up believing success lies in how accurately we can reproduce

a paragraph on paper, not in how deeply we understand it. We are rewarded for memorizing what others have said, and punished for thinking differently. The discovery, the joy of learning, fades away in the process.

By the time we enter adulthood, we've mastered the art of remembering. We can recall definitions, dates, and formulas with ease. But, once the exam ends, the information evaporates like chalk dust on that same blackboard. All those hours of cramming amount to nothing more than an empty sense of achievement.

We love to quote Einstein's line that education is the "training of the mind to think," but our classrooms still revolve around memory. Students are rarely encouraged to connect ideas or see learning as something personal. Examinations

remain the measure of worth, while creativity becomes casualty.

Education should never feel like a contest of recall. It should make us think, question, and feel. It should push us to wonder why a story is told the way it is, or why an equation works, or why our society behaves as it does. True learning demands curiosity. But we've been made to believe that questions slow us down and that thinking differently is risky. So we memorize poems without feeling their pain, and we define democracy without practicing its spirit.

Our world today holds more information than any textbook ever could. And yet, we struggle to think for ourselves. If our classrooms valued imagination as much as accuracy, perhaps learning would feel less like a burden and more like becoming.

ing. Teachers would act as guides, not gatekeepers. Exams would test the depth of our thought, not the speed of our recall.

I've come to believe that learning happens not when we remember something, but when we feel it. It could be a line from a poem that echoes your own longing, or a teacher's story that alters the way you see the world. Education takes root in our empathy, values, and sense of justice. It is what makes us human in the truest sense.

If our education system could understand this, it might finally set us free. Teaching what to think creates followers, but teaching how to think creates free minds.

Sincerely,  
Afreen Bashir  
afreenbashir111@gmail.com



# It's Time for Kashmir to Move Beyond Patriarchy

Patriarchy in Kashmir has trapped both women and men in silence. Real progress begins when empathy replaces dominance.

Heena Nazir

I grew up in a home where decisions had a familiar pattern. Men led, women followed, and silence was treated as peace.

It was never announced as a rule, but everyone knew their place. From how tea was poured to who spoke in family gatherings, there was an order that seemed natural.

Only later did I realise that what we called respect was often restraint, and what we mistook for harmony was habit.

Patriarchy doesn't always scream in the valley. It lives in expectations handed down through generations. It hides in the way we teach daughters to be obedient and sons to be strong. Families repeat these lessons without thinking, believing they preserve culture.

The truth is, this pattern has shaped our homes for centuries and still defines many lives today.

Growing up, I saw how women carried the invisible weight of adjustment. Mothers woke first, worked last, and ate only after everyone else. Daughters learned early to soften their voices. Many women I knew lived with the belief that compromise was a virtue.

At the same time, I saw how men were confined too. My brothers were expected to stay firm, never cry, and always provide. They were praised for being responsible, but no one asked if they were tired or afraid.



This is what patriarchy does. It shapes everyone, even those who seem to benefit from it. Women lose agency, and men lose tenderness. It is a system that hardens hearts and silences emotions on both sides.

When I began working, I met women who had managed to break through the barriers. Some became teachers, administrators, or activists. Their success was inspiring, but I noticed something unsettling.

A few, once they gained authority, used it harshly. They ruled as they had been ruled. I understood then that power alone doesn't heal old wounds. If pain turns into revenge, the pattern continues under a new name. True empowerment needs balance.

Religion, in its essence, offered this balance long ago.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) granted women rights to education, inheritance, and dignity. He reminded men that the best among them were those kind to women. The spirit of Islam rests on justice and compassion, values that seek to equalise.

But in many Kashmiri households, these principles have been replaced by customs that serve convenience more than conscience. Culture has overshadowed faith. What was once mutual respect has been turned into control.

Still, change is happening, even

if slowly. Many young women are entering universities and professional fields. According to recent education data, women now make up nearly half of higher education enrolments in the valley. Many of them challenge inherited silence with reason and grace. They demand equal say in careers, marriages, and family life. Their courage has started to shift the atmosphere inside homes and workplaces.

Some men are changing too. A new generation is beginning to see that strength has many forms. They are learning that empathy can lead as powerfully as authority.

When fathers allow daughters to study freely, husbands share domestic work, and brothers respect a sister's choices, the structure begins to bend.

These small acts are steps toward a different future.

Change in places like Kashmir cannot happen overnight. It must grow through awareness and trust. It begins in homes where parents teach equality through example, and children learn that fairness is a part of love.

When boys are told that emotions do not make them weak, and girls are taught that ambition is not arrogance, the culture will start to heal.

Patriarchy has long shaped our sense of identity, but it does not have to shape our destiny. The real progress of any society depends on how well it balances dignity and compassion.

Kashmir's story can evolve if both men and women learn to walk together, neither leading nor following, but supporting.

In the end, what we need is not a battle between genders, but a shared understanding that humanity loses when one side dominates.



**PATRIARCHY HAS LONG SHAPED OUR SENSE OF IDENTITY, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO SHAPE OUR DESTINY.** The real progress of any society depends on how well it balances dignity and compassion. Kashmir's story can evolve if both men and women learn to walk together, neither leading nor following, but supporting.

Balance is what our faith calls for, and what our times demand.

The day we see equality as harmony rather than threat, we will move closer to the justice our culture once promised, and the peace our valley still seeks.

— The author is an MBA graduate who has previously worked as a Training Executive and a Public Speaking Guide with an edtech platform. She can be reached at [henan8853@gmail.com](mailto:henan8853@gmail.com)

## When Filters Become Our Faces

In the race to appear gentle and agreeable, we've lost the courage to be authentic.

Newsheen Mushtaq

We live in an age of filters that go far beyond photos. They have entered our personalities, relationships, and values. People have mastered the art of curating themselves, of appearing gentle, wise, and thoughtful, while keeping their true intentions tucked away behind smiles and sugar-coated words.

What began as a harmless trend on social media has slowly turned into a survival skill in society. We filter our emotions, opinions, and even morals, afraid that honesty might make us look unpleasant.

The saddest irony is that the world now punishes truth and rewards pretension.

A person who speaks their mind with honesty is often branded rude, arrogant, or disgraceful. Their bluntness is seen as a flaw because it does not come wrapped in flattery. But the one who hides their real thoughts behind sweet words is celebrated as polite and mature.

Society bows to the well-filtered while turning away from the genuine. It has become safer to pretend than to be authentic. A lie spoken softly wins more hearts than a truth spoken firmly.

People admire virtue when it comes in a pleasant tone, not when it comes with honesty. We have started valuing presentation over principle. The one who smiles and agrees, even when wrong, is called kind. The one who corrects with sincerity, even when right, is called harsh.

This strange moral confusion has turned the world upside down. We have learned to act virtuous instead of being virtuous.

We now live with two selves. There is the public self that is polished, calm, and careful with words. And then there is the private self that carries fatigue, frustration, and unspoken truths.

The more we filter, the further we drift from our real reflection.

What began as small compromises, a white lie here, a fake compliment there, have grown into a culture of constant pretence. It has become exhausting to live like this, to weigh every word and action for how it might appear, not what it truly means.

