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## Kashmir Mourns Beloved Broadcaster & Bard Abdul Ahad Farhad

For Decades, Farhad's Voice Brought News, Poetry, And Reassurance To Kashmiris Living Through Turbulence And Uncertainty



**Fiza Masoodi**

Srinagar: Long before phones buzzed in pockets and televisions flashed headlines, evenings in Kashmir had their own pattern. Families and neighbours gathered around radios, waiting for a familiar voice that could cut through the uncertainty outside. "Ab aap Farhad se khabrein suniye," it said.

People paused and listened. For a few minutes, the weight of the day eased, and the world felt a little more certain.

That voice belonged to Abdul Ahad Farhad, one of Kashmir's most respected broadcasters, poets, and writers, who passed away suddenly in Jammu on December 22, 2025.

Born in Soura, Srinagar, he lived there for most of his

life, deeply connected to the city and its people. His death has left literary, journalistic, and cultural circles in deep mourning.

During the violence of the 1990s, Kashmiris relied on Farhad's broadcasts as a lifeline. "His mesmerizing, beloved voice still echoes across the valley," Nazir Khan, an ardent radio listener, said.

Farhad studied in Srinagar and completed his Master's degree in English at the University of Kashmir. After university, he was selected for a lecturer's post, a stable and respected career. But at the same time, he was also selected at Radio Kashmir.

Radio changed everything. He often said he was influenced by the work culture and professionalism he saw

there. Broadcasting, he recalled, was once a profession people chose over government jobs.

Farhad joined radio as a scriptwriter, was later promoted as a newsreader, and eventually retired as a Grade One newsreader, a distinction considered equivalent to the rank of a director-general.

He | [More on P6](#)

Republic Day 2026

## Security Grid Intensified In Srinagar

**Observer News Service**

Srinagar: Security forces on Monday carried out extensive search and inspection operations in areas surrounding Bakshi Stadium, the designated main venue for Republic Day celebrations in Kashmir, as part of heightened security measures ahead of the national event, officials said.

Joint teams of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force conducted anti-sabotage checks, market sweeps and coordinated inspections across several parts of the city. The operation focused on densely populated and commercially significant areas close to the stadium, including Amirakadal and Maharaja Bazaar.

Officials said sniffer dogs, handheld metal detectors and other surveillance equipment were deployed to check residential units, commercial premises and storage spaces for any explosives, arms or ammunition. Fire exits, basements, godowns and narrow lanes were also scanned during the exercise.

A separate surprise search was conducted in Maharaja Bazaar and adjoining commercial lanes earlier in the day. Police teams verified identity cards of shopkeepers and pedestrians as part of routine security procedures. Officials said such checks are carried out periodically in crowded markets to ensure public safety during peak business hours.

Movement through inner lanes of | [More on P6](#)

## Cloudy Weather To Persist Till Dec 29: MeT

Light Rain, Snow Expected After Dec 30

**Observer News Service**

Srinagar: Cloudy weather conditions are likely to persist across Jammu and Kashmir over the coming days, the Meteorological Department said on Monday, as the region continues to experience the effects of recent precipitation.

The MeT said the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy across most parts of the Union Territory, with intermittent light rain in plains and light snowfall in higher reaches at some locations.

The department said that for Monday, generally cloudy conditions are expected, with the

possibility of light rain or snow at scattered to fairly widespread places during the afternoon hours. From December 23 to 29, the weather is likely to stay partly to generally cloudy across both Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

Between December 30 and January 1, some areas may witness light rainfall in the plains and light snowfall over higher reaches, while conditions from January 2 to 3 are expected to remain partly to generally cloudy.

Earlier, on Monday, the MeT forecasted another spell of snow or rain over the next 12 hours.

Officials said that recent precipitation has kept day temperatures | [More on P6](#)

## Kashmir's Rs 6 Crore Waste Plant Becomes Open Dump, Sparks Outcry

Climate Activists Demand Probe After Rs 6 Crore Facility Is Misused, Spreading Waste, Pollution, And Stray Dogs In Local Communities

**Syed Sammar Mehdi**

Srinagar: A waste management plant built at Dangerpora Padgampora in Pulwama, funded with over Rs 6 crore, has reportedly turned into an open garbage dump, sparking outrage from climate activists and local residents.

The J&K Climate Action Group (JKCAG) has called on the J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Principal Accountant General's office to investigate the project.

In a recent site visit, the group found unscientific dumping, burning of waste, and foul odors affecting nearby communities.

"The municipal solid waste is scattered everywhere, and



the smell is unbearable, even in this cold weather," said Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat, JKCAG chairman.

"An irrigation canal that serves over 1,200 acres of paddy fields runs just 5 to 7 meters from the site. This clearly

violates Municipal Solid Waste Rules 2016, the Water Act, and the Air Pollution Act."

Locals said the site has become a haven for stray dogs, which roam the area in packs, attacking children, women, and livestock.

"Women avoid going to the fields, children are afraid to walk to school, and our livestock, especially sheep, are under threat," said Mushtaq Ahmad, chairman of the Auqaf Committee in Dangerpora.

He added that plastic waste is spreading into nearby paddy lands, worsened by gusty winds, making life unbearable, especially in summer months.

The J&K Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC) had previously | [More on P6](#)

## Fresh Snow, Rain Disrupt Air, Road Traffic

Fresh snowfall in higher reaches and rainfall in the plains on Monday disrupted air and road traffic across Kashmir, while movement on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained slow due to single-lane operations at multiple stretches, officials said. | [More on P6](#)

## India Must be Ready for Short, Long Wars: CDS

**Press Trust Of India**

Mumbai: India should be prepared to fight short-duration, high-intensity conflicts to deter terrorism, something like Operation Sindoor, and long duration conflict because of the territorial disputes with its neighbours, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan said on



Monday. Speaking at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, Gen Chauhan said multi-domain operations | [More on P6](#)

## Cabinet Okays 5 Marla Land For Flood Victims, VLW Pay Upgrade

**Observer News Service**

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet on Monday approved a policy for the allotment of five marlas of land to people affected by floods and cloudbursts, besides clearing a proposal to enhance the salary of Village Level Workers, official sources said.

Sources said that the Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and attended by all ministers, cleared a series of proposals submitted by various departments.

According to the sources, the Cabinet gave its nod to



the allotment of five marlas of land to families affected by floods and cloudbursts earlier this year, a move aimed at providing relief and rehabilitation to those who lost land or homes during the natural

calamities.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal to designate District Panchayat Officers posted in Assistant Commissioner Panchayat offices as Block Development | [More on P6](#)

## Terrorists, Drug Mafia In Sight Of Our Guns: DGP

Says 10 Police De-addiction Centres Operating Across J&K

**KO Web Desk**

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Monday said terrorism, drug trafficking and other criminal activities will remain firmly under police watch, asserting that the force is committed to eliminating all anti-national and anti-social elements from the Union Territory.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the 14th Police Shaheed Smriti T20 Cricket



Tournament 2025-26 at Kathua, the DGP said criminals of every kind, particularly terrorists, would not be spared.

"Whether it is drugs, gangsters, mafia or any other kind of crime, and especially terrorism, everything will remain in the sight of our guns. | [More on P6](#)

Between Imports & Outages

## Why J&K's Power Promises Fell Short In 2025

**Observer News Service**

Srinagar: As 2025 draws to a close, Jammu and Kashmir's power sector stands exposed between ambitious promises and harsh realities. The year saw recurring power shortages, rising dependence on imported electricity, seasonal uncertainty in generation, and ageing infrastructure, all of which combined to deliver an unreliable supply and growing public frustration.

While the government pushed reforms such as smart metering, infrastructure upgrades and revenue improvement, developments through the year showed that the path towards energy self-reliance remains long and complex.

Heavy dependence on



imported power

By the third week of December, Jammu and Kashmir was importing over 95 percent of its electricity, leaving the region highly vulnerable during

peak winter demand. Officials said imports ranged between 2,900 and 3,100 MW during peak hours, and 2,400 to 2,800 MW during other periods.

The actual demand in

- » J&K imported over 95% power in winter 2025
- » 800 MW deficit during peak demand
- » 90% fall in local hydropower in winter
- » 40-50% power bought from markets in lean season
- » Power demand to rise 50% by 2035
- » Deficit may touch 10,000 MW in a decade
- » 29% load shedding projected by 2034-35
- » Low voltage issues persist in Valley
- » 20% peak-hour surcharge proposed
- » December shortage at 34%
- » AT&C losses above 41%
- » Power revenue up 250% in five years

Kashmir hovered around 2,400 to 2,500 MW, while Jammu's demand ranged between 1,400 and 1,500 MW. Against an availability of about 3,100 to 3,200 MW, the region | [More on P6](#)



A local pulls a tourist on a sledge through fresh snowfall in Gulmarg on Sunday. KO Photo By Abid Bhat





No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

worked under specific conditions," said IIT Bombay Prof Gopal Dixit. The findings reveal a new method that removes the need for complicated laser schemes by using just one linearly polarised pulse. Researchers found that a subtle asymmetry in the laser's skewed polarisation waveform, introduced as a controlled delay between its polarisation components, is enough to push electrons into either valley. By inverting the temporal skew, the induced valley polarisation can be switched between the two states, making the process fully reversible.



# KU Suspends Assistant Professor, Panel Set Up

## J&K Police Organizes Drug De-Addiction Seminar

## DIPR Condolences Demise of Abdul Ahad Farhad

**S**SRINAGAR: Joint Director Information Kashmir, Syed Shah Nawaz Bukhari expressed deep sorrow and profound grief over the demise of Abdul Ahad Farhad, a renowned poet, writer and noted broadcaster, terming his passing as an irreparable loss to the literary and cultural heritage of Kashmir.

