

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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Kashmir Rings In New Year With Tourism Revival



KO Photo | Abid Bhat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir's tourism sector witnessed a strong New Year revival on Wednesday, with heavy tourist footfall reported at key destinations, particularly Gulmarg and Pahalgam, bringing renewed optimism to the industry after months of uncertainty.

The world-famous ski resort Gulmarg emerged as the main hub of New Year celebrations, as hotels and guesthouses recorded near-full occupancy. Snowfall, music and winter festivities marked

the beginning of celebrations, prompting authorities to put in place elaborate security, crowd management and medical arrangements to ensure smooth conduct of events.

Chief Executive Officer of the Gulmarg Development Authority, Tariq Hussain Naik, welcomed tourists and said the fresh snowfall was vital for sustaining winter tourism. He described tourism as the backbone of the Valley's economy and said Gulmarg continues to remain the top choice for visitors from | **More on P6**

LG, CM Extend New Year Greetings



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday extended warm greetings to the people on the eve of New Year 2026, expressing hope for peace, prosperity and inclusive development in the Union Territory.

In his New Year message, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha conveyed his best wishes to all citizens, saying the New Year brings new hopes and opportunities in life. He urged people to commit themselves towards building a happier and healthier society and to work collectively to take Jammu and Kashmir to new heights of development and prosperity.

"Let us also dedicate ourselves to ensure the welfare and progress of Bharat and pledge to take on future challenges to realise our dreams, preserve our core values, align them with life goals and give shape to our aspirations," the Lieutenant Governor said, praying that the New Year brings joy and prosperity | **More on P6**



Warm *New Year* Greetings from Paros Health – Srinagar



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'Non-Veg Diet, Poor Sleep, Obesity Raise Breast Cancer Risk'

Press Trust Of India

Non-vegetarian diet, poor sleep and obesity have been associated with increased risk of breast cancer which is expected to rise by about 5.6 per cent annually leading to an estimated increase of 0.05 million new cases per year, according to an ICMR study. Reproductive timing, hormonal exposure and family history also influence breast cancer risk primarily among Indian women, stated the study conducted by ICMR's National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research based in Bengaluru. In 2022, an estimated 2.3 million women worldwide were newly diagnosed with breast cancer, resulting in approximately 670,000 deaths.

In India, breast cancer is one of the leading cancer sites, with an estimated 2,21,757 cases reported in 2022, accounting for close to a quarter (22.8 per cent) of cancers in women. This study was a systematic review of the Indian studies assessing breast cancer risk factors among Indian women published up to December 22, 2024. A meta-analysis using a random effects model estimated pooled associations between key risk factors and breast cancer. Among the 1,871 articles identified, 31 studies met the inclusion criteria of which case-control studies were of moderate to high quality. The study stated found that early menopause -- before 50 years -- showed an inverse association with breast cancer, whereas menopause after 50 years was associated with more than a twofold increase in risk.

Reproductive and hormonal factors, including age at marriage, pregnancy, abortion history, age at first and last childbirth, breastfeeding, oral contraceptive use, parity, and number of children were also examined. The risk of breast cancer increased progressively with age at marriage. Also, women reporting more than two induced abortions had 1.68 times higher risk compared to those with no abortions. Late age at first childbirth (more than 30 years) showed markedly elevated risks. Breastfeeding duration was not significantly associated with breast cancer risk in most studies, and oral contraceptive use did not show a significant association, the study said. Anthropometric findings indicate that abdominal obesity, measured by waist-to-hip ratio (more than or equal to 0.85), was more strongly

associated with breast cancer risk than BMI, suggesting that fat distribution, rather than total body mass, may be more relevant for Indian women. Lifestyle factors contributed significantly to breast cancer risk variability. A non-vegetarian diet was associated with increased risk, consistent with growing evidence on dietary fat intake and may be due to a higher intake of saturated fat and processed meats, which have been linked to estrogen production, the study said. Similarly, poor sleep quality was also associated with increased risk. As evidence of circadian rhythm disruption in cancer development grows, these findings align with this growing body of evidence. Findings from individual studies indicated that irregular sleep patterns and sleeping in a light-room support the possible role of melatonin

suppression in breast cancer development. Elevated stress levels were also reported as significant in individual analyses, although variations in measurement tools and the predominance of cross-sectional designs limit causal interpretation, the study said. Conversely, alcohol and tobacco use were not significantly associated with breast cancer risk, possibly reflecting low prevalence, underreporting, or population-specific biological differences. The Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer found in a large meta-analysis that alcohol consumption increases breast cancer risk by 7.1% for every 10 g consumed. Nevertheless, its contribution to breast cancer incidence in developing countries with low alcohol consumption (0.4 g/day) was negligible, and smoking had little to no independent effect.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I Furqaan Fayaz Rather want to change my name in my adhaar card bearing no 8038 7374 3978 from Furqaan Fayaz (old name) to Furqaan Fayaz Rather (new name). If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned centre within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
jvd

PUBLIC NOTICE
I Ashmal want to change my name in my adhaar card bearing no 5249 7210 9599 from Asha Bano (old name) to Ashmal (new name). If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned centre within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
jvd

PUBLIC NOTICE
The name & dob of my ward has been wrongly written in his/ her adhaar card bearing adhaar no 9708 8037 3316 as Imra Bin Irshad Instead Of Liyaan Saani & 22-08-2016 instead of correct DOB 22-08-2018. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar within Seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Irshad Ahmad Rather
F/O Liyaan Saani
R/O Sindoo Shirman Shopian
fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Saqib Ahmad Akhoo, son of Ali Mohammad Akhoo resident of Delina do hereby inform the general public that I have changed my name from Saqib Ahmad Akhoo to Saqib Ali. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified as Saqib Ali for all purposes including my bank records and all other official documents. Any person having any objection to the said change may contact the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objection is received, the change shall be treated as final.
Former Name: Saqib Ahmad Akhoo
Present Name: Saqib Ali
jvd

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. 2772 3564 0646. Now I want to change my name from Abdul Majeed Wani (Old Name) to Ab Majid Wani (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.
Name:- Ab Majid Wani
S/o:-Abdul Aziz Wani
R/O: ompora Budgam Budgam, Jammu And Kashmir- 191111
inf

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my Aadhaar Card bearing Aadhaar No. 4776 2607 5059. Now I want to change my name from Sameek Sajjad (Old Name) to Sameek Sajad (New Name). In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he or she may approach the concerned authorities within a period of seven days. After that, no objection shall be entertained.
Name:- Sameek Sajad
S/o:-Sajjad Ahmad Deenda
R/O: Main Road Ravarich Khansahib Budgam Budgam, Jammu And Kashmir- 191111
inf

PUBLIC NOTICE
The name of my ward has been wrongly written in his/her adhaar card bearing adhaar no 686759698202 as Batool Irfan instead of Dua Bint Irfan. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar within Seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Irfan Ahmad Kababi
F/o Dua Bint Irfan
R/o Khawaja Sahab Tehsil Baramulla
fko

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform general public that my name in Aadhaar Card has been incorrectly recorded as Meema Akhter while as my actual name is Shameema Begum. Now I want to apply for the correction of same Any person who has any objections or concerns regarding these changes is requested to file them in the concerned Adhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar within 07 days from the date of this notice.
Name: Shameema Begum
W/O: Mohammad Maqbool Malik
R/O: Astan Pora, Magam, Budgam, J&K
bmg