This endless performance is the reason many people today feel unseen.

They are surrounded by attention but starved of understanding. Everyone is busy appearing right instead of being real. Social media has worsened this disease of perfection. It has taught us to value appearance over depth.

A post about kindness gets applause even if the kindness never leaves the screen. A smiling photo can hide a dishonest life. We have mistaken visibility for virtue.

Honesty has become the most misunderstood quality of our time. When someone dares to be real, society calls them difficult. When someone sugarcoats, they are called graceful.

It is easier to admire what pleases the ear than what challenges the mind. The world has turned its back on truth-tellers and embraced the comfort of filters. But comfort is not the same as integrity.

To live without filters requires courage, the courage to disappoint people with your truth rather than please them with your lies. It means choosing honesty even when it costs approval. It means saying what you mean without cruelty, but also without fear.

True decency is about being authentic.

We often talk about how rare honesty has become,



**IF WE WISH TO LIVE MEANINGFULLY, WE MUST UNLEARN THIS HABIT OF WORSHIPPING FILTERS. WE MUST BEGIN TO SEE BLUNT HONESTY NOT AS DISGRACE BUT AS PURITY. WE MUST LEARN TO APPRECIATE THOSE WHO ARE CONSISTENT, WHO SAY THE SAME THING BEHIND YOUR BACK AS THEY SAY TO YOUR FACE.**

but we are the ones who punish it. We claim to value truth but only when it sounds polite. We admire those who mirror our opinions, not those who challenge them. And in doing so, we push genuine people into silence and reward those who master the art of pretending.

If we wish to live meaningfully, we must unlearn this habit of worshipping filters. We must begin to see blunt honesty not as disgrace but as purity. We must learn to appreciate those who are consistent, who say the same thing behind your back as they say to your face.

The world does not need more smooth talkers. It needs honest hearts.

Maybe the time has come to stop mistaking charm for character. Because when the filters fall away and the masks crumble, the blunt and honest ones are the only people who remain real.

And in a world addicted to pretence, being real is the most beautiful rebellion of all.

— The author has done her Masters in English Literature, and is currently working as an English educator. She can be reached at [newsheen9051@gmail.com](mailto:newsheen9051@gmail.com).

## When the Rivers Sang

Long before tourism brochures and camera-tipped shikaras, Kashmiris took to the waters in Dongas, wooden boats that carried songs, stories, and the scent of Wazwan through a gentler world.

Shereen Naman

In the Kashmir of the 1940s, when the rivers were still arteries of life and leisure, a journey on a Donga was a small act of joy.

These long, arched wooden boats, shaped like floating homes, once glided across the Jhelum, Dal, and Wular, carrying families, friends, and musicians through the slow-moving heart of the valley.

A Donga cruise was both travel and tradition, a festival that unfolded on water.

People would set off for days, with their neatly-packed belongings and unburdened hearts. The river was their road, and the lake their destination. Weddings, fairs, or simple outings became occasions for collective celebration.

It was common to see a flotilla of Dongas on the way to Mela Qamar Sahib in Ganderbal or toward the Hazratbal Shrine, where faith and festivity met at the lake's edge.

By the time they reached Hazratbal, the waters seemed to calm themselves. The white dome of the Dargah shimmered in the distance, reflected in Dal's mirror-like surface.

For many, this was less a pilgrimage than a pause, a chance to think, breathe, and feel the pulse of life in the steady lap of the oar. Faith flowed with the current, and the soft recitation of prayers merged with the sound of ripples, turning each journey into a meditation.

The music was never far behind. Sufiana musicians often accompanied these voyages, their instruments tuned to the hum of the river. Among them was Ghulam Mohammed Qaleenbaff, a master of Sufiana Kalam, whose name still stirs nostalgia among the older generation.

His compositions seemed made for the water: melodies that rose and fell like waves. When his voice filled the air, the boundaries between earth and sky blurred, and the passengers sat transfixed, as if time had slowed for them alone.

Someone would always sing Rasul Mir's haunting verse, "Mati roz dama roz daryam chani lolray", a line that carried longing like perfume.

The poet's words, spoken softly over the water, reached the soul without effort. The Donga, swaying gently beneath, became a cradle for memory.

Storytellers too found a home aboard these boats. The Dastangos, keepers of oral legends, were often invited to share their craft. Their voices, rich and rhythmic, brought to life Maqbool Shah Kralwari's Gulraiz, an



epic of love and valour.

As they narrated the trials of Nosh-lab and Ajab Malik, the boat seemed to move in harmony with the story's flow. Children listened with open mouths, elders nodded with knowing smiles, and even the river seemed to listen.

These moments stitched generations together, each retelling an offering to the culture that thrived on song, and shared silence.

By the 1970s and '80s, the Donga still floated in family albums and weekend plans. Schoolchildren boarded them for picnics, their laughter bouncing off the water. Families set out for long summer days on Dal Lake, the snow peaks glinting in the distance, their reflections dancing on the ripples.

The Donga was both shelter and celebration, a wooden world where the boundaries between home and nature dissolved.

As dusk fell, the scene shifted from pastoral to regal. The nobles of Srinagar and the newly wealthy often hosted soirées on the lake, their boats illuminated with lanterns that mirrored in the water like twin stars.

Hafiz Nagma performers, graceful women whose art blended music and movement, would sing of love and devotion, their anklets keeping rhythm with the water's pulse. Their voices lingered in the air long after the last note, a sound that seemed stitched into the golden sky of a Kashmiri evening.

No gathering was complete without the scent of Wazwan. Copper trays were laid out, steaming with Rogan Josh, Yakhni, and Gushtaba. The aroma

floated through the air, mingling with the smoke of kangris and the sweetness of iltar.

Each dish told a story of heritage, recipes handed down like heirlooms, unchanged by time. The meal was less about indulgence and more about belonging, a ritual of togetherness that transformed dinner into devotion.

Those who grew up with the Donga remember its texture, the feel of worn wood beneath the fingers, the gentle sway that lulled them to sleep, and the faint sound of oars slicing through moonlit water. To them, it was not a relic but a living companion, one that held laughter, prayers, and songs within its frame.

By the turn of the century, the Donga had mostly vanished from daily life. Motorboats and speed launches replaced its rhythm, and the old storytellers fell silent. But the memory of those floating gatherings endures, carried in the stories told by elders, in the faded photographs, in the verses of poets who once sang to the river.

My own fascination with the Donga began in childhood, listening to my grandmother recall her youthful voyages. Her eyes would light up as she described the evenings when the world seemed afloat in golden light, when music and water became indistinguishable.

Through her stories, I came to understand that the Donga was a symbol of a people who believed that life, like water, was best lived in flow.

— The author is a cultural activist by passion and scribe by profession.



## J&K Statehood Shared Desire Of Entire Nation: Bihar Guv

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Bihar Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Wednesday said that the restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir is the "shared desire" of the entire nation, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and urged the people to work towards creating conditions conducive for normalcy.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function in Srinagar, Khan said, "We are all concerned and we want normal conditions. This is everyone's desire – the desire of the whole of India."