J&K Police reiterated its commitment to engaging with students and the community to create awareness about social evils and to promote a healthy, drug-free society through proactive initiatives under the Civic Action Programme.



**Cats do transmit** rabies, similar to dogs, but unfortunately, many owners believe cats are harmless and do not require vaccination. We are seeing a consistent rise in cat exposure cases. Now more than half of the animal bite cases reaching our clinic are due to cats,”

**Office Of The Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Division Tangmarg**

# CORRIGENDUM

sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
R&B Division Tangmarg

## This Day In History

- 962 - Byzantine-Arab Wars: Under the future Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, Byzantine troops stormed city of Aleppo, recovering the tattered tunic of John the Baptist.
- 1482 - The Peace of Atrecht (now Arras) concluded between Louis XI of France and Maximilian of Austria, ending the War of the Burgundian Succession.
- 1620 - French huguenots declare war on King Louis XIII.
- 1690 - English astronomer John Flamsteed observes Uranus without realizing it's undiscovered.
- 1715 - Russian/Prussian troops occupy Stralsund.
- 1728 - Prussian Emperor Karel VI signs Treaty of Berlin.
- 1793- Thomas Jefferson warns of slave revolts in the West Indies
- 1808- Painter Francisco Goya swears an oath of loyalty to Joseph Bonaparte as king of Spain, during the Napoleonic occupation of Spain [1]
- 1832 -Dutch troops in Antwerp surrender
- 1834- Joseph Hansom of London receives patent for Hansom cabs
- 1852- 1st Chinese theater in US, the Celestial John, opens in San Francisco
- 1876- Turkey's 1st constitution proclaimed, transferring more power to elected representatives
- 1888- Vincent van Gogh cuts off his left ear with a razor, after argument with fellow painter Paul Gauguin, and sends to a female courtesan for safe keeping
- 1899 - Tentative Turkish & German treaty on construction of Baghdad railway.
- 1914 - World War I: Australian and New Zealand troops arrive in Cairo, Egypt.
- 1915 J Kern/S Green's musical "Very Good Eddie" premieres in NYC
- 1916 - World War I: Battle of Magdhaba - Allied forces defeat Turkish forces in Egypt's Sinai peninsula.
- 1917 - 3 British warships come close to Holland.
- 1919 - 1st hospital ship built to move wounded naval personnel launched
- 1920 - Government of Ireland Act / Home Rule Act passed partitioning Ireland.
- 1933 - Train crash in Eastern Paris; 230 die.
- 1938 - Discovery of the first modern coelacanth in South Africa.
- 1941 - British troops overrun Benghazi, Libya.
- 1941 - Japan begins assault on Rangoon, Burma.
- 1942 - Allies air attack on Den Helder.
- 1947 - Transistor invented by Bardeen, Brattain & Shockley in Bell Labs.
- 1954 - The first human kidney transplant is performed by Dr. Joseph E. Murray at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.
- 1958 - Abdallah Ibrahim forms government of Morocco.
- 1961 - Fidel Castro announces Cuba will release 1,113 prisoners from failed 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion for \$62M worth of food & medical supplies.
- 1964 - India & Ceylon hit by cyclone, about 4,850 killed.
- 1968 - 1st US case of space motion sickness.
- 1972 - 6.25 Earthquake destroys central Managua, Nicaragua, 10,000 die.
- 1982 - The United States Environmental Protection Agency announces it has identified dangerous levels of dioxin in the soil of Times Beach, Missouri.
- 1986 - Experimental airplane Voyager, piloted by Dick Rutan & Jeana Yeager, complete 1st nonstop, round-the-world flight without refueling lands
- 1990 - Slovenians vote to secede from Yugoslavia.
- 2002 - A MQ-1 Predator is shot down by an Iraqi MiG-25, making it the first time in history that an aircraft and an unmanned drone had engaged in combat.
- 2003 - PetroChina Chuandongbei natural gas field explosion, Guoqiao, Kai, Chongqing, China, killing at least 234.
- 2005 - Azerbaijan Airlines Flight 217 from Baku, Azerbaijan, to Aktau, Kazakhstan crashes shortly after takeoff killing 23 people.
- 2012 - 200 civilians are killed by Syrian government warplanes in Hefaya, Syria.



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KO VIEW

Kashmir's  
Lost Words

An Instagram post has landed like a bolt from the blue in Kashmir. In a single moment, it threatens to make the region's proud claim to learning and culture look hollow.

The post carried a simple appeal: these books need a home. Some are brittle, some torn, and a few are more than a hundred years old. Rare manuscripts and fragile texts sit waiting for a place where they can be preserved.

That such an appeal had to be made at all should unsettle us. Beyond mountains and lakes, Kashmir is a place shaped by words. Poets, scholars and translators worked in Persian, Kashmiri, Sanskrit, Urdu and Arabic for centuries. Books lived in homes, shrines and schools. Even over the last three decades of turmoil, families placed their faith in education. Learning was seen as honour, and books as a way forward.

But today, a private literary archive filled with out-of-print works is searching for shelter. Perhaps an NGO will step in. Maybe a literary institution will respond. So far, the silence has been loud.

This raises an uncomfortable question. How did a society so proud of its scholarship reach a point where its literary memory must beg for survival online?

The timing makes the moment harder to ignore. We live in an age of artificial intelligence, where knowledge arrives instantly and reading is reduced to summaries.

In such a world, rare paper looks expendable. Old books feel like clutter. Kashmir has not entirely abandoned libraries. The renovated S.P.S. Library on M.A. Road stands as proof. It is busy and full, drawing young people preparing for competitive exams. It serves a purpose, and it serves it well.

But exam halls are not archives. Reading rooms built for tests cannot replace spaces built for memory.

Who, then, is responsible for Kashmir's older knowledge? Who protects manuscripts that will never help someone crack an exam but help a society understand itself? How many readers are left for books that demand time, silence and patience?

What began as a simple Instagram appeal has become an alarm. If even the original caretakers of this archive felt forced to abandon its physical home, the failure runs deeper than funding or logistics.

When knowledge becomes a discarded pile of paper, the loss is slow but lasting. It shows up later, in thinner thinking and borrowed histories.

Kashmir deserves a living home for its words. And it should not take a social media post to remind us of that truth.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Saving for Retirement

Why saving early is now the only retirement plan many of us have.

Irshad Mushtaq

For years, a pension felt like a guarantee. You worked, retired, and a fixed income arrived each month. That promise shaped how people thought about old age. Today, that promise is fading. Most pensions once went to government workers and a small group of corporate employees. A retiree could count on a steady cheque, often enough to cover daily needs without worry. A monthly pension of 50,000 meant an annual income of 6 lakh, paid for life. The system worked because contributions were steady and time did the rest.

Now the ground has shifted. Many jobs offer no pension at all. Retirement still arrives around 60, but the safety net does not. That means millions must create their own version of a pension, using savings and investments.

This sounds daunting, but it is not impossible. The key lies in understanding compounding. If your money grows at about 10 percent a year, a corpus of roughly 60 lakh can generate an income close to 50,000 a month. That number feels large until you break it down.

Over a 35-year career, saving a small amount every month can get you there. Even a few hundred rupees, invested regularly and allowed to grow, can turn into something meaningful. Time matters more than size. Starting early gives your money room to work.

The real challenge is discipline. Saving feels optional when you are young. Life feels busy, expenses feel urgent, and retirement feels distant. But delay comes at a cost. Every missed year shrinks what compounding can do.

Financial security in old age is no longer about luck or employer benefits. It is about habits. Save early. Invest for the long term. Stay patient when markets wobble. Repeat this for decades.

A pension may not be promised anymore. But a secure retirement is still possible if you plan for it.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



Rambiara at Risk

Narrowing the river with concrete and steel could turn predictable floods into catastrophic disasters for Shopian and Pulwama districts.



Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

I have walked along the Rambiara River at Trenz in Shopian more times than I can remember.

The river has always been a part of people's lives here, a companion to orchards, fields, and homes.

In summer, children play in its shallow waters. When the rains come, it rises and roars, a reminder that it gives life but cannot be controlled.

Two years ago, everything along its right bank began to change.

Poplar and willow trees, acacia, apple saplings, and vegetable plots were cleared. Families who had farmed the land for generations lost their connection to the soil.

Local Halqa Majlis, the panchayat that should have been consulted, was bypassed, and the community had no say in a decision that uprooted their livelihoods.

Now, an industrial estate is rising on the very land that once held those orchards and fields.

The J&K State Industrial Development Corporation, SIDCO, is building factories and commercial complexes on 500 kanals, just thirty meters from the river.

The estate sits directly on a floodplain, the natural runway the Rambiara has always used to carry high waters during the rains.

Concrete barriers and factories will line the right bank, protecting buildings but forcing the river toward the unshielded left bank.

There, villages like Dombwani, Nazneenpora, Adoora, and Sheikhpura rely on agriculture, orchards, and small plots to survive.

These families have nothing to buffer them when floods arrive.

I have brought these concerns before the authorities in written representations. I even approached the National Green Tribunal in New Delhi, presenting maps, hydrology reports, and local testimony.

The silence in response has been deafening. Officials act as if the land is vacant and buildable, ignoring its ecological role and historical function.

The Rambiara is a major tributary of the Jhelum, originating in the Pir Panjal mountains, nourishing fields, orchards, and communities along its course. Its seasonal floods are nature's way of maintaining balance.