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM
Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0420160031309 issued in favour of MUDASIR AHMAD BHAT Parentage GULLA BHAT
Whereas an application has been received by one MUDASIR AHMAD BHAT Parentage GULLA BHAT wherein he claimed that the Fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as GH MOHAMMAD BHAT Which needs to be changed as GULLA BHAT. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.
Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir
mcb

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUB TRANSMISSION DIVISION-IIND, RAJBAGH, SRINAGAR
EXTENSION NOTICE 2
Due to poor response, the date of submission of bids in respect of below mentioned e-NIT is hereby extended with the details enumerated below:-
SNO E.NIT No. Name of the work Tender ID Cost tender document (In Rs) EMD Cost (In Rs)
1 eNIT No STD-II / 54 of 2025-26 Dated 29-11-2025 Raising of height for 33KV line for Lasjan Receiving station approach Road. 2025_ Rs 200.00 Rs 8800.00
Last Date of Bid Submission extended up to 06-01-2026; 4.30pm
Bid Opening Date 07-01-2026; 2.30pm
No.: STD-II/9914-16/TS
DIPK-NB-2894/25
Dated: - 31-12-2025
Sd/-
Executive Engineer, Sub Transmission Division-II,
Rajbagh, Srinagar.

Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL AND HOSPITALS DIVISION SRINAGAR
-----Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- exen-mechospgr@jk.gov.in
e-NIT No: M&HDS/TS /2025-26/124/e-tendering,
Dated: 30.12.2025
(Short Term)
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited in two cover system on percentage basis from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-
Name of Work Est. Cost (In rupees) Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) Time of completion (in days) AA Accorded Vide No: TS No Earnest Money Position of Funds
1. Comprehensive Maintenance Contract (CMC) for or No. (G+) 15 Passenger OTIS Make lift installed at Govt Bone & Joint Hospital, Srinagar (2026-27) 95,000/- 100 365 days 04 MCS of 2025 Dt:- 08.05.2025 M&HDS/TS/90 2% of the estimated cost Available with intending Department
2. Comprehensive Maintenance Contract (CMC) for or No. (G+) 26 Passenger OMEGA Make lift installed at Govt Bone & Joint Hospital, Srinagar (2026-27) 1,00,000/- 100 365 days 04 MCS of 2025 Dt:- 08.05.2025 M&HDS/TS/91 2% of the estimated cost Available with intending Department
The bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule given below:-
1. Publish date 30.12.2025 (18:00 hrs)
2. Period of downloading of bidding document 30.12.2025 (18:00 hrs)
3. Bid submission start date 30.12.2025 (18:00 hrs)
4. Bid submission end date 05-01-2026 (13:00 hrs)
5. Date and time of opening of bids 05-01-2026 (15:00 hrs)
Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
M&HD, Srinagar
Dated: 30.12.2025
No: M&HDS/TS/7485-89
DIPK-9512/25
Dated: 31-12-2025

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER
POSHAN PROJECT NARVAW
ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE
Applications on prescribed proforma (Annexure-I) are hereby invited from the eligible female candidates of the Panch wards/Municipal Wards shown against the below mentioned Panchayat Halqa /Municipal Wards, for the engagement of **Sahayikas (AWHs)** "preferably married" for the Anganwadi Centres of POSHAN Project Narvaw on "**Honorarium basis**". The applications along with required documents shall be deposited in the Office of the undersigned i.e Child Development Project Officer Narvaw by or before **16-01-2026** against proper receipt.
S.NO NAME OF THE DISTRICT NAME OF THE PROJECT NAME OF PANCHAYAT/ MUNICIPALITY WARD VACANCY OF SANGINIS (ANGANWADI Helpers) NO. OF PANCH WARD/ MC WARD NAME OF AWC
1 Baramulla Narvaw Binner-B Ward No:02 Binner-A
2 Baramulla Narvaw Ward No: 5Arampora Ward No: 05 Sarie-Bazar
3 Baramulla Narvaw Ward No: 5Arampora Ward No:08 Janbazpora-B
4 Baramulla Narvaw Ward No: 7 Azadgung Ward No:07 Gousia Colony
5 Baramulla Narvaw Fatghrah Ward No:09 Putalwan
6 Baramulla Narvaw Fatghrah Ward No:04 Fatghrah-A
7 Baramulla Narvaw Khawajabagh Ward No: 16 Ward No:16 Mir Mohalla Rangwar
8 Baramulla Narvaw Badmulla Ward No:03 Badmulla-A
9 Baramulla Narvaw Heevan Ward No:04 Mukdam Mohalla Heevan
10 Baramulla Narvaw Kitchama Ward No:06 Sheikh Mohalla Kitchama
11 Baramulla Narvaw Dangerpora Ward No:08 Taripora-A
12 Baramulla Narvaw Shutloo Ward No:01 Batpora Shutloo
13 Baramulla Narvaw Jadeed Ward No:11 Jadeed-B
14 Baramulla Narvaw Binner-A Ward No:08 Sheikh Mohalla Binner
Criteria for Selection of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) shall remain as envisaged in the Govt. Order No: 103 JK (SWD) OF 2023 Dated 28.4.2023 i.e.
> Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years shall be considered for the post.
> The candidate should be a domicile of the UT of J&K.
> The candidate should be a resident of Electoral Ward where Anganwadi Centre is located.
> Minimum qualification for Anganwadi Helper shall be Matriculation.
> In case no matriculate candidate is available in the panch Ward, candidates with qualification not less than 8th standard shall be considered.
> The committee shall select the most destitute/needly married women of the ward as helper from amongst those who fulfill the qualification criteria. In case no married candidate is available, unmarried candidate may be considered.
Self-attested copies of documents to be attached with the application form:-
♦ Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate based on the voter list of the ward certificate issued by BDO concerned as per format enclosed, (in case of any dispute as to residence for any reason then the residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered).
♦ Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsilidar concerned.
♦ Date of Birth Certificate.
♦ Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.
♦ Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.
All applicants to submit affidavit stating following facts duly attested by 1st class Magistrate:
a) Documents submitted are correct, without any mismatch, scanning, duplicate or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.
b) Maximum qualification is Class 10th for Anganwadi Helper and this is as per the facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.
c) The deponent has read the HR policy no. 222-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30.11.2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Anganwadi Helper.
Note: Prescribed Application Proforma can be had from the undersigned office "Free of Cost".
Child Dev. Project Officer
Poshan Narvaw
No:-CDPO/POSHAN/Adv/2025/ 676-689
(ANNEXURE-I)
Dated:- 30-12-2025
S.NO:
APPLICATION FORM FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SAHAYIKA (ANGANWADI HELPER)
1. Name of the District: - **Baramulla**
2. Name of the ICDS Project: **NARVAW**
3. Name of the Anganwadi Centre for which engagement sought.....
4. Panch Ward/MC Ward..... Panchayat Halqa.....
5. Name of the Candidate (In Block Letters)
6. Fathers Name (In Block Letters)
7. Marital Status: - Married /Un Married
8. Husbands Name (if married)
9. Place of Permanent Residence.....Village.....
Panch Ward Constituency & Number.....
Name of the Panchayat Halqa.....
House No..... (As per latest Panchayat Ward Electoral) Block.....
10. Address for Correspondence.....Mobile No.....
11. Date of Birth.....
12. Age as on 01-01-2026.....
13. Academic Qualification.....
S.No Examination passed Board/School Year of passing Marks Obt. Max. Marks %age
1 Middle
2 Middle
14. Do candidate belong to family of retired AWH (Yes/No).
15. Documents attached.
♦ Panch Ward Certificate /present /continuous, ward residence certificate based on the voter list of the ward certificate issued by BDO concerned (in case of any dispute as to residence for any reason then the residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered).
♦ Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsilidar concerned.
♦ Date of Birth Certificate.
♦ Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10th.
♦ Non employment Certificate from a Gazetted Officer.
♦ If candidate belongs to family of retired AWH, then copy of e-ration card/ any other valid proof.
Signature of Candidate
I.....D/o,W/o.....R/o.....
do hereby certify that the contents of the application given above are correct and true to the best of my knowledge. In case any of the above contents is found incorrect, the selection committee shall have the right to reject my application and similarly revoke my engagement order.
Signature of Candidate.
FORMAT FOR PANCH WARD CERTIFICATE TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.
This is to certify that the candidate named _____ is residing in Panch Ward _____ of Panchayat Halqa _____. It is further certified that her name is enlisted in electoral / voter list of the panch ward at S. No. _____.
No: _____
Dated: _____
Signature of Block Development Officer
DIPK-9510/25
dated: 31-12-2025