Responding to a question about the dual power structure in the Union Territory, Khan said that while the Prime Minister is personally inclined toward Jammu and Kashmir governing itself as a state, it is the responsibility of the people to help create an environment that enables that transition.

"And it is your and our job to create those conditions," he said, adding that the goal is to ensure that "the law functions in Kashmir the same way it functions everywhere else."

In an apparent reference to Pakistan, Khan said that "hatred was planted in this part of the country" and must now be rooted out completely.

He said the partition of 1947 brought a "new situation" to Kashmir and quoted Maulana Azad's reflections on historical divisions, remarking that while others have paid the price for those mistakes,



"the biggest price has been paid by the people of Kashmir."

Reflecting on the nature of conflict, the governor said, "Very innocent people come into conflict. When conflict spreads, its effects are not limited to those who create it – innocent people are also sucked into it."

Asked about the assembly elections in Bihar, Khan said that all preparations were in place for the first phase of polling scheduled for Thursday.

Calling elections a "celebration of democracy," he said India has proved that leadership is determined not by lineage but by the will of the people. "Those who run the government are chosen through the ballot box. They are not sovereign – the people of this country are sovereign," he said.

He cited the journeys of President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi as examples of how humble beginnings can lead to the nation's highest offices.

"The message to the common man and the youth is clear – there are no limits to what you can achieve. You must win the trust of the people; after that, the sky is the limit," Khan added.

## CISF DG Calls On LG; Discusses Security Situation

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Director General Praveer Ranjan called on Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and discussed the security situation and the role of the force in maintaining it, officials said here on Wednesday.

A CISF spokesman said Ranjan called on Sinha here on Tuesday. He was accompanied by Additional Director General Sudhir Kumar and CISF Inspector General Navajyoti Gogoi.

"During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the prevailing security scenario and ongoing CISF deployments across Jammu & Kashmir," the spokesman said.

He said the Lieutenant Governor was briefed on the force's role and operational preparedness in safeguarding vital installations in the Union Territory.

"The CISF currently has 12 units deployed in J&K, securing key establishments including airports, central jails, power grids and hydropower plants," the spokesman said.

With the rapid pace of development projects underway in the region, the role and presence of CISF is expected to expand further in the coming days, he added.

The meeting underscored



the continued coordination between the CISF and the Union Territory administration to ensure robust security arrangements and effective response mechanisms in line with national objectives.

Top importer Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a long-term supply contract with Rosneft, will stop taking Russian oil. Two other state-controlled refiners have said they are stopping Russian oil imports.

Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd and HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, a joint venture of steel tycoon Lakshmi Mittal's Mittal Energy and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), have announced plans to suspend future imports.

The three accounted for more than half of the 1.8 million barrels of Russian crude oil imported in the first half of 2025.

However, Nayara Energy's Vadinar refinery, partially owned by Rosneft and already under EU sanctions, is likely to maintain its Russian crude intake.

According to Sumit Ritolia, Lead Research Analyst (Refining & Modelling) at Kpler, Russia remained India's top crude supplier in October, followed by Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Russian shipments to India reached 1.6-1.8 million barrels per day (mmbd) before the sanctions, with declines observed post-October 21 as refiners avoided potential US

OFAC exposure.

Analysts say Russian barrels are unlikely to disappear entirely, but future imports will rely on more complex logistics and trading arrangements.

To offset reduced Russian flows, Indian refiners are increasing procurement from the Middle East, Latin America, West Africa, Canada, and the United States. US crude imports hit 5,68,000 barrels per day (kbd) in October, the highest since March 2021, driven by economics and arbitrage opportunities rather than sanctions. Flows are expected to normalise to 250-350 kbd in December and January.

"We see reductions in

Russian crude arrival in post-November 21," he said.

"Most Indian refiners are expected to comply with US sanctions and halt or reduce direct crude purchases from Rosneft and Lukoil. This is likely to trigger a sharp decline in Russian crude import in December, followed by a gradual recovery through mid-to-late Q1 2026, as new trading intermediaries emerge and alternative routes are established."

In contrast, Nayara Energy's 400 kbd Vadinar refinery is unlikely to alter its current procurement pattern, as it is already almost entirely reliant on Russian crude.

"To offset reduced Russian inflows, Indian refiners are expected to increase procurement from the Middle East, Brazil, Latin America, West Africa, Canada, and the United States," he said.

"However, higher freight costs could limit the scale of substitution by eroding arbitrage opportunities."

Overall, refiners are likely to broaden their import baskets, with higher inflows from Latin America (Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Guyana), the United States, West Africa, and the Middle East. While near-term Russian imports may dip starting in December, Russian barrels will continue reaching India through intermediaries, he said.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Schools Now Echo

of people-first, social justice and equality, which has transformed both the lives of the people and this crown jewel of the nation."

The LG said that huge sacrifices made over the last five years have led to this new phase of stability and hope. "Our brave forces and J&K Police have created a Jammu Kashmir in which the sound of ragas and new enthusiasm has replaced the sound of bullets and grenades," he said.

Highlighting visible change on the ground, Sinha said, "We have created a Jammu Kashmir in which the walls of schools are echoing not with the clash of stones but with the laughter, innovation and education of children. Towns like Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam, once shrouded in silence, have transformed into cultural and literary centres for the youth. Markets like Lal Chowk and Polo View are no longer deserted but are glowing with new vitality."

Reiterating the administration's resolve to dismantle the terror ecosystem, Sinha said that peace, justice and equity remain the government's top priorities. "We are determined to strengthen socio-economic development and to turn the dreams of our youth into reality," he added.

Calling the people of Jammu and Kashmir the "heartbeat of peace," the Lieutenant Governor urged all sections of society to unite against elements seeking to disrupt harmony and to collectively combat the challenges of drug addiction and youth radicalisation.

"Everyone must follow the rule of law for peace, progress and prosperity," he said.

LG Sinha hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and leadership for making possible what once seemed impossible in J&K.

Quoting Indian saints and thinkers, he said, "The time has come to rediscover the path and the dream of our forebears – to live in harmony as Yogini Lalleshwari and others envisioned, and to fulfil the national aspirations with dedication."

He invoked Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's teachings, saying that they must continue to guide our lives and institutions. "Our Rishis in the Yajurveda taught that we must see each other with the spirit of friendship. For sustainable peace and progress, people must advance with values, harmony, and brotherhood," he said.

The LG also paid tribute to the sacrifices of JKP personnel, Army, and civilians who laid down their lives for peace. "Their sacrifice must always be remembered, and our efforts for peace must continue," he emphasized.

The Lieutenant Governor called on citizens, innovators, scientists, doctors, police, civil administration, and the armed forces to work together as one unit in the service of the nation.

He said, "We must remain vigilant against challenges to peace and development. Our youth must stay away from radicalization and drugs."

The LG recalled Mahatma Gandhi's words: 'Be the change you wish to see in the world.' He urged everyone to begin that change within themselves, for peace and progress to truly flourish in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated the strong resolve to dismantle terror ecosystem and affirmed the commitment to maintaining peace, justice and equity.

"We are determined for strengthening socio-economic development and to turn the dreams of our youth into reality," he said.