The consequences of ignoring this balance are clear.

Narrowing the river with concrete will choke its flow, pushing water onto the unprotected left bank. Poor families, farmers, and orchard owners will bear the brunt.

Homes may be lost, fields destroyed, and livelihoods wiped out.

When floods come, they will follow the path of least resistance, and the people of these villages will pay for mistakes made far from their homes.

Illegal riverbed mining has already weakened the banks, making the flood threat even greater.

This is not unused land. It was fertile, productive, and protected by trees that prevented soil erosion.

The Naid Gund residents who once farmed the riverbanks had no power to resist. Two years ago, their vegetable plots were removed without compensation or consultation, despite their status as legitimate stakeholders under state land laws.

Similar to highway and railway projects, where local panchayats are compensated during land acquisition, the people of Trenz were overlooked.

SIDCO and government authorities must recognize that the Rambiara is a floodway.

They must halt industrial expansion on the right bank, enforce responsible urban planning, and construct protective measures for the left bank communities before it is too late.

Ignoring the needs of the people while prioritizing industry will lead to environmental catastrophe.

The river will follow its natural course. It will reclaim the land forced into concrete, and the unprotected will suffer the consequences.

Walking along the banks today, I see bulldozers and steel frameworks where willows once swayed.

The river, patient as ever, continues to flow,

“

Walking along the banks today, I see bulldozers and steel frameworks where willows once swayed. The river, patient as ever, continues to flow, carrying the warnings of generations. If development ignores these warnings, the floodwaters will tell the story of loss. For the left bank families, the Rambiara will be a force that destroys what they have built with their own hands.

carrying the warnings of generations.

If development ignores these warnings, the floodwaters will tell the story of loss.

For the left bank families, the Rambiara will be a force that destroys what they have built with their own hands.

The author is an Acumen Fellow and Chair-man Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. He can be reached at bhatrajamuzaffar@gmail.com.



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Why Winter Break in Kashmir Deserves Rethinking

Every winter, when the cold settles deep into the valley, schools close for weeks. The government announces winter vacation for a clear reason.

During chilai kalan, the coldest forty days, classrooms are hard to heat, roads turn icy, and daily life slows down.

Students remain tied to homework and tuition classes through the break. Teachers step into a rare stretch of time.

Too often, this long break is treated as time off. It can be that. But it can also be time well used through rest, learning, and preparation for the year ahead.

The starting point is rest. Teaching drains the mind and body, especially in crowded classrooms with few resources. Sleep helps repair that fatigue.

Medical advice is clear. Seven hours of sleep supports both mental and physical health.

Winter makes slowing down easier. A short daily walk in the cold air or a sim-

ple indoor workout improves circulation and mood. Cutting down screen time also matters. Social media consumes hours and adds stress.

Replacing some of that time with a newspaper, a magazine, or a book sharpens focus and calms the mind.

Once rested, teachers can return to learning.

Winter offers uninterrupted time to review the subjects they teach. Reading new research, updating facts, and revising lesson plans keeps teaching fresh. Good lesson plans set clear goals that are realistic and time bound.

Teachers also benefit from learning beyond their own subjects. Reading history, science, or literature outside one's field often leads to better explanations and stronger classroom stories.

Online courses make professional growth easier than ever. Platforms like DIKSHA, NISHTHA, and SWAYAM offer free training designed for Indian teach-

ers. NCERT has also announced long term online diploma courses for middle school science teachers.

These courses focus on concept clarity, inquiry based teaching, and better assessment. For teachers in remote areas, such programs bring quality training home.

Social media does not have to be the enemy. Used wisely, it becomes a tool. Teachers can join online groups, share lesson ideas, ask questions, and learn from others facing similar challenges.

These exchanges often lead to new methods worth trying once schools reopen.

Winter is also the right time to build teaching resources. Teachers can prepare slides, collect videos, design quizzes, and create assessment tools that match the curriculum.

Doing this work now saves time during the busy school year.

Working on personal hobbies matters too. Painting, writing, reading, or learning music helps restore creativity.

Students enjoy seeing their teachers as people with interests beyond textbooks.

Some teachers use the break for travel, including religious visits, if budgets and permissions allow. Others give back closer to home by offering free tuition, or joining environmental clean ups.

These experiences deepen understanding and bring real life examples into the classroom.

Winter is also for family and colleagues. Sharing meals, ideas, and conversations rebuilds emotional strength.

When schools reopen, teachers greet students with warmth and care.

Winter in Kashmir closes schools. It also gives teachers the chance to return stronger, clearer, and ready to teach again.

Sincerely,

Shahnawaz Malik  
smaliklect@gmail.com



# The Life and Legacy of Syed Shahid Mahdi

A former Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia and United Nations expert, Mahdi inspired generations with his intellect, humour, and love for literature.

Prof. M. Aslam

I first met Syed Shahid Mahdi in early 2000s, shortly after he became Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. I was then serving as Director of the School of Continuing Education at IGNOU, New Delhi.

We sat together over coffee, a few books scattered between us, and soon discovered a remarkable connection rooted in a shared history with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

Between 1983 and 1988, Mahdi had served at FAO headquarters in Rome as Chief of Inter-Agency Affairs in the Director-General's office, while I was Director (Training) at the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

CIRDAP had been established at FAO's initiative, linking our professional paths across countries and years.

This coincidence became the foundation of a friendship built on shared work, curiosity, and a love for thoughtful conversation.

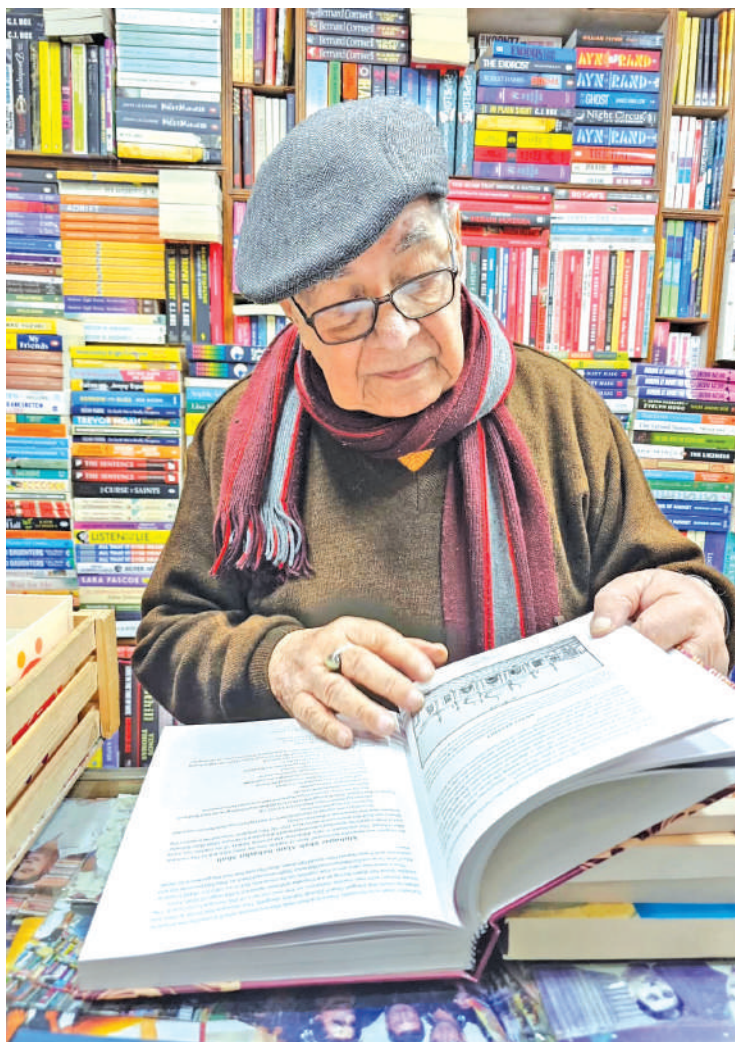
From that first meeting, Mahdi revealed a rare warmth and charm.

He loved Urdu literature, Persian poetry, and English classics. The man of letters could turn a simple discussion into an exploration of ideas, history, and human experience.

With him, even ordinary moments turned unforgettable, whether it was a story, a laugh, or a shared reflection on life.

Mahdi's professional journey was extraordinary.

A top-ranking student at Aligarh Muslim University, he earned his Master's in History and Political Science and began teaching at Aligarh



and Kurukshetra Universities in 1959.

In 1963, he joined the Indian Administrative Service, securing the second rank in his batch.

He served Bihar in multiple key roles, including Deputy Development Commissioner, Director of

Fisheries, Managing Director of the State Cooperative Bank, and later as Fertilizer Commissioner in New Delhi.

His international work was equally remarkable.

At the FAO of the United Nations,

**SYED SHAHID MAHDI CHERISHED LITERATURE AND DIALOGUE AS MUCH AS SCHOLARSHIP.** He delighted in

Urdu, Persian, and English writings, weaving poetry and stories into everyday conversations. His meetings became shared journeys of ideas, humour, and reflection, turning simple exchanges into moments of insight, curiosity, and lasting connection for all around him.

he coordinated with agencies such as UNESCO, ILO, WHO, and UNIDO, served as Chief of Inter-Agency Affairs, and represented India in FAO conferences, Executive Council sessions, and inter-governmental committees on agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and food standards.

He was FAO Representative in Nepal and Yemen and took on a special assignment in drought-stricken Ethiopia.