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New Year Scam Alert Issued In J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Cyber Crime Investigation Centre for Excellence has issued an advisory warning of a spike in cyber fraud cases involving fake New Year greeting links and malicious APK files circulating across digital platforms.

Officials said cyber criminals are exploiting the festive season by sending deceptive messages offering New Year wishes, gifts, or video cards through SMS, WhatsApp, social media, and emails. These messages often contain suspicious links or APK files with names such as "NewYear.apk".

Once clicked or installed, such files can compromise mobile phones and applications, leading to theft of personal data, banking credentials, and unauthorised access to social media and financial accounts.

The cyber wing advised the public not to click on unknown links, avoid installing APK files from unverified sources, and never share OTPs, PINs, or banking details. Citizens were urged to download apps only from official platforms like the Google Play Store or Apple App Store.

People facing | [More on P6](#)

Srinagar Stays Dry: Rain, Snow Forecast Misses Plains

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Contrary to the weather forecast issued by the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, the city did not witness any snowfall or rainfall on December 31, with Srinagar and its adjoining areas remaining dry throughout the day.

Earlier, the Meteorological Centre Srinagar had, through a post on its official X handle @metsrinagar, forecast the possibility of light rain or snowfall at many places across Jammu and Kashmir from the evening of December 30. The forecast further predicted light rain or snow at most places during December 31 and January 1,



with moderate snowfall expected over a few higher reaches of north and central Kashmir.

The weather office had also stated that plains of north Kashmir and | [More on P6](#)

New Year May Bring Rain, Snowfall Across J&K

- » Higher Reaches See Snow On Wednesday
- » Night Temps Above Normal; Weather to Improve Gradually From Jan 2

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Meteorological Department has forecast generally cloudy weather across Jammu and Kashmir, with light to moderate rain and snowfall expected at most places from Wednesday night till Thursday morning



or forenoon, officials said.

Snowfall was continuing late Wednesday evening in several areas of north Kashmir, including the ski resort Gulmarg and Sonamarg, as well as upper reaches of the Valley such as Gurez and Tulail.

According to the MET Centre Srinagar, a western disturbance is likely to affect the | [More on P6](#)

Fire Incidents Drop 25% In J&K In 2025

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Fire incidents in Jammu and Kashmir recorded a significant decline in 2025, with 6,039 cases reported during the year, down from 8,033 incidents in 2024, marking a reduction of nearly 25 per cent, officials from the Fire and Emergency Services Department said on Wednesday.

An official spokesperson said the department responded to 6,039 fire calls, along with 59 rescue calls and 53 false alarms, deploying 322 fire tenders and quick response vehicles with the support of 2,157 personnel across the Union Territory.

He said timely and coordinated operations helped save property worth approximately 5,000 crore, while losses were limited to around 300 crore, reflecting improved preparedness and faster response capabilities.

"A total of 1,994 fewer fire incidents were reported compared to the previous year, indicating the positive impact of sustained fire prevention measures and | [More on P6](#)

Several Flights Cancelled At Srinagar Airport

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Several flights at Srinagar International Airport were cancelled on Wednesday owing to adverse weather conditions and operational constraints, officials said. Airport authorities confirmed

that the affected services include IndiGo flight 6E-6164/6165, Air India flights AI-3423/3421 operating between Delhi and Jammu, AI-3422/3424 between Jammu and Delhi, and Air India flight | [More on P6](#)

that the affected services include IndiGo flight 6E-6164/6165, Air India flights AI-3423/3421 operating between Delhi and Jammu, AI-3422/3424 between Jammu and Delhi, and Air India flight | [More on P6](#)

Security Beefed Up Ahead Of New Year

Multi-Layered Arrangements At Tourist Spots, Entry Points

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Security has been intensified across Kashmir, particularly at major tourist destinations and key entry points, ahead of New Year celebrations, officials said on Wednesday.

They said a multi-layered security grid has been put in place to ensure peaceful festivities, with additional deployment of security forces at popular tourist locations. Checking and surveillance have been stepped up across the Valley, especially at venues where New Year celebrations are expected.

Additional checkpoints have been established at important entry and exit points, while increased patrolling, area domination exercises, and surprise inspections are being carried out along vital roadways to



prevent any untoward incident, officials said.

Vehicles are being thoroughly checked at Srinagar's entry and exit points, and heightened alertness is being maintained at all major tourist hubs, they added.

Last week, V K Birdi reviewed the overall security preparedness for the New Year during a high-level meeting at the Police Control Room, Kashmir. During the review, officers briefed the IGP on | [More on P6](#)



Tourists and locals ring in New Year 2026 amid snow, selfies, and celebrations on the white meadows of Gulmarg. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Op Sindoor Sent Clear Global Message: GOI

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Operation Sindoor stands as a "resounding testament" to India's unwavering resolve against terrorism, and with precision and professionalism, the Indian armed forces struck deep into the heart of Pakistan's terror infrastructure, delivering a "calibrated and decisive blow", the defence ministry said on Wednesday.

The operation sent an "unambiguous message" to the world -- "India will not tolerate terror, and those who sponsor it will face the full force of retribution", it said.

"This operation would be remembered as a defining moment in India's military history and as a symbol of military precision and national resolve," the ministry said in a year-end review statement.

Operation Sindoor was carried out in the early hours of May 7 eliminating at least 100 terrorists in response to the horrific | [More on P6](#)

One Glitch, Many Bills?

Srinagar Case Sparks Fears Of Smart Meter Accuracy

Farzana Nisar

Srinagar: A Srinagar household's discovery that a smart electricity meter allegedly doubled actual power consumption for nearly three years, acknowledged by the power department as a technical configuration error, has exposed potential gaps in billing safeguards.