The event was attended by Dr Darakhshan Andrabi, Chairperson J&K Waqf Board; Swami Jitendranand Saraswatiiji; Prof Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir; Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir; Prof (Dr) Geeta Singh, National President, Vishwagram; besides heads of educational institutions, senior officers, thinkers, academicians and youth in large numbers.

#### Fresh Snowfall

supervision," an official from the district administration said.

Locals reported that snowfall began around midnight and intensified early morning, cutting off the remote Gurez Valley from the rest of Bandipora district. Authorities have advised residents to avoid unnecessary travel until road clearance operations are completed.

Meanwhile, in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, the Srinagar-Leh highway was also closed following heavy snowfall at Zojila, Sonamarg, Minimarg, and Drass. Traffic police officials said that around nine inches of snow were recorded at Zojila and five inches at Sonamarg. "Several vehicles were stranded on both sides of the highway before traffic was halted as a precautionary measure," an official said.

Meanwhile, Mughal road was temporarily closed for precautionary measures via Peer Ki Gali.

The Meteorological Department confirmed that a western disturbance is currently active over Jammu and Kashmir, bringing snow to the higher reaches and light rain to some plains. However, the weather is expected to improve soon.

"After November 5, the region is likely to experience stable and dry weather till November 16," the Meteorological Centre Srinagar said in its latest bulletin. The department added that a slight dip in temperatures is expected, advising farmers to continue routine agricultural activities during the dry spell.

The early snowfall has led to a sharp drop in temperatures, prompting residents in upper reaches to turn to traditional heating methods as winter conditions begin tightening their grip on the Valley.

#### Gunfight Reported

in the mountainous district, resulting in multiple encounters in the belt which borders Doda and Udhampur districts.

Kishtwar has seen six encounters in the past seven months as forces continue their hunt for Pakistan-based terrorists hiding in these hills.

On September 21, a group of terrorists was engaged in a gunfight in the Chhatru area.

On September 13, two army men, one of them a junior commissioned officer, were killed and two more injured in an encounter with terrorists in the Naidgram area of Chhatru. Violent confrontations took place in Dul and Chhatru belts on August 11 and July 2, but the terrorists managed to escape.

On May 22, a soldier and two terrorists were killed in an encounter in the Singapore area of the Chhatru belt.

On April 12, three terrorists were killed in an encounter in the Kishtwar area, while the army foiled an infiltration bid by terrorists along the LoC in the Akhnoor sector.

#### Op Sindoor Will

targeted civilians after asking about their religion. "What happened next is known to all. We launched Operation Sindoor and destroyed their bases in Kashmir and Pakistan. The operation hasn't ended—it's only on hold. If such an attempt is made again, we will respond with greater strength," he warned.

The Defence Minister said India's global image had transformed under Modi's leadership. "India is no longer seen as weak. Our nation commands respect and is recognised as a powerful force," he said.

Taking a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for suggesting reservation in the armed forces, Singh said, "What has happened to Rahul ji? The army has no caste or religion. A soldier's only identity is his Sainya Dharma. Our forces stand united above such divisions."

He said India never provokes confrontation but will respond firmly when challenged. "We don't initiate, but if someone provokes us, our reply is decisive," he added.

#### Postal Ballot, Home

will continue for three consecutive days, starting from November 5.

Meanwhile, the home voting process also commenced across the constituency on Wednesday. The ECI has introduced the facility to enable senior citizens aged 85 and above, and persons with disabilities (PwDs) with 40 per cent or more benchmark disability, to vote from the comfort of their homes.

Dedicated polling teams comprising presiding officers, polling officials and security personnel visited the homes of eligible voters to facilitate the process as per ECI guidelines.

The initiative has received widespread appreciation from voters who availed the facility. Many expressed gratitude towards the ECI and the Budgam DEO for ensuring an accessible and citizen-friendly electoral process.

Officials said the home voting initiative marks a significant step towards promoting inclusivity, dignity and participation in elections, reaffirming the ECI's commitment to the principle of "no voter left behind."

#### How A Woman

ornaments. After selecting the items, she would insist on showing them to her family before confirming the purchase. To appear genuine, she would present fake cheques purportedly linked to a local bank account in the name of one Ajaz Ahmad Khan, identified in police documents as a "history-sheeter and gang member."

Once the jewellers agreed, she would leave the shop—never to return. Her phone, the shopkeepers later discovered, would be switched off within minutes.

At Shah-e-Hamdan Ornaments in Lal Bazar, the woman allegedly made away with ornaments worth around ₹5 lakh on August 21, prompting the owner to file an FIR the next day at Lal Bazar Police Station. A similar pattern was reported at Maqdoomi Zevraat near Kani Mazar, Nawa Kadal, where jewellery worth about ₹5 lakh went missing on August 8. The complaint was lodged at Police Post Bagiyas.

Zarger Jewellers in Soura reported a comparable loss on July 29, with items worth nearly 7 lakh allegedly stolen in the same manner. The shop's owner told reporters that despite filing a report at Soura Police Station, the accused remains untraceable.

During a press conference in Srinagar, affected shop owners shared photographs, video footage, and copies of fake cheques allegedly used by the accused to win their trust. The jewellers described the fraud as "a well-planned con job" and urged police to act swiftly.

"She appeared sophisticated and convincing. We never imagined such a thing could happen. We just want justice and our hard-earned money back," said one of the victims.

Police sources confirmed that an FIR has been registered and that investigations are underway. The authorities are also reportedly verifying the involvement of others connected to the fake cheques.

The victims have appealed to the higher-ups in the department to intensify efforts to track down the accused and recover their stolen ornaments.

The incident has triggered concerns among Srinagar's jewellers, who say such scams have shaken their trust in customers. Many have now started enforcing stricter verification measures before allowing customers to take ornaments out of shops for viewing.

#### HC Dismisses Plea

and that their names were included in the list of Daily Wager earlier.

However, they said, later their names were not included in the list of Permanent Daily Labourers/Temporary Daily Labourers (PDLs/TDLs) framed by the authorities, which non-inclusion deprived them from seeking their regularization in terms of SRO 520 of 2017.

On the other hand, the grievance of the

petitioners was vehemently opposed, controverted and resisted by the authorities, primarily, on the basis of a report of Inquiry Committee constituted by the Managing Director O&M of KPDC.

The authorities said that none of the rights of petitioners have been infringed or violated, while admitting that they were engaged on temporary basis. As and when required they were paid the wages for the period they worked, the authorities said.

They said that the petitioners' CVs have been found prepared after imposition of the ban imposed by the Government vide Order dated 17.03.2025, as such, their names were not forwarded to the higher authorities for further necessary action.

"Having regard to the aforesaid position obtaining in the matter, i.e., the findings of the aforesaid Inquiry Committee, which report indisputably has not been either objected to by the petitioners or else thrown challenge to the till date, the respondents cannot be said to have faulted in the matter or else infringed any of the rights of the petitioners, entitling them to invoke the extraordinary writ jurisdiction of this Court," the bench said.

#### Railways Fast-Tracks

progress is being monitored to establish Jammu-Srinagar connectivity at the earliest," the official added.