For over a decade, he held the senior-most professional grade in the UN system, shaping programs and budgets that touched lives across nations.

In his tenure as Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia from 2000 to 2004, Mahdi championed education as the foundation of society.

He urged parents to support their children, encouraged students to embrace opportunities with curiosity, and worked to make learning accessible and meaningful.

Alumni remember him for his energy, guidance, and encouragement, whether at a reception in Doha or on the campus of Jamia.

Beyond his work, Mahdi's life was

full of literary curiosity, humour, and kindness.

Friends recall evenings spent over coffee and books, conversations that wandered from poetry to agriculture, diplomacy, and the small wonders of life.

He had the rare gift of making people feel valued and inspired, turning every interaction into a moment of reflection and joy.

The doyan passed away in New Delhi on December 22, 2025.

His life left an indelible mark on education, public service, and international development.

He will be remembered for his intellect, humanity, warmth and poetry he brought to the lives of all who knew him.

— The author is the former Vice-Chancellor of IGNOU, New Delhi, and a longtime educator and scholar. He has worked extensively in continuing education and international development, including collaborations with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

## The Honour Trap

In the struggle against drugs, it is not substances alone that destroy lives. Fear of shame has become the deadliest force.

Ishfaq Nabi Qureshi

As I handle more and more cases of addiction in Kashmir, I have come to realise something disturbing.

Honour, or izzat, once a guiding principle for families, is becoming the biggest casualty of the drug crisis.

In the name of preserving reputation, many households hide addiction, delay help, and allow suffering to grow in silence.

This crisis is majorly about fear, secrecy, and a culture where the preservation of appearances often outweighs the protection of life.

I see it every day in my work at a rehabilitation centre.

Young people rarely arrive when dependence first appears. They come when it has already destroyed education, work, relationships, and self-esteem.

Many carry a fatigue born of years spent hiding, lying, and living under the weight of unspoken distress.

Families tell me they delayed help out of fear of neighbours, relatives, and being permanently marked by shame.

I have sat across from parents who lower their voices when speaking about their children.

Fathers avoid eye contact, burdened by concern and the pressure of honour. Mothers soften their words as though speaking aloud might make the problem permanent.

Pain is whispered because it is feared.

Few parents confess, with visible regret, that they knew help was needed years earlier.

They hoped marriage, re-



**I HAVE NOTICED ANOTHER CRUEL IRONY.** In protecting honour from public scrutiny, families allow addiction to take deeper root in private.

We need to understand that addiction does not follow social codes. That's why Kashmir faces a moral crossroads.

sponsibility, or routine could solve the problem.

Sadly, addiction is often seen as a flaw of character rather than a disorder of the mind and brain.

This misunderstanding breeds judgment instead of care. Communities respond with whispers rather than support. Professional intervention comes too late, and

the cost is enormous.

I meet young men who speak less about craving and more about invisibility, less about intoxication and more about emotional suffocation.

I hear that the substance was never the first refuge, silence was.

I know this from therapy rooms where they describe feeling unseen long before they ever touched drugs.

I see the cruel paradox unfold every day.

Families, trying to protect honour, often sacrifice the very well-being that honour is meant to safeguard.

Endurance is valued over expression, and suffering becomes normal. Silence masquerades as esteem but is, in truth, neglect. Patience is often prolonged fear.

In therapy, I help families

understand that recovery is about restoring honour as much as it is about abstinence.

When they finally seek help, relief often follows. Families are surprised to discover that treatment stops further loss.

I want families to understand that seeking help is a declaration of responsibility.

It is a commitment to life, healing, and accountability.

Ignoring addiction destroys social order. Untreated substance use fractures families, destabilizes communities, and passes trauma to the next generation.

I see younger siblings learning early that some truths must never be spoken aloud. But what is hidden often spreads.

I have noticed another cruel irony.

In protecting honour from public scrutiny, families allow addiction to take deeper root in private.

We need to understand that addiction does not follow social codes.

That's why Kashmir faces a moral crossroads.

Therefore, preserving appearances can no longer outweigh preserving lives.

True izzat is confronting the crisis, and seeking help simply affirms humanity.

I see hope when families speak and seek help. Courage reclaims life, but many still remain in silence.

How many more lives must be lost before honour is redefined as the bravery to face suffering?

— The author is a counseling psychologist based in Kashmir, specializing in addiction and mental health. He can be reached at qureshipsy1113@gmail.com.

**TRUE IZZAT IS CONFRONTING THE CRISIS, AND SEEKING HELP SIMPLY AFFIRMS HUMANITY.** I see hope when families speak and seek help. Courage reclaims life, but many still remain in silence. How many more lives must be lost before honour is redefined as the bravery to face suffering?



# Campus Happiness Improving In India, Academic Stress Still A Concern: Survey

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The latest Institution of Happiness (IOH) survey conducted by QS I-GAUGE has highlighted significant improvements in campus facilities, academic freedom and emotional support across Indian educational institutions, while also flagging academic stress and the need for greater flexibility as persistent concerns among stakeholders.

The large-scale survey, covering nearly 5.5 lakh respondents across 28 states and eight Union Territories, gathered feedback from students, teachers, parents and alumni from both higher education institutions and schools. The initiative aims to assess happiness, well-being and emotional resilience within India's education ecosystem.

According to the survey, a majority of stakeholders expressed positive sentiment

about institutional environments. However, respondents also called for reduced academic pressure, smoother workload distribution and the integration of well-being practices into everyday campus life rather than treating them as occasional initiatives.

"In its third year, the Institution of Happiness survey has expanded its scope to bring greater depth and authenticity to stakeholder voices. Our goal is to embed happiness and well-being as a lived culture across every educational institution," said Ravin Nair, Managing Director of QS I-GAUGE.

Higher education findings In the higher education segment, 67 percent of students rated emotional and mental support on campus as excellent, citing awareness drives, counselling services and approachable staff. At the same time, several students stressed the need

for routine, proactive well-being practices embedded into daily academic life.

While academic stress remained a common theme, 43 percent of students reported no stress or anxiety, reflecting improvement in campus environments. Others linked stress to heavy workloads, limited leisure time, personal challenges and relationship pressures, underscoring the need for flexible academic structures and time-management support.

Campus infrastructure also showed gains, with 78 percent of students rating facilities as good and 84 percent reporting that they felt safe on campus. Student participation and feedback mechanisms appeared strong, with 70 percent saying their ideas were consistently heard and 80 percent finding it easy to approach teachers or staff for help.

Among faculty members, 72

percent said they felt comfortable discussing stress with management, while 84 percent felt their academic freedom was respected, indicating a more open and supportive institutional culture.

Alumni responses showed that 83 percent had access to internship opportunities that strengthened their employability, though some flagged uneven implementation across programmes.

School education insights In schools, faculty and staff reported high levels of safety, with 96 percent feeling comfortable on campus during late hours. However, workload pressures persisted, with 55 percent of faculty reporting occasional stress or burnout, particularly during peak academic periods.

Leadership accessibility emerged as a strength, with 86 percent of faculty describing management as highly

approachable and 77 percent feeling they were treated fairly in institutional decisions.

Among school students, 61 percent said their efforts were always recognised, while 58 percent identified academic pressure as the primary source of mental stress. Peer support was viewed positively, with 56 percent rating mental and emotional support as excellent, though respondents stressed the need for better inclusion of socially isolated students.

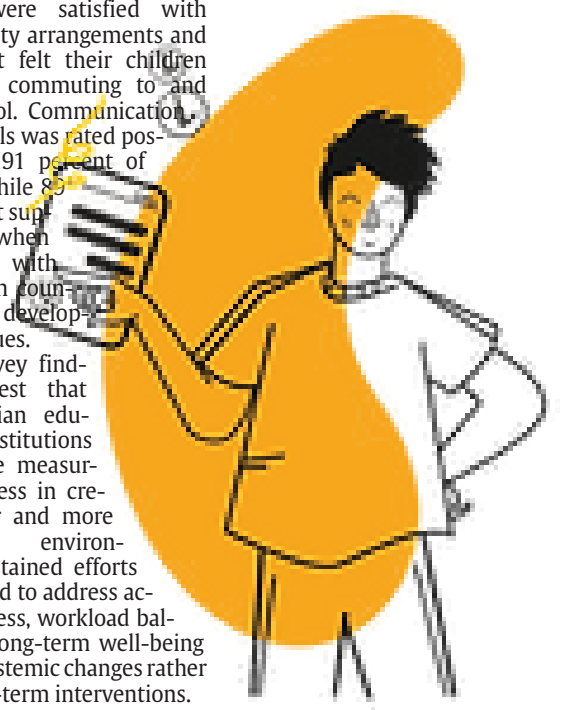
Only about half of the students felt fully prepared for future education or careers, pointing to a demand for stronger career guidance, skill-building initiatives and real-world exposure.

Parents stress safety, communication

Parents participating in the survey expressed high levels of satisfaction with safety and communication. About 93

percent were satisfied with school safety arrangements and 97 percent felt their children were safe commuting to and from school. Communication with schools was rated positively by 91 percent of parents, while 88 percent felt supported when engaging with teachers on counselling and developing mental issues.

The survey findings suggest that while Indian educational institutions have made measurable progress in creating safer and more supportive environments, sustained efforts are required to address academic stress, workload balance and long-term well-being through systemic changes rather than short-term interventions.



## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Kashmir Mourns

remained devoted to the medium. For the first three years of his career, he did not miss a single day of work.

"I chose radio because it was a culture of brotherhood," he once said. "There was no culture of bribes. That is what kept me there and kept me connected to the people."