While officials call it an isolated incident, the case highlights how undetected smart meter glitches can lead to prolonged overcharging, raising questions about system-wide audits, retrospective corrections, and consumer protection mechanisms across the smart metering programme.

The issue surfaced in Srinagar's Buchpora area, where the consumer, Dr Bashir Ahmad Makhdoomi, noticed persistently high electricity bills despite modest household usage following the installation of a



smart meter. The matter was taken up by his brother, M H Makhdoomi, a former vigilance awardee and whistleblower in a Bandipora PDD fraud case, who began tracking daily consumption data and comparing it with actual usage patterns.

According to Makhdoomi, despite repeated complaints over

the last three years and multiple inspections by the Power Development Department (PDD), the daily consumption readings continued to remain abnormally high. Even after replacing internal GI piping with PPR fittings at a personal cost of around 1.65 lakh, the electricity usage figures showed only

marginal reduction. "On days when only basic lighting was used, the meter still recorded consumption as high as 48 units, which was inexplicable," Makhdoomi said.

A detailed review of billing data downloaded from the PDD portal revealed that while the smart meter correctly recorded opening and closing readings, the system was billing double the actual difference. For instance, an actual daily consumption of around 23 units was being charged as approximately 46 units.

Makhdoomi said the anomaly was later acknowledged by the PDD helpline, which reportedly admitted that a configuration error may have occurred during meter installation. Following this, he personally visited the office of the Superintending Engineer at the PDD Data Centre in Bemina on December 31. | [More on P6](#)

Nimesulide Oral Formulations Above 100 mg Banned

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry has banned the manufacture, sale and distribution of all oral formulations containing the popular painkiller nimesulide above 100 mg, citing serious risks to health, an official notification said.

The decision was taken following a recommendation by ICMR, the apex health research body of India, it said.

"The Central government is satisfied that the use of all oral formulations containing Nimesulide above 100 mg in immediate release dosage form is likely to involve risk to human beings and that safer alternatives to the said drug are available," the notification issued on Monday said.

It stated that | [More on P6](#)

NIA Court Acquits Kulgam Trio Of Terror Charges

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A special NIA court here has acquitted three men accused of terror-related offences, holding that the prosecution failed to prove the charges beyond a reasonable doubt and that the case was riddled with material discrepancies and lack of corroboration.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge Manjeet Rai, designated under the NIA Act, acquitted Wajid Ahmad Bhat, Masrat Bilal Bhuru and Rameez Ahmad Dar, all residents of Kulgam district and directed their release forthwith if not required in any other case.

According to the prosecution, the trio had been

arrested on October 10, 2022, from a checkpost (Naka) near Command Post Batamaloo here. Police had said that grenades and magazines with live rounds were recovered from them and they were booked under the UAPA and Arms Act.

The court said it was settled that in a criminal trial, the prosecution must prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt and that suspicion, however strong, cannot take the place of proof in a criminal trial.

"The present case is marked by material discrepancies about how the accused came to be apprehended and what exactly was recovered from whom," the court observed.

On the absence of independent witnesses, the court noted that | [More on P6](#)

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KO VIEW

A Year to Repair

Kashmir enters 2026 carrying the burden of a hard year. It began with shock and fear after the spring attack. Business slowed almost overnight, tourism slipped, and daily earners felt the blow first.

Before people could recover, nature added its own damage. Cloudbursts, landslides, and broken roads cut off villages and markets. Later, highway closure created crop crisis.

None of this can be erased by hope alone. Joblessness remains higher than the national average. Skilled workers sit idle or do work far below their training. Homes face growing stress, with more family disputes and strained marriages.

These problems are not new, but they grew sharper last year. If 2026 is to mean anything, it must begin with facing these facts clearly.

Repair can start with work that already exists. Kashmir has skilled hands in wood, metal, textiles, food processing, and repair trades. Many were pushed out of their crafts by weak demand and poor access to markets.

Revising these skills needs short training updates, small loans, fair pricing, and local buyers. When skilled work returns, pride and income follow.

Young people also need room to build useful businesses. Beyond buzzwords, startups should solve daily problems. Waste collection, recycling, clean local transport, food storage, and basic health services are obvious gaps. Cleaner towns mean fewer illnesses and lower costs for families. Care for land and water protects farming and limits future damage from disasters.

Education must connect to real life. Degrees alone will not reduce unemployment. Schools and colleges should teach practical skills, digital tools, and small business basics that match the local economy. Learning should prepare students for work at home.

There is another issue that cannot be ignored. Family stress is rising. Financial strain, addiction, and poor communication are tearing at households. This weakens society from inside. Support systems, counseling, and honest discussion are as important as economic plans. No progress lasts if homes remain unstable.

This year calls for review. A social audit of how families spend, work, travel, and treat shared spaces can guide change. Without review, progress cannot be tracked, and mistakes repeat.

Mosques can play a larger role here. They are local institutions people trust and visit daily. Beyond prayer, they can host conversations on health, family well being, cleanliness, traffic sense, and civic duty. Change that starts at this level often spreads outward to schools, markets, and local bodies.

Government action matters, but public behaviour matters too. Order on roads, respect in public spaces, and responsible conduct shape how society functions.

If 2026 becomes only another year of wishes, little will change. If people choose repair over complaint and action over habit, this year can mark a real beginning.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Plans We Make

The rush to own a house often drains savings that could shape a child's future.

Irshad Mushtaq

Marriage in Kashmir is often followed by construction. A plot is bought, materials arrive, and a house begins to take shape. By the time a child enters primary school, many families are already deep into building their own home.

It feels natural. A house stands for success, stability and respect. Parents want their children to grow up under their own roof. Society expects it.

But this rush to build often comes with a cost that shows up later. A house takes most of a family's savings. Loans follow, along with years of repayments. School fees rise every year, and higher education costs even more. When children grow older and aim for professional courses or universities outside Kashmir, many parents realize they are unprepared.

At that point, choices become limited and stressful. A home offers comfort, but it cannot replace education. Education gives children skills, confidence and independence. It helps them find work, support their families and make decisions on their own terms. One educated child can change the future of an entire household.

Planning early matters. Setting aside money for education, even in small amounts, can ease pressure later. It allows children to choose courses based on interest and ability. It also saves families from heavy borrowing at the worst possible time.

This is not an argument against owning a home. It is an argument about timing. Education should come first. A house can wait or be built in stages. Walls can rise slowly. School years do not pause.

Kashmir values tradition, family and dignity. Those values are best protected when parents invest in learning as carefully as they invest in land. A strong education plan gives children something no house ever can: a future they can build on their own.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The New Year Begins

The year gone by tested our plans, patience, and dreams. Moving forward, we carry experience, hope, and a sharper understanding of what it means to keep going.

Nadeem Qayoom

Looking back, 2025 was a year that reminded us life rarely unfolds as planned.

Many of us enter the new year believing that our strength, energy, and good fortune are permanent. We convince ourselves that luck or timing has gifted us a smooth path.

The truth, however, is far less comforting.

Life rarely plays by the rules we set. It surprises, challenges, and humbles us.

We often design our lives as if they were blueprints. The young self draws maps for careers, relationships, and personal milestones, thinking that following the lines guarantees success.

Reality, however, redraws the lines. Plans falter, unexpected events intervene, and lessons arrive in the form of failure and discomfort.