Uchit Singhal, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (DCM), Jammu Division, said: "At present, the train is operational up to Katra. Once the bottlenecks are cleared and readiness is in place, the direct service to Jammu will begin."

He said redevelopment and operational processes are moving at a steady pace. "By November, we expect the bottlenecks to be cleared. After that, further decisions will be taken," Singhal added.

The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project is widely regarded as one of India's greatest engineering feats. It includes the world's highest railway bridge over the Chenab River—taller than the Eiffel Tower—and India's first cable-stayed railway bridge at Anji Khad.(KNO)

#### Zohran Mamdani Wins

victorious, securing over 50 per cent of the votes. Cuomo, 67, who was endorsed by Trump, trailed behind with just over 40 per cent of the votes, while Sliva garnered a mere seven per cent of the votes.

Cuomo ran as an independent after losing the Democratic primary to Mamdani in June.

In his address, Mamdani invoked Jawaharlal Nehru as he quoted the first prime minister of India from his famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech of 1947 to reflect his own agenda of revitalisation, equality and tackling corruption.

"We won because New Yorkers allowed themselves to hope that the impossible could be made possible, and we won because we insisted that no longer would politics be something that is done to us. Now, it is something that we do," he said.

"Standing before you, I think of the words of Jawaharlal Nehru – a moment comes, but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends and when the soul of a nation long suppressed finds utterance. Tonight, we have stepped out from the old into the new," he said amid loud cheers.

Besides winning the New York mayoral elections, the Democrats won gubernatorial elections in Virginia and New Jersey, in outcomes largely seen as declining public support for Trump's second term in the presidency.

In his victory speech, Mamdani, a state assemblyman, also trained his guns on US President Donald Trump, who called him a "communist." "We won because New Yorkers allowed themselves to hope that the impossible could be made possible, and we won

because we insisted that no longer would politics be something that is done to us. Now, it is something that we do," he said.

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"If anyone can show a nation betrayed by Donald Trump how to defeat him, it is the city that gave rise to him, and if there is any way to terrify a despot, it is by dismantling the very conditions that allowed him to accumulate power," Mamdani said.

"This is not only how we stop Trump; it's how we stop the next one," he said.

In his remarks, the New York Mayor-elect also threw a challenge at Trump and condemned "oligarchy and authoritarianism".

"So Donald Trump, since I know you're watching, I have four words for you: 'Turn the volume up,'" he said.

Mamdani's victory assumed greater political significance as President Trump is a native New Yorker who has consistently warned people not to vote for the democratic socialist.

In criticising Trump's crackdown on immigrants, Mamdani said New York will continue to be powered by immigrants and, after his historic victory, will be "led by an immigrant".

"New York will remain a city of immigrants: a city built by immigrants, powered by immigrants, and, as of tonight, led by an immigrant. So hear me, President Trump, when I say this: to get to any of us, you will have to get through all of us," he declared.

Many analysts saw Mamdani's victory as a reflection of the ongoing churn in US domestic politics, while some others felt that it could set up a bitter rivalry between the young leader and Trump.

"Whether he succeeds as mayor of New York or not, Mamdani shines a light on the current churn in US domestic politics and the unfolding contest for the political soul of America," wrote strategic affairs expert C Raja Mohan in The Indian Express.

Mamdani was born in Uganda's Kampala and moved to New York City with his family when he was seven years old.

The democratic socialist promised that New York will be the light in "this moment of political darkness" and where "we believe in standing up for those we love, whether you are an immigrant, a member of the trans community, one of the many Black women that Donald Trump has fired from a federal job, a single mom still waiting for the cost of groceries to go down, or anyone else with their back against the wall."

"Your struggle is ours, too," he said to loud cheers.

Current New York City Mayor Eric Adams, whose administration has been plagued by scandals, had dropped out of the mayoral race in September. Mamdani had been the front-runner in the NYC mayoral election for months.

The New York Board of Elections said that two million votes were cast, for the first time in the elections since 1969.

#### Para Questions Govt

further into surveillance."

"Jammu & Kashmir deserves openness, not oppression; transparency, not targeting. This election was fought to restore trust and dignity, not to replace one silence with another," he added.



# PCOS, PCOD Among Major Causes of Infertility in Kashmir: Doctors

‘Late marriages, obesity, lifestyle shift adding to crises’

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** With fertility rates witnessing a steady decline in Jammu and Kashmir, health experts say the current generation is facing a worrying rise in infertility, and conditions like PCOS and PCOD among women are emerging as significant contributors.

Doctors say that besides biological reasons, a major share of the problem is rooted in social and lifestyle changes – delayed marriages, unhealthy diets, lack of physical activity, growing obesity and poor knowledge about contraception.

According to KNO, Dr Rakshanda Akhter, a gynaecologist at DHSK, said multiple social factors are pushing couples, particularly women, into a high-risk infertility zone.

“The most common cause is late marriage. When age advances, the fertility potential naturally declines. We are now seeing

women getting married mostly in their late 20s or early 30s – a stage where the ovarian reserve has already declined,” she said.

She added that poverty, unemployment, the obsession with government jobs, extravagant wedding culture, and pressure for dowry continue to delay marriages, making late marriage a “socially manufactured trend”.

According to her, the peak fertility window in females is between 18 to 25 years – but in today’s scenario, most women enter marriage well after this phase.

Dr Akhter said that PCOS/PCOD is one of the most common causes of infertility in women.

She explained: “In PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome), the ovaries do not release eggs regularly (anovulation or irregular ovulation), hormones become imbalanced (especially excess androgen/testosterone), follicles in the ovaries do not mature properly, and because ovulation is irregular or absent,

**THE LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT CONTRACEPTION and improper use of emergency contraceptives are creating avoidable reproductive health issues.”**

pregnancy becomes difficult; that is why PCOS is a leading cause of infertility.”

The gynaecologist said PCOS is now one of the commonest hormonal disorders in reproductive-age women here. She said obesity, sedentary lifestyle, junk food, stress and diabetes are all contributing to it. PCOS is directly linked to infertility.

Dr Rakshanda stressed the

need for societal-level intervention, which includes early marriage, healthy food habits and weight control as key preventive measures.

Another gynaecologist, Dr Masarat Jan, said that pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) – largely caused by sexually transmitted infections like chlamydia and gonorrhoea – is another leading cause.

She said unsafe abortions and procedures performed at unregistered places by untrained persons are adding to complications. “Septic abortions cause severe genital tract infections and often lead to permanent infertility. Unfortunately, such cases are rising,” she said. “The lack of awareness about contraception and improper use of emergency contraceptives are creating avoidable reproductive health issues.”

Doctors said today’s youth are facing a completely changed lifestyle – sitting for long hours,

no physical exercise, fast food dependency, stress and prolonged job waiting period – all of which are collectively shrinking reproductive health.

Timely marriage, lifestyle modification, regular exercise and proper knowledge of reproductive health must be promoted, they added.