Though he admitted that his income as a news editor of Daily Wular earlier was modest and often tight by the end of the month, it was still better than what many state employees earned at the time. What mattered more to him was integrity.

But before the microphone made him a household name, Farhad was already known as a poet. He participated in state-level symposiums and later appeared at a World Conference of poets. He was surprised when his name was announced. He often described that moment as humbling.

The bard-broadcaster translated two books during his career. After retirement, people kept asking him why he had not published his own work. Responding to that insistence, he published four books in September 2023. Most were compilations of his naats, poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Many of these naats were already being recited widely. "It was the reciters themselves who urged him to publish them, so the words could be preserved, corrected where needed, and recited properly," said Maqbool Hussain, his poet friend.

Lines such as "Ba-khuda saerie khudae asiha pardan andar" became part of Kashmir's cultural memory.

"For many years, people did not know what Farhad looked like," said his former colleague at Radio Kashmir. "He was simply a voice. Shopkeepers in cities, farmers working in fields, and people in distant villages knew the name Farhad because they heard him every day."

With the arrival of television and his frequent appearances on screen, people finally began to recognize his face. His popularity only grew.

"In those early days," his radio colleague continued, "there were only a few broadcasters like him, including Farooq Nazki. Later, many more would enter the field."

Farhad himself remained honest about change.

"Our generation had the least competition," he once said. "There were hardly any journalists in town. Today, even one neighbourhood has dozens. They work under constant pressure and scrutiny."

Farhad often said he had no single mentor. Anyone who taught him something, whether scholars, colleagues, or listeners correcting him, was a mentor. He said these exchanges with the public were his greatest source of learning.

Roshan Khayal Khan, who worked with him for many years, called his passing a personal loss. "As a senior broadcaster, he encouraged me when I joined the newsroom as a young and raw newsreader," he said.

Khan recalled working alongside giants such as Abdul Rashid Bandy, Syed Muzaffar Kashani, Moti Lal Khazanchi, and Makhan Lal Bekus. "I often felt like a minnow among them," he said. "Such was their stature and aura."

Farhad, he added, would sometimes recite newly written naats and poetry in his unforgettable style.

Shafiq Ahmad, who spent more than two decades with Farhad at Radio Kashmir, remembered him as graceful and generous.

"He was a professional of the highest standard," he said. "He dedicated his youth and later years to All India Radio, Delhi, and Radio Kashmir, Srinagar. His command over Kashmiri vocabulary was exceptional. Truly, he was a living legend."

Nisar Gilani, his college friend and debating partner, traced their bond back to S.P. College, Srinagar. Though one studied Arts and the other Science, literature brought them together. Under professors Ghulam Nabi Firaq, Sattar Shahid, and T. N. Bhan, they worked on the college magazine PARTAB.

The two travelled together on RTC buses toward their homes in Soura and Nowhatta, talking endlessly about life and the future.

In debates, Gilani spoke in English, while Farhad was the Urdu voice. In 1967, they travelled to Delhi for an inter-college competition. Decades later, living only a few hundred meters apart in Jammu, they still spent winter afternoons over tea, talking as if time had barely moved.

Farhad never received many major awards.

He never seemed to mind. He believed his greatest achievement was the love of the people.

There were moments when that love became overwhelming.

During a condolence visit to Sopore, someone recognized him while he was travelling by car. A crowd gathered so quickly that the army had to intervene to let him pass.

"That," Farhad once said, "was my biggest award."

The legendary broadcaster is survived by his wife, a former principal, and two daughters, one a banker and the other a professor. His family remained deeply devoted to his work and admired his creative genius.

Friends and neighbours remember community moments too.

Farooq A. Nawchoo, his neighbour in Umerhair, Buchpora, recalled sitting with him in his lawn, discussing life and worldly matters. Author Zahid G. Muhammad remembered him as a learned friend, and a mystic in later years, recalling his early writings in Daily Aftab under the pen name Kokab Kashmiri.

Farhad believed his survival through the years of violence and later through the COVID pandemic was a divine blessing. He often spoke of gratitude, faith, and patience.

"Today, his voice no longer rises from the radio each evening," said a colleague. "But people still remember how his voice carried the valley through fear, uncertainty, and silence."

### Cloudy Weather

below normal at many stations, while night temperatures have remained above normal at several places. Foggy conditions are also expected to continue in the plains of Jammu division, particularly during morning and night hours.

Meanwhile, the rainfall and snowfall had a positive impact on air quality across the Valley. The Meteorological Department said the Air Quality Index (AQI) showed significant improvement following the rain.

"There has been a clear improvement in air quality due to the rainfall. After this spell, the weather is expected to remain dry and cold from December 23 to December 30," another official said.

An advisory issued by the department warned that higher reaches of Kupwara, Bandipora and Ganderbal districts could receive moderate to heavy snowfall, especially during the night.

South Kashmir's Pulwama district recorded the coldest minimum at -3.2°C, followed by Shopian at -2.9°C and Awantipora at -2.2°C.

Central Kashmir's Srinagar district registered -0.4°C, Qazigund and Pahalgam -1.0°C each, while Gulmarg and Kulgam recorded 2.0°C and 1.2°C respectively.

In Jammu division, Katra recorded the lowest at 10.0°C, Jammu Airport 11.0°C, while Banihal and Bhaderwah registered 3.8°C and 4.4°C, respectively.

In Ladakh, Leh recorded a minimum of -4.2°C. Some stations, including Zojila Pass, Kargil, Doda, and Zethan Rafiabab, did not report data. The figures were compiled by Kashmir Weather.

An advisory issued by the department warned that higher reaches of Kupwara, Bandipora and Ganderbal districts could receive moderate to heavy snowfall, especially during the night.

Travellers and commuters have been advised to remain cautious, especially on high-altitude roads where slippery conditions may persist, and in the Jammu plains where reduced visibility due to fog could affect traffic movement. Authorities have urged people to follow traffic advisories and administrative guidelines during the ongoing winter spell.

### Fresh Snow, Rain

The recent precipitation slightly eased cold conditions across Jammu and Kashmir even as the India Meteorological Department forecast another spell of rain or snow over the next 12 hours.

The Traffic Police said movement on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway has been regulated from 4 pm on December 22 and will continue till 4 pm on December 23 due to the breakdown of two heavy motor vehicles, leading to congestion at several single-lane stretches.

In view of inclement weather and the forecast of further precipitation, commuters were advised to undertake travel only after confirming highway conditions through official Traffic Control Units. Passenger light motor vehicles were asked to prefer daytime travel on the Jammu-Srinagar axis, while heavy motor vehicles were advised to avoid night travel, particularly between the Nashri and Navyug tunnels.

Officials said that subject to fair weather and improved road conditions, two-way movement of light vehicles and regulated movement of heavy vehicles was planned on NH-44 in coordination with the Traffic Control Unit Ramban.

Several key roads across the region were closed due to snow accumulation. The Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road, Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri road and the Mughal Road were shut for vehicular traffic, while security force convoys were allowed to move only after clearance from traffic authorities.

The Gurez-Bandipora road was also closed following snowfall. In north Kashmir, several interior roads were cut off due to snow accumulation, prompting the administration to launch snow clearance operations to restore connectivity.

Flights Cancelled at Srinagar Airport Meanwhile, air traffic was also affected as IndiGo and SpiceJet cancelled two flights from Srinagar Airport due to low visibility. In a post on X, the airport authorities advised passengers to check their flight status with the respective airlines for updates and alternate arrangements.

Travellers were urged to follow lane discipline, avoid overtaking and adhere to official advisories to prevent congestion and ensure safety during the ongoing winter weather spell.

### Kashmir's Rs 6 Crore

inspected the site in August. Its report said the facility was constructed illegally without consent and warned that it threatens local habitats, biodiversity, and human health.

The report cited risks from leachate contaminating groundwater and increased disease from insects, birds, and stray animals.

Despite notices from the JKPC for violating environmental and waste management laws, the Municipal Committee of Awantipora continues to use the site as a dumping ground.

Dr. Bhat said around Rs 6 crore have been spent, but the plant produces no usable output.

JKCAG said it will submit a formal report to the government, the ACB, and the PAG's office, urging action to address the violations and protect local communities

### Security Grid

the markets was regulated during the operation, though authorities said efforts were made to minimise inconvenience to traders and shoppers. Locals described the security presence as visible but orderly, with business activity largely unaffected.

In central Srinagar, police personnel assisted by CRPF teams also carried out coordinated vehicle checking at multiple intersections. Vehicles were stopped briefly for document verification, and drivers were sensitised about security protocols. Officials said the checks resulted in only minor and temporary delays.

"No suspicious object or material was detected during the searches and inspections carried out today," officials said, adding that the exercise was purely preventive in nature.

Senior officers said the operations are part of a layered security plan activated every year ahead of Republic Day in Srinagar. The plan includes intensified patrolling, market inspections, technology-assisted anti-sabotage checks and increased deployment of security personnel at sensitive locations.

More such inspections and checks are expected in the coming days based on ongoing security assessments, officials added.

### Terrorists, Drug

Our constant aim and objective is to stamp out all such anti-national and anti-social activities in Jammu and Kashmir," Prabhat said.

Paying tribute to fallen personnel, he said 1,620 police personnel have laid down their lives in the line of duty. He said sporting events are organised in memory of these martyrs to honour their sacrifices and promote a spirit of patriotism.

Highlighting the police force's gallantry record, Prabhat said the Jammu and Kashmir Police has received one Ashok Chakra, seven Kirti Chakras, 33 Shaurya Chakras, 1,866 gallantry medals and 2,347 other awards in recognition of bravery.