Each setback demands we adjust our expectations, rebuild our strategies, and muster the courage to try again.

This process is not easy. It requires effort, reflection, and hope. But in our pursuit of convenience, many of us turn to digital worlds for comfort, avoiding the real-life lessons that test and strengthen us.

For countless people, 2025 was a year of failures and corrections. We endured doubt from others, questioned ourselves, watched well-laid plans fail, and carried the burden of mistakes both small and large.

Opportunities slipped by, and challenges sometimes felt overwhelming.

But, what held us together was our ability to endure and continue despite the disappointments and setbacks. We survived because we learned to keep going, even when the outcome was unclear. The year was also a mirror of broader life beyond the personal.

In South Asia, political changes sparked debates and forced citizens to reconsider the meaning of governance. Cyclones and floods tested communi-



“2026 may not be perfect, but it can be meaningful. Challenges teach us about life. Setbacks build patience. Success shows that effort counts. By embracing these truths, we carry 2025's lessons forward, with hope and learning.”

ties, prompting acts of solidarity. Sports, cultural events, and regional gatherings offered moments of pride and joy amid uncertainty. Ordinary people faced struggles and celebrated graduations, promotions, and family milestones.

These events, whether difficult or uplifting, showed that life does not stop for anyone. Lessons came in many forms: how to adapt, care, and move forward when circumstances shift without warning.

Now, we step into 2026. Some may greet it with relief, others with caution. A new year feels like a fresh start, but the truth is more complex.

Life does not offer guarantees.

Planning for months or years can give a sense of certainty, but reality often proves us wrong. The strong falter, the untested rise, and everything we think we understand can change in a moment.

The challenge ahead is to meet struggle with clarity and purpose. We cannot promise that pain or failure will vanish. What we can carry forward is experience, awareness, and the willingness to act despite uncertainty.

The year ahead offers opportunities for growth, learning, and achievement, if we approach it with both caution and determination.

By facing difficulties directly,

celebrating small victories, and learning from mistakes, we make progress that lasts beyond fleeting moments of success.

2026 may not be perfect, but it can be meaningful. Challenges teach us about life. Setbacks build patience. Success shows that effort counts.

By embracing these truths, we carry 2025's lessons forward, with hope and learning.

The author is a regular columnist, and can be reached at nadeemqayoom@gmail.com

The Art of Beginning Again

As 2026 unfolds, we carry forward the lessons of the past: patience, courage, and the joy of persistence.

Muzamil Arif

power to define and gained the power to instruct. Judgment sharpened, while perspective widened.

One of the clearest lessons was the return to self-trust. Depending less on validation and more on conviction changed the quality of daily life. Independence came to mean confidence in decision.

From this shift grew steadiness: reactions softened and intentions clarified.

Beyond individual experience, the wider world reflected similar strain. Conflict, instability, and uncertainty



The past year will be remembered for what it clarified. Perspective was earned, conviction was restored, and belief in one's capacity to endure and grow was reclaimed. That is what moves forward into 2026.

The author is a poet from Doda. He can be reached at muzamilarifbatt@gmail.com.

Letter to Editor

Integrity at the Patwar Khana Will Decide Kashmir's 2026

On a frozen winter morning in south Kashmir, a farmer stood outside a Patwar Khana before the office opened. He held a faded folder tied with string. Inside were land papers passed down from his father. He had come for a simple mutation.

The poor peasant had already been told, off the record, what it would cost to move the file. The office door was still shut. The transaction had already begun. This is why 2026 matters.

Corruption in contemporary India is often discussed in abstract numbers and high-profile cases. It begins with land records and the Patwari in Kashmir.

A single entry decides ownership of a field, entitlement to compensation, the right to sell or borrow, and whether a family spends years in court. No official meets citizens more frequently at the

State's first point of contact.

The claim is simple. If India is serious about reducing corruption, reform must begin with the Patwari.

Land remains the main asset for most households. In Jammu and Kashmir, nearly every family depends on agriculture, orchards, or property tied to revenue records. The Patwari controls the Jamabandi, mutations, and field maps.

A delay is leverage, an error is power, and a correction can be justice.

During reporting trips over the past year, I met shopkeepers in Anantnag waiting months for records needed for bank loans. I met widows in Pulwama sent back repeatedly for documents already submitted. I met young men told to return "tomorrow" until they paid. These were not Delhi's policy lapses but local decisions.

Digitisation is changing the system. Online land records and e-mutations are expanding. This is the moment of pressure. Technology reduces discretion. It also exposes old habits. Honest officers adapt fast. Corrupt ones resist or manipulate delays outside the screen.

This is where leadership matters. A Patwari who refuses illegal payment resets expectations for an entire area. Senior officers who back such staff send a clear signal. Those who look away encourage the opposite.

The argument that corruption is "systemic" is convenient and false. Systems do not demand bribes. People do. The law already prohibits this conduct. Salaries are already paid. The gap is enforcement and personal resolve.

Citizens also shape outcomes. Many pay because it feels faster. That choice

strengthens the same structure that hurts the next person. Refusal is costly in the short term. It is effective in the long term.

As 2026 begins, the farmer outside the Patwar Khana still waits. The question is whether this year brings another transaction or a clean decision.

The change required is clear: zero tolerance at the first point of contact, protection for honest officials, consequences for misconduct, and public refusal to pay.

Landowners, voters, and believers in the law should pay attention. When the office door opens, governance is decided, file by file.

Sincerely,
Mohammad Amin Mir
miramin354@gmail.com

Kashmir in Kolkata's Imagination

Kashmir in Bengali mind is a land of longing and beauty, traced through literature, film, and history.

Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

Rabindranath Tagore's letters and travel writings gave Bengalis their first glimpse of Kashmir, a place of calm beauty and deep reflection.

The tall mountains, sky-reflecting lakes, and the poetic pace of life in Srinagar spoke directly to Bengal's love for nature and inward thought.

Kashmir thus became a mythical refuge, a place where time seemed to stand still and beauty endured beyond the demands of everyday life.

This vision was reinforced over the decades through cinema and popular culture, which carried the valley into stories, songs, and screens across Bengal.

After independence, films cemented Kashmir as a dream destination in the public imagination.

Honeymooners drifting on Dal Lake, the soft snow of Gulmarg, and the gentle flow of Srinagar's rivers and streets became enduring images, shared and celebrated across Bengal and beyond.

Kashmir came to symbolize love, poetry, and aspiration. In stories, novels, and poems, it embodied longing, often remaining untouched by the political and social realities shaping the valley.

Bengali cinema, especially in its golden age, absorbed these images with subtlety. Even when films were set elsewhere, references to Kashmir suggested a gentle escape, a place of beauty and desire beyond the routines of daily life.

By contrast with more exuberant Hindi portrayals, Bengali representations emphasized introspection.

As political unrest in Kashmir intensified from the late 1980s onwards, this view shifted. Writers and filmmakers could no longer depict Kashmir purely as a dream. Lit-



KASHMIR IN KOLKATA'S IMAGINATION IS DEFINED BY ITS COMPLEXITY. It resists simplification. Bengal's engagement with the valley reflects a willingness to listen, reflect, and feel. In a public discourse often impatient with nuance, this imaginative space preserves a crucial capacity: to see Kashmir as a land of people, stories, and culture, rather than just a problem to be solved.

erature and parallel cinema began to show it as a space of strife and strength, where beauty coexisted with human suffering.