The most common reasons behind PCOS/PCOD include insulin resistance, hormonal imbalance, obesity/overweight, genetic predisposition, sedentary lifestyle, unhealthy diet, stress and lack of sleep, the doctors said.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5 / 2019-21), J&K has the lowest fertility rate in India. The region’s fertility rate has further dropped by 0.6 per cent compared to the previous survey period (2015-16). If the trends persist, the region may face serious demographic challenges in the coming decades, they added.

## Bukhari Welcomes Move to Restore Rajbagh Bridge as Motorable Link

A pni Party president Altaf Bukhari on Wednesday welcomed the government’s decision to begin converting the Rajbagh footbridge over River Jhelum, near the historic Silk Factory, into a motorable bridge. The bridge, he said, was originally designed to ease traffic congestion in the city centre before the project was altered during the tenure of former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti.

Terming the earlier decision to downgrade the project as “foolish, short-sighted and ill-advised,” Bukhari said the change reflected a “misplaced understanding of public interest and administrative priorities.”

“It should be investigated why this project, conceived as a motorable bridge, was later altered and converted into merely a footbridge, despite expert opinion favouring its construction as a motorable structure and after spending around Rs 12 crore on initial work,” Bukhari said. “The people deserve to know who benefited from altering this project.”

Recalling the project’s original conception, the former minister said the bridge was approved to address traffic congestion around Rajbagh, Jawahar Nagar and the adjoining civil lines. “I vividly remember convincing the then Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, to approve this project for that very reason. Foundation work was done accordingly,” he said.

He alleged that the decision to downgrade the project was taken arbitrarily after Mehbooba Mufti assumed office. “Sadly, the original public-oriented vision was derailed. Mehbooba Mufti, during her tenure, altered the nature of the project to favour certain acquaintances. Her Nadirshahi behaviour left the public disheartened and the traffic issue unresolved.” (Observer News Service)

## Farmers Struggle as Flood-Destroyed Paddy Remains Unharvested

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Scores of farmers in the Kakapora belt of south Kashmir’s Pulwama district are yet to harvest their paddy crop this season – not because they don’t want to, but because the entire yield was destroyed in the September floods and is now lying rotten in water-logged fields.

Farmers told KNO that almost two months have passed since the floods, yet large portions of agricultural land in Kakapora are still submerged.

“We haven’t even been able to step into our fields. The paddy has turned black and rotten. There is no point in cutting it now as it is totally useless,” said Abdul Rashid, a farmer from Kakapora.

Farmers said they were hoping that the government would announce a “realistic” compensation package to help them recover from the heavy losses. However, many alleged that the relief being given is extremely inadequate.

“Some of our neighbours



have received just around Rs 800 per kanal. What will we do with that? This amount cannot even cover our fertiliser cost, let alone labour and other expenses,” said another farmer, Shabir Ahmad.

He added that the paddy crop takes months of labour, irrigation, and inputs – and now everything has gone to waste.

Most of the affected farmers said they have not received even a single rupee so far. “We spent thousands of rupees on seed, pesticides and labour. The entire harvest is gone... If the government really wants to save farmers from collapse, it must revise the compensation and release it at the earliest,” said Gh-

ulam Nabi, another farmer.

Farmers said they depend on the income from the crop to sustain their households for several months, and inadequate compensation will leave families financially broken.

They appealed to the government to conduct a fresh assessment of losses and ensure that compensation is meaningful. “Compensation should at least match the expenses of a full paddy cycle. Anything less is like adding salt to our wounds,” they said.

Farmers in Kakapora urged the district administration to personally visit the affected sites so that the ground reality can be understood “with eyes, not through papers.”

## MMU Urges J&K Govt to Withdraw Vande Mataram Directive

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Muttahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), an amalgam of Muslim religious organisations in Jammu and Kashmir headed by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, has expressed serious concern over a government directive asking schools to mark the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram with musical and cultural programmes.

In a statement, the MMU termed the order “coercive” and urged the administration –led by both Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah –to withdraw it immediately, saying it infringes on religious freedom and has caused “anguish among Muslims”.

The government directive, issued by the Department of Culture on October 30, cites instructions from the Union Ministries of Home Affairs and Culture. It calls for a structured year-long celebration from November 2025 to November 2026, involving school-level performances across

Jammu and Kashmir. Directors of School Education in both divisions have been designated as nodal officers to ensure full participation of students and staff.

The controversy deepened after the Doda district administration issued a separate order mandating the recitation of the national song Vande Mataram in all schools during morning assemblies every Monday. The circular, released by Doda’s Chief Education Officer on November 1, directed all school heads to ensure strict compliance. The move triggered a strong backlash from Muslim clerics and community leaders, who objected on religious grounds and accused the administration of undermining constitutional freedom of faith.

The MMU said that reciting or singing Vande Mataram is “un-Islamic”, as it involves “expressions of reverence directed toward the motherland”, which contradicts the core Islamic belief in the Oneness of God (Tawheed).

“Islam does not permit any act that involves wor-

ship or reverence to anyone or anything other than the Creator,” the MMU said in its statement, adding that while Muslims are duty-bound to love and serve their country, “such devotion must be expressed through service, compassion, and societal contribution—not through rituals that conflict with faith.” The religious body alleged that the administration was using “cultural celebration as a cover to push an RSS-driven Hindutva agenda” in a Muslim-majority region.

“Forcing Muslim students and institutions to participate in activities that contradict their faith is unjust and unacceptable,” the statement read.

The MMU further urged both the LG and CM to immediately withdraw the directive and ensure no student or school is compelled to act against their religious beliefs. “The government must respect the region’s religious diversity and avoid decisions that hurt sentiments or foster division,” it said.

## Grand Mufti, Residents Oppose Gupt Ganga Waste Project

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The proposed solid waste and sewage treatment project at Gupt Ganga–Foreshore Road, Nishat, is facing strong opposition from residents, with Grand Mufti of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam, terming it “an ecological blunder that threatens Dal Lake’s survival and public health”.

The Grand Mufti said that converting the Gupt Ganga wetland, an important ecological buffer for Dal Lake, into a waste processing and sewage site would have grave and irreversible environmental, health and social consequences.

“The project is ecologically disastrous and socially unacceptable,” he said. “Destroying this natural wetland for a large-scale waste facility not only undermines decades of conservation efforts but also violates the very principles of environmental protection the administration claims to uphold.”

According to KNO, Mufti Nasir revealed that a delegation of locals from Gupt Ganga and nearby areas met him recently, expressing anger and distress over the proposed site. “The people told me clearly that if the project is not stopped immediately, they will be forced to launch peaceful but massive protests. Their concerns are genuine and must not be ignored,” he said.

He warned that the proj-



ect would lead to persistent odour, rodent infestation, groundwater contamination and property devaluation, making the entire neighbourhood unlivable.

Meanwhile, the residents of Gupt Ganga–Foreshore Road Nishat and adjoining areas have submitted a detailed memorandum, urging the Chief Minister and Lieutenant Governor to immediately halt the plan and order a full Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) before any construction begins.

They said the proposed 30–45 MLD STP and wastewater-fertilizer unit falls in an ecologically fragile area categorised as “Gardens and Parks Zone” under the 2035 Srinagar Master Plan and is just 370 metres from the fringe of Dal Lake.”