Reiterating the department's commitment to martyrs' families, the DGP said financial assistance is provided through the police welfare fund to the best of the department's capacity. He said Special Police Officers are also provided ex gratia assistance, an amount of Rs 1 lakh is given for the marriage of martyrs' daughters, and education expenses up to Class 12 for their children are waived.

Emphasising youth engagement, Prabhat

said the Jammu and Kashmir Police regularly organises sports activities under its annual calendar and the Civic Action Programme to channelise youth energy in a positive direction.

He said the Martyrs Memorial Football Tournament was recently held in Srinagar, while the Martyrs Memorial Cricket Tournament is currently underway in Kathua. Similar events, including hockey, cricket and football tournaments, are organised across districts.

The DGP said the police has also organised several mass participation events such as "Jashn-e-Dal" at Dal Lake, "Pedal for Peace" cycle rally, "Run for Peace" marathon in Srinagar and the upcoming "Run for Unity" in Jammu.

On efforts to tackle drug abuse, Prabhat said the Jammu and Kashmir Police runs 10 drug de-addiction centres across the Union Territory, where around 3,000 people have received treatment and counselling this year.

He further said that under the Bharat Darshan programme, more than 1,000 youths have been sent to different parts of the country this year to expose them to India's cultural diversity and strengthen national integration.

### Cabinet Okays 5

Officers, a step intended to strengthen administrative functioning at the grassroots level.

In another key decision, the Cabinet cleared the enhancement of salaries of Village Level Workers and Multipurpose Workers by upgrading them from Level-2 to Level-4, addressing a long-pending demand of field-level staff.

Besides, the Cabinet approved a capital infusion of Rs 118 crore into the Anantnag Central Cooperative Bank and the Jammu Central Cooperative Bank to improve their financial health and strengthen cooperative banking in the Union Territory.

Sources said that the decisions cleared by the Cabinet will now be forwarded to the Lieutenant Governor for approval, following which formal orders will be issued.(KNO)

### India Must be

will no longer be an option but a necessity, where the effects of one domain will be immediately felt on to the other.

"What kind of threats and challenges should India be prepared for? This should be based on two facts. Both our adversaries — one is a nuclear weapon state and one is a nuclear armed state — hence we should not allow that level of deterrence to be breached," he said without naming Pakistan or China.

He said India has territorial disputes with both its neighbours.

"We should be prepared to fight short duration, high intensity conflicts to deter terrorism, something like Operation Sindoor. We should be prepared for a land centric, long duration conflict because we have land disputes. Yet, we should try and avoid it," the CDS said.

The country's top military officer stressed the need to exploit new domains and create asymmetry with a weaker adversary and yet not allow these asymmetries to be exploited by other nations.

Terrorism and grey zone warfare will remain a threat, which requires defensive as well as offensive response, he added.

Chauhan spoke about modern warfare being at a cusp of a third revolution in military affairs which he termed as convergence warfare.

This is happening because a number of technologies are simultaneously affecting the nature and character of warfare, he added.

Earlier a few technologies were influencing how wars are fought. Now it could be a number of technologies. AI, Quantum, edge computing, hypersonic, advanced material, robotics, he added.

He said multi-domain operations will no longer be an option but a necessity where the effects of one domain will be immediately felt on to the other domain.

"This was clearly visible in Operation Sindoor. In a war which lasted only about four days giving India decisive victory, all domains of warfare were used simultaneously with great amount of tempo," he said.

Multi-domain operations will also require multi-domain capabilities and cross domain command and control, he said.He said multi-domain operations will no longer be an option but a necessity where the effects of one domain will be immediately felt on to the other domain.

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Multi-domain operations will also require multi-domain capabilities and cross domain command and control, he said.

This will require extensive coordination and control between the Army, Navy and Air Force, but also cyber forces, space forces and forces operating in the cognitive domain, he asserted.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 to avenge the terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, leading to the deaths of 26 persons. India inflicted heavy damage on the terror infrastructure located in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir and Pakistan. Both countries agreed on cessation of hostilities on May 10.

### Why J&K's Power

faced an overall deficit of nearly 800 MW.

Hydro collapse, coal and solar dominance

In February, officials revealed that Jammu and Kashmir was relying on 85 to 90 percent coal and solar power procured from other states, as local hydropower generation dropped by nearly 90 percent during winter.

With minimal local generation, authorities acknowledged that the region was effectively without its own power base for several months, intensifying dependence on external sources.

Power procurement from markets

During the lean season in August, Jammu and Kashmir procured nearly 40 to 50 percent of its electricity from power markets. Official documents showed that winter non availability of internal generation forced reliance on interstate power networks, further increasing costs.

Grim deficit projections

Looking ahead, official projections paint a worrying picture. Jammu and Kashmir, along with Ladakh, may face energy deficits ranging from 4,293 MW to nearly 10,000 MW over the next decade.

Studies suggest that by 2034-35, contracted capacity will fail to meet demand, particularly during winter months, with unserved energy estimated at around 8,730 million units.

Peak-hour surcharge proposal

Amid rising costs, the power department proposed a 20 percent surcharge during peak morning and evening hours, excluding agriculture consumers. The proposal, aimed at managing peak demand during harsh winters, awaits regulatory approval and has sparked concern among domestic consumers.

Rising future demand

Official estimates indicate that Jammu and Kashmir will require an additional 4,625 MW beyond planned capacities over the next nine years. Power demand is projected to grow by nearly 50 percent by 2034-35, with an annual increase of around six percent.

Authorities have warned that without timely capacity expansion, forced load shedding could rise to nearly 29 percent of annual energy by 2034-35.

Persistent grid and voltage issues

Throughout 2025, the region struggled with persistent low voltage problems, especially in the Kashmir Valley. Despite repeated discussions at regional power forums, the issue remained unresolved.

The lack of capacitor banks to manage reactive power further worsened voltage quality, leading to higher system losses and penalties.

Winter shortages and curtailments

In December, Jammu and Kashmir faced a projected power deficit of over 34 percent, with availability at 2,460 MW against a requirement of 3,737 MW. Earlier in the month, Kashmir alone faced a shortfall of nearly 500 MW, triggering extended outages.

The government admitted to imposing four-hour curtailments in high-loss areas, while attributing unscheduled outages largely to unauthorised power use in flat-rate zones.

High losses, improved revenue

Despite persistent challenges, the power department reported financial gains. Aggregate technical and commercial losses stood above 41 percent, with Kashmir DISCOM continuing to perform worse than Jammu.

At the same time, revenue generation increased by nearly 250 percent over five years, with power tariffs contributing a growing share of non-tax revenue. Officials credited smart meters, billing improvements and enforcement drives for the turnaround.

A long road ahead

While 2025 saw incremental reforms and revenue gains, it also exposed deep structural weaknesses in Jammu and Kashmir's power sector. High import dependence, weak winter generation, grid limitations and rising demand continue to threaten supply reliability.

The promise of unrestricted power remains distant, underscoring that energy security in the region will require sustained investment, realistic planning and difficult policy choices in the years ahead. (KNO)



# Snowfall Spurs Surge in Railway Travel Across J&K



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Inclement weather in Jammu and Kashmir has prompted a surge in passengers at railway stations, with many preferring train travel between Jammu and Srinagar over road transport, officials said on Monday.

An official said that the recent snowfall in the valley led to a surge of local passengers and tourists, putting additional pressure on railway services. He said the railways

have made arrangements to manage passengers amid ongoing snowfall and rainfall across the region, which has disrupted road traffic.

Two Vandai Bharat trains are currently running between Srinagar and Katra in both directions, the official said, adding, "If passenger rush increases in the coming days, we will write to higher authorities for additional trains."

He said the Katra-Srinagar rail service is operating at full capacity to accommodate trav-

ellers affected by disrupted road movement.

Tourists also praised the railway service, saying it made their travel more comfortable than road transport. "We were worried about reaching Srinagar, but the Vande Bharat train made the journey smooth and hassle-free despite the snowfall," Pooja Sharma, a traveller, told KNO.

National Conference (NC) president Dr Farooq Abdullah also travelled from Katra to Srinagar aboard the Vande Bharat train.

## Snowfall Mesmerizes Tourists in Gulmarg

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The season's first major snowfall has transformed the famous ski resort of Gulmarg into a pristine winter paradise, rekindling the Valley's tourism spirit and winning the hearts of visitors from across the country.

Tourists, delighted by the snowfall and Kashmiri hospitality, have called on people nationwide to visit the region and experience its real charm and warmth.

A group of tourists from Assam, who were among the many to witness the first flakes, told KNO that they were overwhelmed by the experience. "It's like heaven here. The beauty, the peace and the warmth of people – everything is beyond imagination. We want everyone to come and see the real Kashmir, not the one shown on social media," they said, describing the Valley as completely safe and welcoming.

For first-time visitors, the snowfall turned into a memory of a lifetime. "It's great to be here in Gulmarg. The arrangements, hospitality and security are excellent. People are very caring and respectful; it truly feels like home," said a tourist from Varanasi, Uttar

Pradesh, who lauded local hoteliers and guides for their courteous service.

Others who revisited the Valley after years said they were amazed by the change in atmosphere. "I came back after two decades, and I'm really impressed. We went to Lal Chowk in Srinagar yesterday; everything was peaceful and vibrant. There's no fear; only beauty and development," said another visitor.