Contemporary Bengali literature often engages Kashmir with empathy and moral questioning. Writers reflect on the valley's situation through parallels with Bengal's own history: partition, displacement, and communal unrest.

The shared sense of loss creates a bridge of understanding.

Poetry, in particular, holds beauty and pain together. Snow, lakes, and changing seasons carry both emotional depth and political pulse, while human suffering stands in stark contrast to the valley's timeless allure, deepening reflection and resonance.

Documentary cinema and translations of Kashmiri authors further enrich this conversation, offering voices and perspectives that move beyond nostalgia or myth.

Independent filmmakers capture daily life, voices, and struggles that mainstream media overlooks. Translations of Agha Shahid Ali, and others offer Bengali readers an insider's perspective, challenging nostalgic or exoticized images.

These narratives highlight life, longing, and loss. Younger writers and filmmakers, attuned to digital media and global debates, approach these stories with care, questioning who tells them and how.

Silence, absence, and fragmentation are used deliberately, acknowledging the limits of outsider perspectives.

Kolkata's own collective memory deepens this connection.

Stories of refugee influxes, and of divided homelands create empathy with Kashmir. The valley resonates as a human and historical reality. Coffee house discussions, college classrooms, and literary gatherings frame the region through civil rights, and ethical responsibility.

Engagement is reflective, questioning, and attentive to moral complexity.

Travel experiences further shape perceptions. Bengalis who visit Kashmir return with stories of hospitality, conversation, and everyday life.

They recall shopkeepers and students facing challenges with hope. These accounts circulate in personal networks and social media, offering a counterpoint to conflict-centered

narratives and humanizing the valley in the public imagination.

Religion, while present, rarely dominates the Bengali view of Kashmir. Instead, attention is drawn to culture, language, history, and art.

Sufi traditions, syncretic practices, and local crafts are appreciated as part of India's plural heritage.

Even in digital spaces, images of snowfall, saffron fields, and strife coexist, reinforcing the multiplicity of Kashmir's realities: culturally rich yet politically constrained.

Generational shifts further nuance perception.

Older generations recall Kashmir through literature, early cinema, and nostalgic travel, while younger generations encounter it through digital media, images, and debates, often seeking multiple perspectives.

This results in layered, sometimes conflicting images of the valley, but also fosters critical engagement and ethical awareness.

Ultimately, Kashmir in Kolkata's imagination is defined by its complexity.

It resists simplification.

Bengal's engagement with the valley reflects a willingness to listen, reflect, and feel.

In a public discourse often impatient with nuance, this imaginative space preserves a crucial capacity to see Kashmir as a land of people, stories, and culture, rather than just a problem to be solved.

— The author is an International Tagore Awardee and multilingual writer of 20+ books, former Affiliate Faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University, and ex-Head of English at Dum Dum Motijheel College. He can be reached at profpratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com

Chai & Corruption

A first-hand look at how small acts of corruption shape daily life in Kashmir, where even honesty bends to survival.



THE SYSTEM ADJUSTS AND RULES STRETCH UNTIL THEY RESEMBLE CUSTOMS. And corruption, renamed chai, slips into daily life so smoothly that only honest people feel awkward.

Mohammad Ilyas Bhat

After nearly ten months in Bengaluru, working in hybrid seed production, I returned to Kashmir craving ordinary things, like fresh air, familiar faces, and a sense of ease.

I hoped for a break from the constant alertness my work demands, where even a tiny impurity can ruin an entire season.

I thought home would slow me down. Instead, it pushed me into motion.

Within days, I realized I was taking a course no one ever advertised but everyone seemed to know.

Corruption, unspoken and unhidden, played out in shops, kitchens, and government counters. And it had a name everyone used, almost casually: chai.

On my second day back, my gas cylinder ran out. I booked a refill online and felt briefly modern, even hopeful.

Technology, I assumed, had removed old tricks. It has only polished them.

The morning began with the milkman. As he poured milk into my bucket, I noticed it was too thick. I said so.

He stopped, looked at me, and spoke without drama: "Don't take milk today. You're right. I mix it. I can't live otherwise."

It was a fact framed as a defence.



Here, honesty bends before survival. Pure milk costs more than most can manage. The milkman sees himself as practical rather than dishonest. This is how things run: no bribe, just chai.

Later, I went to the ration ghat. The government rate was fixed. The machine printed a receipt. Twenty kilos cost ₹320. The slip said ₹298. I pointed this out.

"That extra ₹22 is compulsory," the dealer said. "I come from far."

Compulsory for what, I did not ask. Distance has its price, but so does inconvenience and simply showing up.

The extra money was chai for the effort. A fee paid by people who cannot afford to argue.

At 3:15 in the afternoon, the LPG delivery man arrived. I handed him ₹1,000. He owed me ₹31. He kept it and smiled.

"That's my tip," he said, "for delivering within one day."

Speed has a price now, but delay costs nothing. Offer chai, if you want things done on time.

Still holding on to civic hope, I walked into a Jan Aushadhi store. These shops exist to make medicine affordable. I asked for a basic gel. The man pushed a branded tube toward me. MRP ₹140. He offered it for ₹20, like a secret bargain.

When I asked for the official prod-

uct, he refused: "This one is better."

Better for him, I thought. Public medicine cuts into private margins. Welfare is welcome only when it does not disturb business. No demand was made. Just chai, served hot as a free advice.

I called the drug inspector. He knew my voice. Familiarity matters more than paperwork. He promised action, inspection and accountability.

"This time, definitely," he said. I smiled.

Here, corruption does not fear exposure. It works openly, sharing chai, smiling as if nothing is wrong. No one asks for it directly. Everyone expects it. Say no, and you become difficult. Pay up, and you are seen as sensible.

The system adjusts and rules stretch until they resemble customs. And corruption, renamed chai, slips into daily life so smoothly that only honest people feel awkward.

The real loss is that it has settled in, served hot, passed hand to hand, and accepted as part of the day.

Change is always coming, they say. It always is.

— The author works in agricultural seed production and is currently writing his first short story anthology from Kashmir.

Serpents & Stones

Robin Koul takes readers deep into Ramban, a mountainous district in Jammu & Kashmir, revealing its sacred traditions, local deities, and the history written into the land.

Shoaib Aslam

High in Ramban's rugged mountains, stories cling to every rock, river, and ridge. Sanctuaries rise on remote peaks, deities watch over villages, and centuries-old rituals shape daily life.

In *Ramban: Folklore—History—Ophiolatry*, Robin Koul brings these hidden worlds to light, capturing a culture where history, faith, and landscape are inseparable.

Koul is an engineer, but his curiosity and love for folklore define his work. He has travelled to remote villages, climbed rugged paths, and spoken with elders who carry knowledge passed down through generations.

His book is the result of years of careful observation, research, and a desire to preserve traditions that were close to being forgotten.

At the heart of the book is Ophiolatry, or the worship of snakes, a practice that continues to shape the lives of people in Ramban.

Mountains, streams, and stones are connected to Nagas, divine figures who influence daily rituals and personal devotion.