The proximity of the project to public and sensitive sites is alarming, with the residential area just 95 metres away, Government High School 300 metres away, hotels/showrooms 300 metres away, mosques within 350 metres, Meerakshah Nallah (connecting Dal Lake) 150 metres, Shamshan Ghat 400 metres and the BSF Camp only 110 metres away,” the memorandum states.

## Tourism Dept Showcases J&K’s Culture, Cuisines at ‘Bharat Parv’

Observer News Service

**AHMEDABAD:** Jammu and Kashmir’s vibrant cultural heritage, traditional crafts, scenic countryside, and diverse cuisine are drawing significant attention at the ongoing Bharat Parv in Ekta Nagar, Narmada district of Gujarat, being held as part of the nationwide celebrations marking the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Organised under the aegis of the Union Tourism Ministry, Bharat Parv is aimed at showcasing India’s unity in diversity through the coming together of culture, cuisine, craftsmanship and regional tourism attractions from across the country. The fortnight-long festival was inaugurated last week by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Jammu and Kashmir Tourism has set up a dedicated pavilion at the event, which has quickly become a major crowd-puller, offering visitors a glimpse of the region’s pristine landscapes, adventure tourism opportunities, and rich artistic traditions. The pavilion also highlights the

Union Territory’s unique cultural identity and sustainable tourism initiatives.

Joint Director Tourism (Jammu) Aijaz Qaiser, along with other senior officials, is representing the region at the festival. Speaking at the event, Qaiser said that Jammu and Kashmir’s participation reflects its commitment to strengthening cultural exchange and promoting the Union Territory as a year-round travel destination. “Our focus is on showcasing the evolving tourism identity of Jammu and Kashmir—one that blends natural beauty, heritage, ecology and community participation in line with the ethos of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat,” he said.

One of the main attractions at the J&K pavilion is a live ‘studio kitchen’ set up by the Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC). The live culinary counter offers visitors first-hand flavour experiences of authentic regional cuisines including traditional Kashmiri and Dogra dishes, which received enthusiastic response from attendees.



## Bunjwah Road in Ruins; Residents Decry ‘Administrative Negligence’



Observer News Service

**KISHTWAR:** The Dunadi-Bunjwah road, a critical link connecting several remote villages in Kishtwar district, has fallen into severe disrepair, prompting growing anger among residents who accuse the administration of ignoring repeated pleas for restoration.

Locals alleged the route—also known by names such as Dunadi-Bunjwah, Kewa Pull Kither, Tipri Patnazi and Patnazi Kither—has not seen meaningful repairs since 2020. Its surface has crumbled, culverts and parapets lie damaged, and frequent landslides make the road risky and sometimes completely inaccessible.

“This road is not just a connection between villages; it is a lifeline for our health, economy and day-to-day survival,” said Ashiq Wani, who is among the locals leading public mobilisation efforts. “Farmers, traders and students have been suffering, but authorities have shown no serious intent to repair or restore it.”

Residents say the condition of the road is putting lives in danger, particularly during medical emergencies. Patients requiring urgent treatment at District Hospital Kishtwar or GMC Doda often face long delays due to blocked or damaged stretches.

“There have been cases where patients had to be carried across dangerous portions of the road. What are we supposed to do when this is the only route?” a resident remarked.

Local businesses too are struggling. Transporters have increased fares due to the road condition, discouraging travel and trade. “It has affected our livelihoods directly,” said a shopkeeper from Patnazi.

Younus Keen, another resident, accused authorities of “deep slumber,” saying the road was handed over to PMGSY years ago for upgradation but “nothing has moved on the ground.”

Community activist Shafqat Sheikh echoed the frustration, saying the administration has failed to recognise the urgency.

## Tourism Hopes Rise as Sonamarg Receives Season’s Snow

The picturesque tourist destination of Sonamarg witnessed a fresh snowfall last evening, covering its meadows and upper reaches in a pristine white blanket, thereby reviving hopes for a strong winter tourism season in the Valley.

According to KNO, Officials from the Meteorological (MeT) department had predicted light snowfall over higher reaches of Kashmir, with more spells expected in coming days.

Local tourism stakeholders said the early snowfall is a positive sign for the tourism industry, which had seen a slow phase in recent months.

Waseem Ahmad, a local tourism associate, said “This is November’s first snowfall and we are very excited. It’s a much-needed boost for tourism. We hope this early snowfall brings back tourists and sets the season on the right track.”

Bilal Ahmad, a travel operator from Ganderbal, said inquiries have already begun. “Since the snowfall started, we’ve been getting calls from tourists who want to visit Sonamarg. People have seen snow pictures on social media and now they want to experience it,” he said.

Locals dependent on tourism also expressed joy. Gh Hassan, a pony owner, said, “Snow means work for us. Tourists come here for the snow and our livelihood improves. We are hopeful this winter will be better.” (Observer News Service)

## Lightning Strike Kills Around 40 Sheep, Goats

In a tragic incident, a lightning strike in the Sangar Dhoke area near Soliyan, Poonch, resulted in the death of nearly 40 sheep and goats, officials said.

An official said, the incident occurred late Tuesday night, causing significant losses to Khalid Hussain, a resident of Hadi Bari Baik, belonging to the Bakarwal community.

An assessment of the damage is underway while cognizance of the incident has been taken. (KNC)

## Elderly Man Dies After Road Accident

An elderly resident of Awantipora in south Kashmir’s Pulwama district died on Wednesday after being struck by a vehicle while crossing the road, officials said.

According to officials, the man was hit by a Maruti car near Awantipora, sustaining serious head injuries. He was immediately taken to the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Awantipora for treatment and was later referred to a Srinagar hospital for advanced care.

However, despite efforts by doctors, the injured, identified as Ghulam Rasool Chopan (70), son of Abdul Aziz and a resident of Padgampora, Awantipora, succumbed to his injuries later in the evening.

Police have taken up the case and initiated further proceedings. (Observer News Service)

## Police Detain Stunt Biker in Baramulla

Police in Baramulla have detained a youth for performing dangerous motorcycle stunts, after a video of the act went viral on social media.

The detained individual has been identified as Shahid Assad Dar, a resident of Puthar Kreeri. According to police, the video showed him performing risky manoeuvres on a motorcycle, endangering both himself and the general public.

Police said the youth has been booked under Sections 184 and 207 of the Motor Vehicles Act. The motorcycle used for the stunt has also been seized.

The action was carried out by Police Station Gulmarg under the supervision of the SDPO Tangmarg and the Station House Officer Gulmarg, as part of the district police’s ongoing campaign to curb stunt biking and improve road safety. (Observer News Service)



# Shami Ignored Again; Pant Makes Test Comeback For SA Series

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Star wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday made a much-anticipated return to India's Test squad for the upcoming two-match home series against South Africa but the selectors chose to ignore pacer Mohammed Shami yet again, putting a question mark over the senior pacer's career.

Pant expectedly made a comeback to international cricket after recovering from a foot fracture, sustained during the fourth Test against England in Manchester in July. He was forced out of the following series against the West Indies.