Tourism stakeholders, equally relieved by the snowfall, expressed optimism about the season ahead. "We were eagerly waiting for this snow, and Alhamdulillah it's finally here," said Tufail Ahmad, a local guide in Gulmarg. "This snow is a blessing. It will give a huge push to the tourism sector and skiing activities. We're hopeful for more in the coming days."

It is noteworthy that after several weeks of dry weather, nearly 10 inches of snow blanketed Gulmarg's meadows overnight, turning it into a picture-perfect destination. The snowfall ended a prolonged dry spell that had raised concern among tourism stakeholders and adventure operators ahead of the winter season.

## Vande Bharat Kashmir's New Lifeline: Farooq Abdullah

National Conference president and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah on Monday said that the Vande Bharat train has emerged as a lifeline for the people of Kashmir, especially during winter months when road connectivity is disrupted and flights are frequently delayed due to weather conditions.

Speaking to reporters, Abdullah said that snowfall, while challenging, remains a blessing for the Valley. "Snowfall is a blessing for us and we pray that Allah blesses us with more," he said. Reacting to the fresh snowfall, Abdullah said snow has always been a source of sustenance and hope for the region. "Snowfall is a blessing for us. May Allah bless us with more," he said.

Referring to the newly introduced Vande Bharat service, Abdullah said the train has provided much-needed relief to commuters. "The Vande Bharat train has become a lifeline for Kashmir. Even if roads are blocked due to snowfall or flights are delayed, the train will continue to run," he said as per KNS.

Abdullah said that winter in Kashmir often brings severe disruption to daily life, with highways getting closed for days and air travel becoming uncertain. In such situations, Abdullah said, the train offers a dependable alternative for passengers, students, patients and traders. (Observer News Service)

## 5 Fire Cases Reported In Kashmir Over 24 Hrs

Five separate fire incidents were reported from different parts of the Kashmir Valley during the past 24 hours, officials of the Fire and Emergency Services said on Monday. No loss of human life was reported in any of the incidents.

According to officials, the fires were reported from Sopore town and multiple locations in Kupwara district, affecting residential houses, cowsheds and a temporary shed.

In Sopore's Sher Colony C, a single-storey residential house was damaged after a fire broke out during the night. Fire tenders from the nearby station rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control, preventing further damage.

In Kupwara district, a cowshed was damaged in the Helmetpora Check area. Firefighters managed to contain the fire in time, stopping it from spreading to nearby structures.

According to KNT, another incident was reported from Narikoot in the Kalaros area, where a double-storey residential house caught fire and suffered partial damage before the flames were controlled by response teams.

Two additional fire incidents occurred in Kupwara. At Hempora in Qazibad, a single-storey cowshed was damaged in a fire, while in Sopore's Ibrahim Colony Arampora, a temporary shed sustained damage due to a minor blaze. (Observer News Service)

## Abandoned Horses Left to Brave Kashmir's Harsh Winter

Dabirah Hassan

**SRINAGAR-** Every winter in Kashmir brings with it a silent tragedy that often goes unnoticed. Horses that serve as a lifeline for hundreds of families during the tourist season are left to fend for themselves once the harsh cold sets in.

Across popular tourist destinations such as Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Doodhpathri and Yusmarg, horses are extensively used to ferry tourists and locals. During the summer months, these animals work relentlessly and generate steady income for their owners. However, with the onset of winter and a sharp decline in tourism, many horses are abandoned on roadsides and open fields, exposed to hunger, freezing temperatures and, in many cases, death.

With no shelter or care, several horses wander along highways, risking fatal accidents. Others stray into agricultural fields in search of food, causing losses to farmers while further aggravating the animals' suffering.

A video that recently surfaced on social media has once again drawn attention to the issue. In the video, Dr Sameer Siddiqui, Patron of Khanqah-e-Hy-

dari, expressed anguish over the treatment of these animals.

"These tongueless animals are made to work relentlessly during summers, and when winters arrive, when they need warmth and care the most, they are abandoned on roads to die," he said. "Many collapse after being hit by vehicles, while others suffer silently from hunger and cold."

Dr Siddiqui said a written complaint has been submitted to the Deputy Commissioner's office in Anantnag, urging the administration to take action against those who commercialise horses during the tourist season and abandon them during winter. He added that many owners desert the animals to avoid the cost of feeding and shelter, leaving them vulnerable to neglect and abuse.

Residents from affected areas have also shared distressing accounts. Mohammad Yaseen, a resident of Sallar in Pahalgam, said horses cannot raise their voice against cruelty.

"They help us earn our livelihood, yet we abandon them when they need us the most," he said. "Being human means showing compassion. Those respon-

sible should be identified and strict legal action must be taken against them."

Similarly, Mushtaq Ahmad from Ashmuqam said the situation has worsened in recent weeks.

"I have seen many horses roaming on the roads. Recently, two horses died after eating something poisonous, and another was hit by a car," he said.

Abid Abbasi, a resident of Budgam, also expressed concern over the growing number of stray horses.

"I have seen many stray horses roaming in our area where children often play. Dogs chase them, creating fear and danger," he said. "Instead of harassing these animals, people should inform the concerned department."

Farmers, meanwhile, report heavy losses due to stray horses entering agricultural fields. One farmer said his crops were completely destroyed, resulting in losses of nearly Rs 2 lakh.

As winter deepens, the suffering of these animals continues largely in silence. Locals and animal welfare advocates have appealed to the authorities to enforce strict regulations, fix accountability and remind people that compassion should not end with the tourist season.

## CM Omar Releases 'Samnvay', Showcasing J&K's Digital Transformation

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah released a coffee-table book titled 'Samnvay', which showcases the digital transformative journey of Jammu and Kashmir and documents the key projects and technological contributions of the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N) in J&K.

The launch event was attended by Minister for Science & Technology and Information Technology Satish Sharma; Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani; Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo; Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department Shantmanu; Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta; Commissioner Secretary GAD/Information M. Raju; Secretary IT Piyush Singla; Special Director BISAG-N; Secretary School Education; CEO JKeGA, and other senior



officers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister lauded BISAG-N for crafting practical, innovative solutions to complex governance challenges in Jammu and Kashmir, noting that many of these solutions have relevance beyond J&K. He said J&K's unique geography and climatic conditions necessitate a strong push towards digitisation, as technology enables uniform delivery of public services irrespective of location.

"Digitising governance and services ensures that people of Jammu and Kashmir receive the same quality of service, whether they live or work in remote areas or urban centres," the Chief

Minister observed.

Calling Samnvay a comprehensive snapshot of this cooperation, the Chief Minister said the publication offers an overview of how technology-driven interventions have supported administrative efficiency and service delivery.

Thanking the Director General of BISAG-N and his entire team for their sustained efforts, CM Omar Abdullah expressed hope that Samnvay would be the first of many such publications documenting future projects and milestones, as the Government of Jammu and Kashmir continues to leverage technology for better governance in the months and years ahead.

## SBI Donates ₹2 Lakh for Infrastructure Support to Abhedananda Home



As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, State Bank of India, through its Regional Business Office-I Srinagar donated Rs. 2 Lakh to Abhedananda Home, a welfare school for Deaf & Dumb for upgradation of infrastructure of Special School.

The handover took place during a brief function at the school, where the Chief Manager (Ops) formally presented the Air Conditioners and Water Dispensers to the Principal of Abhedananda Home in presence of other bank officials.

At SBI, we believe that meaningful CSR is about creating real impact in the lives of those who need it the most, particularly in sectors for welfare of the specially-abled. (Observer News Service)

## Year-End 2025: SDRF Conducts 110 Rescue Operations, Trains Over 55,000 People

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir's State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) marked 2025 with sustained preparedness and on-ground action, carrying out more than 110 rescue operations and training nearly 56,000 people across the Kashmir Valley. Alongside emergency response, the force laid strong emphasis on community awareness and capacity-building, reflecting a shift towards preparedness-driven disaster management.

Official data show that SDRF personnel responded to a wide range of emergencies during the year, including fires, snow-related incidents, floods and a landslide. The force also played a crucial role during the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, extending assistance to over 15,000 pilgrims dur-

ing the annual pilgrimage, which remained the largest mobilisation of SDRF resources in 2025.

According to KNO, the SDRF responded to 14 fire incidents, one landslide and multiple flood situations during the year, rescuing five lives in different operations. In addition, personnel remained deployed along pilgrim routes and base camps during the Amarnath Yatra, ensuring rapid response and safety support in challenging terrain and weather conditions.

A month-wise operational review highlights consistent activity throughout the year. January and February each saw five rescue operations, with over 3,400 and 3,500 people respectively sensitised through awareness programmes. March recorded similar rescue numbers, while April witnessed

an uptick with eight rescue operations and nearly 6,000 participants trained.

May emerged as a peak month for preparedness activity, with nine rescue operations and over 8,800 people trained, largely focusing on fire safety ahead of the summer season. June saw six rescue operations, followed by ten rescues in July as pre-Amarnath Yatra deployments began.

August marked one of the busiest periods of the year, with 22 rescue operations and assistance provided to 15,319 pilgrims during the Yatra. September recorded the highest number of rescue operations—33 in total—including multiple flood-related responses and animal rescue incidents. Activity continued through October and November with regular rescues and awareness programmes across districts.

## Jammu Airport Sees 13 Lakh Footfall, 10,900 Flights This Year

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The Jammu Airport has recorded steady growth in air traffic during 2025, handling over 13.5 lakh passengers and nearly 10,972 flight movements till mid-December.

As per the data accessed, the airport recorded 5,486 arrivals and 5,486 departures between January 1 and December 15, 2025.