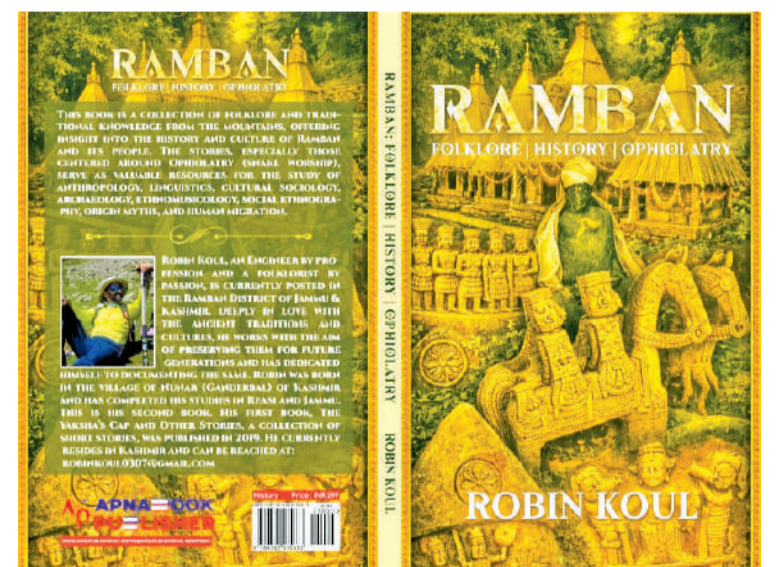
One of the most striking examples is the Shankpal Devta temple, sitting at 9,530 feet on the Shankpal ridge. Built entirely from stone without any mortar, the temple shows how faith is rooted in the land.

The climb through forests and rocky terrain reflects the effort of devotion, and Koul's writing captures both the physical challenge and the spiritual importance of the journey.

Koul also introduces other deities with care and attention. Lakru Dada Ji, often pictured riding a black horse in white robes, is seen as a guide and protector for villagers and travellers. His temple on the route to Gham village is a place for offerings of jaggery and Shereni.

Baba Bansul is remembered for wisdom, Chousar Naag Devta for protection and well-being, and Traman Devta for maintaining harmony in villages. Kicholi Mata, connected to Lakru Dada Ji, draws prayers for health and care.

Each shrine, deity, and story adds layers to Ramban's cultural life, giv-



KOUL'S WRITING IS SIMPLE, OBSERVANT, AND FLOWING. He does not rely on flourish, but his words carry the texture of forests, mountains, and temples. He lets stories, rituals, and landscapes speak for themselves.

ing the reader a sense of a world where every place carries meaning.

The book also highlights historical landmarks. Gajpat Fort, perched high above the valleys, recalls past struggles, imprisonment, and local resistance.

Koul's account shows how history and belief are closely linked, and how the people of Ramban live their faith alongside memory and legacy.

What makes this book remarkable is its attention to detail and scope.

Koul has documented more than fifty sacred and historical sites, many previously unknown outside local communities. He traces the origins of each story and shrine, showing how these traditions continue to shape the present.

The book is a chronicle of a culture that might have disappeared without this careful work, offering readers a chance to understand a region where land, belief, and history are intertwined.

Koul's writing is simple, observant, and flowing. He does not rely on flourish, but his words carry the texture of forests, mountains, and temples. He lets stories, rituals, and landscapes speak for themselves.

Scholars of folklore, anthropology, and history will find much to explore, but the book also invites any reader to experience Ramban's life and culture firsthand.

Ramban: Folklore—History—Ophiolatry preserves a living culture, capturing voices, places, and practices at risk of fading.

Koul shows that Ramban's mountains hold memory, devotion, and identity.

For readers who follow him, the book reveals a world where stories, faith, and land are inseparable, and every shrine, river, and ridge tells its own story.

— The author is a Srinagar-based avid book reader and reviewer.

J&K Assembly Budget Session Likely in 2 Phases

Agencies

Srinagar: The budget session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly is likely to be held in two parts- the first before the holy month of Ramadan and the second after Eid-ul-Fitr, sources said.

Sources said that the NC-led government is considering holding the budget session in two phases.

"If all goes as per plan, the first part of the session will be held before the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. With the commencement of Ramadan, the Assembly will go on a month-long recess, after which the session will resume following Eid-ul-Fitr," sources disclosed, adding that the government is currently contemplating the timetable along these lines.

Sources privy to the development said the government is seriously considering recommending convening the session from the first week of February 2026.

"As per the proposal being

discussed, the Assembly would go for a month-long recess from February 18 or 19. The session will then resume after Eid-ul-Fitr," they said.

According to sources, the issue is likely to be decided in the next cabinet meeting, which will be held after the return of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah from abroad.

In that meeting, the cabinet is expected to make a recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor for convening the Assembly to hold the budget session.

It is worthwhile to mention that the Finance Department had started preparations for the 2026-27 budget in October 2025 by asking departments to submit budget estimates for the next fiscal year and revised estimates for the current fiscal.

The Finance Department has also completed budget discussions with all departments.

The budget for 2025-26 was presented by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the J&K Assembly on March 07, 2025. (KNO)

Low Pay, Long Hours & Lack Of Security Push Gig Workers To The Edge

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Long working hours, shrinking incentives, low monthly earnings and the absence of insurance or medical support have left gig workers struggling to make ends meet, prompting many of them to voice their grievances and seek stronger social security measures.

Several gig workers said they work 11 to 12 hours a day for modest daily earnings, with no assurance of support in case of injury or illness.

Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, a delivery worker who has been in the sector for eight years, said he earns around Rs 1,300 a day, while incentives have steadily reduced.

"We work from morning till midnight, but if even one order is unsuccessful, incentives are cut. Monthly earnings are around Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000. After paying rent and children's school fees, we are left with nothing, and without any savings. We want a fixed salary and insurance," Sharma said.

Another worker involved in this unorganised sector,



Mahesh, said meeting daily targets has become mandatory, forcing them to work beyond their assigned shifts.

"We start very early and our children hardly see us in the morning. Even on festivals, when others celebrate, we continue working. I recently met with an accident and fractured my finger, but the company did not provide any medical help,"

he said.

Highlighting issues of dignity and safety, gig worker Shakir Raza said they often face unreasonable demands from customers.

"Even in extreme heat, we are asked to climb to the fourth or fifth floor, otherwise complaints are filed on the app. If a customer cancels an order, penalties are imposed on us,"

he said, urging companies and customers to understand their situation.

Amid these concerns, BJP MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat said the government was sensitive to the issues faced by gig workers and those in the unorganised sector. She said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently shown concern for gig workers, who have become an essential part of modern life.

"The Prime Minister remains deeply concerned about gig workers and labour law reforms. Gig workers are an integral part of today's lifestyle. The government is concerned about their safety and facilities and will address their demands," Sehrawat said, adding that society must also change its mindset and treat gig workers with respect.

Gig Worker Association secretary Nitesh Kumar Das said, in Delhi, gig workers are not protesting through a conventional street demonstration. Instead, they are observing a coordinated flash strike.

This means workers are

collectively logging off and not accepting orders during peak demand hours, especially lunch and dinner slots, when platforms are most dependent on their labour. The aim is to expose how platform systems rely on constant availability of workers, while denying them basic protections, Das said.