The 26-year-old impact batter recently captained India A to win over South Africa A in a four-day game in Bengaluru, scoring 90 in the second innings in a chase of 275.

He replaced N Jagadeesan in the 15-man squad and will be



deputy to Shubhman Gill.

## IS SHAMI'S INDIA CAREER OVER?

However Shami, who did quite well in three recent Ranji Trophy matches for Bengal, yet again did

not find a place in Test squad.

The 35-year-old premier pacer, who once made a lethal combination with Jasprit Bumrah, guided Bengal to successive wins over Uttarakhand and Gujarat with his skill set.

He bowled 93 overs, across three matches, albeit in short spells and accounted for 15-plus scalps.

However, it seems that the selectors are unsure if Shami's body can withstand the vigours of Test cricket that requires long bowling long spells.

In domestic cricket too Shami, at times, takes break after spell. The outspoken fast bowler's recent statements in media about his fitness and credentials also generated debate and might have impacted his chances negatively.

He had said that it was not his job to give his fitness updates.

Since India are not playing Test cricket for at least six months after the South Africa series, it seems that the Indian team door has been shut on Shami, who has 462 wickets to his name across formats.

He last played a Test match in 2023 and competed in ODIs and T20Is this year.

With Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep, and Prasidh Krishna, the pace department is more or less settled in Test format.

The first Test will be played in Kolkata from November 14, followed by the second in Guwahati from November 22.

**India's Test squad:** Shubman Gill (C), Rishabh Pant (WK) (VC), Yasir Hasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal, Dhruv Jurel, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Axar Patel, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, and Akash Deep.

**India A's ODI squad:** Tilak Varma (C), Ruturaj Gaikwad (VC), Abhishek Sharma, Riyan Parag, Ishan Kishan (WK), Ayush Badoni, Nishant Sindhu, Vipraj Nigam, Manav Suthar, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Prabhsimran Singh (WK).

## Inter-District UT Level Karate C'ship Kicks Off In Kulgam



Observer News Service

**KULGAM:** The Inter-District UT Level Under-17 and Under-19 Boys Karate Championship 2025 kicked off on Wednesday at Government Boys Higher Secondary School, here. The event was inaugurated by DySP (DAR) Kulgam, Mohd Ayoub, who was the chief guest. DSP Arun Gupta was also present during the inaugural ceremony.

Teams from 13 districts across J&K are participating in the tournament. Player reporting was completed a day earlier, on November 4. The event is being hosted by the Youth Services and Sports Department, under the overall supervision of

the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K.

The championship offers an opportunity for young athletes who have already excelled at the inter-school, inter-zone, and district levels. The best performers from this event will be shortlisted for the J&K UT-level team, which will later represent J&K at the national level.

Speaking on the occasion, DySP (DAR) emphasized that the government is deeply committed to promoting sports and nurturing young talent.

All ZPEOs of YSS Kulgam, especially Nisar Ah Wani and ZPEO D H Pora Ab Ma-jeed Rather were also present on this occasion.

## YSS Budgam Continues UT Level Cricket Tournament For Boys U-14

Dabirah Hassan

**BUDGAM:** The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam continued the Inter District UT Level Cricket Tournament for Boys Under-14 on Wednesday. The event is being organised under the supervision of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Ghulam Hassan Lone.

The matches were conducted across four major venues of the district — Sports Stadium Budgam, Eidgah Ground Sheikhpura, Sports Stadium Charar-i-Sharief, and Degree College

Ground Charar-i-Sharief.

Young cricketers from various districts of J&K showcased outstanding talent, determination, and team spirit, turning the day into an inspiring display of budding cricketing potential.

DYSSO Budgam, Ghulam Hassan Lone, lauded the efforts of all participants and officials for their dedication and professionalism, emphasizing the department's continued commitment to providing vibrant platforms for youth to excel in sports and represent Budgam with pride.



## DPS Srinagar Students Shine At 31st National Thang Ta C'ship



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Delhi Public School Srinagar students showcased impressive performances at the 31st Sub-Junior and Senior National Thang Ta Championship 2025 in Goa from October 28 to 30, with athletes from 26 states across India competing. The DPS students hauled in an impressive medal tally of one gold, two silver, and one bronze.

Leading the contingent with a phenomenal victory, Farjuman Riyaz of Class 6th A secured the coveted gold medal in the Sub-Junior girls' 25kg category. She clinched the title after

a decisive and commanding final bout against her opponent from Maharashtra.

Silver medalist Zynah Sartaj Mantoo (Class 7th H) demonstrated incredible tenacity in the Sub-Junior girls' 37kg category, winning three successive matches before a closely contested final against Bihar. Seerat Fatima (Class 6th G) also displayed outstanding prowess, earning her silver in the Sub-Junior girls' 52kg category after two strong victories and a hard-fought final against Assam.

Adding to the tally, Tabin Peerzada of Class 4th B secured a bronze in the Sub-Junior boys' 25kg category.

## PM Modi Meets Victorious Indian Women's Cricket Team

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday met the triumphant Indian women's cricket team at his residence and lauded the players for their "remarkable resilience and comeback" in the World Cup after enduring a tough phase marked by three consecutive defeats.

The Prime Minister also referred to the trolling the players had faced on social media after the early setbacks and praised them for showing exemplary mental strength to bounce back and script history.

Recalling their earlier meeting with Modi after the 2017 World Cup, captain Harmanpreet Kaur said the team had then come without a trophy hoping they will achieve success and get to meet him more often.

The Indian women's cricket team won its maiden global title — the 50-over World Cup — with a 52-run victory over South Africa in the final in Navi Mumbai. (PTI)

## 4th T20: Time For Gill To Come Good As India Play Australia

Shubman Gill will be looking to turn the tables with a big knock after what has been an underwhelming tour when a confident India aim to go one up against a depleted Australia in the fourth T20 International here on Thursday.

The series is locked at 1-1 after three games and the absence of Josh Hazlewood in the previous game did make a difference to Australia's defence of a standard total of 186.

Going into the fourth game, there won't be any Travis Head for Australia as the opener is set to play Sheffield Shield to prepare for the Ashes.

With two pillars of the rival team unavailable, this is the best chance for India to go 2-1 up before the final game at the Gabba and wrap up a series win.

However, what will slightly bother the Indian team management is skipper Shubman Gill's form in the series as he has now played six games without a half-century.

Match Starts at 1:45 pm. (PTI)

## U-17 Girls UT Level Yoga Competition Begins In Baramulla

The ongoing Inter-District Provincial Level (IDPL) UT Level Yoga Competition for all age groups of boys and girls continued Wednesday at Indoor Stadium Khawaja Bagh, Baramulla, witnessing yet another day of inspiring performances and youthful energy.

The prestigious event is being organised and hosted by Department of Youth Services and Sports District Baramulla, under the supervision of DYSSO Baramulla Zahoor Ahmad Wani.

Wednesday's session featured the Under-17 Girls category, where 88 talented young girls representing 14 districts across J&K showcased their skills, flexibility and discipline through yoga. Their graceful movements and perfect balance reflected months of dedication and commitment to the ancient art form. (Observer News Service)

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