During the same period, total passenger arrivals stood at 6,83,632, while departures were recorded at 6,70,764, reflecting a steady flow of domestic travellers throughout the year.

Cargo and mail operations also continued smoothly. Between January and November 2025, Jammu Airport handled 810.32 tonnes of incoming and 247.86 tonnes of outgoing cargo and mail, underscoring its growing logistical importance.

The Airport Director Jammu, Davender Yadav, told KNO that Jammu Airport witnessed steady passenger movement and consistent flight operations during 2025, reflecting the growing demand for air travel in the region.

Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SOPORE.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No- 147 of RnB-Sopore of 2025-2026 e-tendering DATED: 20.12.2025.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K, e-tenders (in Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/ Central Governments for the following works:

S.No.	Name of Work	Adv. cost	Cost of Tender Documents In Rupees	E/ Money	Time for completion of work	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contract or	M. H of Account	Position of TS
1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
1	Construction of Resource room at Girls Middle School Seelu.	10.15	600/-	20300	60 days	13.01. 2026	BEE/ CEE/ DEE	Samagra Shiksha	121 /TS of 2025-26 dated: 20.12.2025 Rs. 10.18 lacs
2	Construction of ACR at Primary School Daira Ismail Khan Gujjarpati	20.833	800/-	41666	120 days	13.01. 2026	BEE/ CEE	Samagra Shiksha	122 /TS of 2025-26 dated: 20.12.2025 Rs.20.84 lacs
3	Construction of Head Master room at Middle School Yembran Edipora.	10.15	600/-	20300	60 days	13.01. 2026	DEE/ CEE/ BEE	Samagra Shiksha	123 /TS of 2025-26 dated: 20.12.2025 Rs.10.15 lacs
4	Construction of ACR School Building at Middle School Dharambal	20.673	800/-	41350	120 days	13.01. 2026	BEE/ CEE	Samagra Shiksha	124 /TS of 2025-26 dated: 20.12.2025 Rs. 20.673 lacs

Project Authority: Project Director Samagra Shiksha J&K

Position of funds: Available

Position of AA: Accorded by Project Director Samagra Shiksha vide his order No: 314 of Chirag of 2025 dated: 1.12.2025.

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other detail's can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below.

1	Date of issue of tender Notice	20.12.2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	20.12.2025 to 12.01.2026 (upto 4 PM)
3	Bid Submission start date	20.12.2025
4	Bid Submission End date	12.01.2026 (4.00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bides ( online)	13.01.2026(12 PM) in the office of Ex. Engineer R&B Division, Sopore

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) with NIT No. Name of work and S.No. deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore. Besides that, the successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released after submission of a performance security of 5% of the quoted cost which will be released after completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

3(b). Geotag Photographs Minimum 03 sets (01 set Comprising of Photograph before, during and after execution of work) of size 26 cm x21 cm to be provided. Unbalanced Bid:- In case bid of the successful bidder is unbalanced, the Successful bidder will have to provide additional performance security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender receiving authority) vide Principal Secretary to Government Finance department's circular issued under endorsement No: DF-Code/ 441/ 2021-02-158 dated" 8.8.20025.

a: Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee/security percentage shall be Incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11 % with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

b: Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be Incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1 % of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

c: The additional performance guarantee percentage shall be rounded off to the next lower percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is below 0.5% or next higher percentage based on whether the decimal point of the percentage of bid price is 0.5% or more.

d: The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security. Additional performance security shall be taken only after approval of next higher authority. The additional performance security shall be released only after successful completion of work.

4 The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same web site in the office of the Tender receiving authority).

5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical Bids.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K UT, No 9349-58 Dated: 20.12.2025.

DIPK-9212-25 DT: 22 / 12 / 2025

Sd/- Executive Engineer, R&B Division Sopore



2nd WT20I

# Fielding Focus as India Face Sri Lanka Today

Press Trust of India

The Indian women's cricket team will look to raise its fielding standards by a few notches and build on a comprehensive opening win when it squares off against Sri Lanka in the second WT20I on Tuesday. Playing its first international game after a historic World Cup triumph last month, Harmanpreet Kaur's side didn't need to break much sweat in the batting and bowling departments during an eight-wicket win over the island nation. However, the team's fielding, especially catching, left a lot to be desired despite the bowlers managing to restrict the Lankans to a paltry 121 for 6.

"We are working on our fielding. Don't know why we keep dropping catches. It is wet out here, but it is not an excuse. That is something we really need to think about. In the next match, we will come about with better

approach," skipper Harmanpreet Kaur had said after the match.

The Indian team had a well-deserved six-week break following the World Cup high. The players converged for a week-long camp at the Centre Of Excellence in Bengaluru after that.

Some rustiness in fielding was pretty much expected and the seasoned skipper feels that the team would be getting into the groove very soon.

"We are playing after a month. We don't want to unnecessarily challenge ourselves. We just want to do well for the team.

"We just wanted to bowl first and see how it goes. We wanted to show the better approach," Harmanpreet had said.

On paper, India are overwhelming favourites to win the series against Chamari Athapaththu-led visitors.

In the form of her life, Jemimah Rodrigues commenced her post World Cup journey from



where she left during the title victory.

She looked in rhythm and was especially severe on Shashini Gimhani, a left-arm wrist spinner, which is a rare breed in women's cricket.

Gimhani bowled a lot of over-pitched deliveries and failed to get her length right and Rodrigues alone creamed her for half a dozen boundaries.

The biggest gain for India was 20-year-old left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma, who was recently ignored at the WPL auctions.

Although Vaishnavi went wicket-less, she gave away only 16 runs and didn't concede a single boundary.

For Shafali Verma, the series is an important one and she would like to be more consistent while batting in the format that suits her game.

In the opening game, Sri Lanka's inept performance didn't test India's batting much.

But the likes of Rodrigues, Harmanpreet, Deepti Sharma would like to be challenged during the course of this series before embarking on a tough tour of Australia after the conclusion of the Women's Premier League.

**Squads:**

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Harleen Deol, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Renuka Singh Thakur, Richa Ghosh (WK), G Kamalini (WK), Sree Charani, Vaishnavi Sharma.

Sri Lanka: Chamari Athapaththu (c), Hasini Perera, Vishmi Gunaratne, Harshitha Samarawickrama, Nilakshika De Silva, Kavisha Dilhari, Imesha Dulani, Kaushini Nuthyangana, Malsha Shehani, Inoka Ranaweera, Shashini Gimhani, Nimesha Madushani, Kawya Kavindi, Rashmika Sewwandi, Malki Madara.

## Spain Ranked Top Team In FIFA Men's Soccer Rankings



AP

**ZURICH:** Spain will end 2025 as the top men's team in the FIFA rankings.

There were limited changes in the new rankings published Monday, after the previous standings had been released on Nov. 19.

The top 10 remain unchanged with, in order, Argentina, France, England, Brazil, Portugal, Netherlands, Belgium,

Germany and Croatia following Spain.

Spain won World Cup Group E qualifying and will meet Uruguay, Saudi Arabia and Cape Verde in Group H at the 2026 tournament co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

FIFA said Vietnam, which climbed three places to 107th in the rankings, registered the biggest leap.

The next rankings will be published on Jan. 19.

## J&K Cycle Polo Teams Depart For Bihar

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu & Kashmir Cycle Polo teams have departed for Ara, Bihar, to participate in the 44th Junior Boys and 46th Senior Boys National Cycle Polo Championship 2025-26, scheduled to be held from 26th to 29th December 2025 at Ara.

The teams were selected after a rigorous selection process conducted by the J&K Cycle Polo Association, with the presence of observers from

the J&K Sports Council. The final team screening was also carried out by officials of the J&K Sports Council to ensure merit-based selection.

**Junior Team (Boys):**

Muhammad Ibrahim Shah (Captain), Mohammad Abdullah, Mohammad Abrar-Ul-Haq Rabbani, Mohammad Ienemul Haq, Shahzaib Rafiq, Mohammad Mukarram, Zaid Yousuf, and Mintaha Hussain.

The junior team will be guided by Vilayat Hussain (Coach) and Sahil Ali (Manager).

**SENIOR TEAM (BOYS):**

Aqib Maqbool, Hatim Showkat, Mohammad Taha, Sheikh Mohsin, Furkan Yaseen, S. Manjeet Singh, Aaqib Nissar, and Shujah Mohd Ishrat.

The Senior team will be accompanied by Bilal Ahmad (Coach) and Imtiyaz Ahmad (Manager).

The officials expressed confidence that the J&K teams will deliver a strong performance and bring laurels to the Union Territory in the prestigious national championship.



## Pakistan Colts Get Hefty Cash Reward For Asia Cup Title Run



Press Trust of India

**KARACHI:** Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Monday announced a special cash award of 10 million rupees for Pakistan's U19 Asia Cup-winning squad members. The Pakistan colts thumped India by 191 runs on Sunday to claim the title.

Sharif made the announcement at a reception for the team and officials in Islamabad where he lauded the team's performance.

Sarfraz Ahmed, the mentor and manager of the team, told the media after the reception that the Prime Minister has announced cash award of 10 mil-

lion (Approx USD 36,000) to each of the players.

Sarfraz said he was enjoying working with a bunch of talented players who had a great future in the sport.

Head coach Shahid Anwar credited win to a long process of selecting the squad and giving each player enough exposure of 50-overs cricket.

"The process started in June when we picked around 70 players after trials and then reduced the number to 20. Most of these players were then given chances to play 50-over cricket at domestic level," Anwar a former Test batsman said.

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