AAP MP Raghav Chadha, in a post on X, said, "Today, gig workers have announced a strike to highlight their grievances. I raised their issues in Parliament earlier in the month, expecting responsible engagement from the platforms."

He urged the management of online delivery companies to intervene immediately, engage dialogue and arrive at a fair, humane solution. "India's growth cannot run on fear and exploitation. It must run on dignity and justice," he added.

The Gig and Platform Service Workers Union announced a nationwide strike on the New Year's Eve to collectively raise demands concerning the rights, welfare and dignity of gig and platform workers across India.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Rings

across the country. He also assured that all necessary measures were in place to maintain a vibrant and secure environment for tourists.

The Department of Tourism, in collaboration with the Gulmarg Development Authority, also inaugurated a seven-day Winter Carnival featuring snow sports, skiing events, musical evenings and cultural programmes, aimed at showcasing Kashmir's winter charm and promoting a message of peace and hospitality.

In south Kashmir's Pahalgam, tourism activity picked up significantly on the occasion of New Year, with hotel bookings touching nearly 60 per cent, according to local stakeholders. The revival coincided with a week-long Tourism Festival organised by the Pahalgam Development Authority, which began on December 25 and concludes Wednesday night.

Hoteliers said the New Year rush has brought much-needed relief after a prolonged lull following the April 2025 attack. Tourists from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi and neighbouring states were arriving in good numbers, they added.

PDA Chief Executive Officer Hilal Ahmad said the encouraging response reflects growing confidence in Kashmir as a safe and attractive destination. He said the festival was organised to revive winter tourism and promote Pahalgam as an all-weather destination, adding that efforts are underway to introduce snow-based activities, particularly in Betaab Valley.

Tourists visiting Pahalgam expressed delight over the festive atmosphere and natural beauty, while local ponywalas and vendors said the return of visitors has restored hope after a long dry spell.

Meanwhile, Director Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajad said Kashmir's tourism industry is witnessing a strong revival and is poised for substantial growth in the coming years. Speaking at the opening of the Winter Carnival in Gulmarg, he said the current tourist influx indicates a promising "mega year" ahead for the sector.

He also announced the revival of an integrated advanced skiing programme across Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg and Doodhpathri, with around 200 students being trained to nurture local talent and promote Kashmir on national and international platforms.

Officials said sustained infrastructure upgrades, new initiatives and a focus on safety and quality services are helping restore momentum, as New Year celebrations across the Valley set a positive tone for the winter tourism season ahead.

LG, CM Extend

to everyone.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended New Year greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, wishing them peace, prosperity and good health in the year ahead. He expressed hope that the New Year would usher in renewed optimism, harmony and fresh opportunities for progress across the region.

The Chief Minister said the occasion offers a moment to reflect on shared aspirations and reaffirm the collective commitment towards building a more inclusive, resilient and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir. "May the New Year bring happiness to every household and inspire us to work together with dedication and mutual respect for the overall development and well-being of our society," he said.

Calling upon all sections of society, especially the youth, Omar Abdullah urged them to contribute positively towards peace, unity and sustainable growth, and to play an active role in shaping a brighter future for the region. He also prayed for a year marked by stability, economic growth and strengthened bonds of brotherhood among the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Srinagar Stays

Ganderbal could receive light snowfall during the late night of December 31 or early morning of January 1, while plains of Srinagar and adjoining areas, along with south Kashmir, might receive mixed light rain or snow without any significant ground accumulation. It was also mentioned that a few lower and middle reaches could experience the season's first snowfall.

However, Srinagar witnessed clear to partly cloudy skies for most of the day, accompanied by cold conditions but without any

precipitation. No snowfall or rainfall was recorded in the city till late evening, leaving residents and tourists disappointed on New Year's Eve, a time traditionally associated with snowfall in the Valley.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Director Meteorological Department Kashmir, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said the forecast had not gone wrong. "The prediction did not go wrong. There are still chances of light rain," he said, adding that overall weather activity is expected to remain subdued in the coming days. "In the coming week, there isn't any significant weather activity expected," he added.

He said the western disturbance which hit Kashmir was weak.

Earlier, Independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif also echoed similar views, suggesting limited chances of snowfall over the plains. "Given the current setup, I would say there's around an 80 per cent chance that no significant precipitation or snow will occur over most plains," he posted on "X"

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Arif stressed the need for a strong western disturbance to bring meaningful winter precipitation to the region. "We really need to pray for a good-intensity western disturbance, as the next 10 to 15 days are largely pointing towards dry weather, with no strong WD in sight," he said.

The Meteorological Centre has already indicated that weather conditions are likely to improve from the afternoon of January 1, with no significant weather activity expected till January 12, raising concerns over a prolonged dry spell during the peak winter period in Kashmir.

Several Flights

AI-2431/2434 on the Leh sector.

In addition, SpiceJet flight SG-160/161 operating from Delhi to Srinagar was also cancelled.

Officials said one of the Air India flights had to be called off due to inclement weather in Delhi, while the SpiceJet service was cancelled for operational reasons. The cancellations caused inconvenience to passengers, many of whom were left awaiting further updates from airlines.

Passengers have been advised to check the status of their flights with the concerned airlines before leaving for the airport, as more cancellations or delays may occur depending on prevailing weather and operational conditions.

Airport authorities said they are monitoring the situation closely and will issue updates as soon as fresh information is received.

New Year May

Union Territory from the night of December 31 to January 1, bringing light to moderate rain or snowfall to most areas.

A few higher and extremely high reaches of north and central Kashmir may receive moderate to heavy snowfall during this period, the department said.

On January 2, weather conditions are expected to remain partly to generally cloudy, with brief spells of light rain or snowfall at isolated places.

From January 3 to January 5, the weather is likely to remain partly cloudy, while January 6 may witness generally cloudy conditions with the possibility of light snowfall over isolated higher reaches of north and central Kashmir.

As per the forecast, weather conditions are expected to remain partly cloudy from January 7 to January 8, partly to generally cloudy on January 9 and 10, and partly cloudy again from January 11 to January 13.

The department has advised travellers and transporters to follow traffic and administrative advisories, particularly in view of the likelihood of snowfall in higher reaches. It has also warned of moderate fog over the plains of the Jammu division, with dense fog at isolated places during the next 48 hours.

Meanwhile, minimum temperatures across Kashmir remained a few degrees above the freezing point at most places.

Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 2.3 degrees Celsius, while Qazigund recorded 1.4 degrees and Pahalgam 1.8 degrees.

Gulmarg continued to remain below freezing, recording a low of minus 3.0 degrees Celsius. Pulwama and Shopian recorded sub zero temperatures of minus 0.2 degrees and minus 1.1 degrees, respectively.

In the Jammu region, minimum temperatures were relatively higher, with Jammu city

recording 10.4 degrees Celsius, Katra 10.0 degrees and Reasi 10.8 degrees.

Banihal recorded a low of 5.9 degrees Celsius, while Bhandarwah recorded 4.0 degrees.

In Ladakh, Leh recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.0 degrees Celsius.

Fire Incidents

increased public awareness," the spokesperson said.

During the year, the department conducted 3,728 fire safety audits in hospitals, hotels, nursing homes, educational institutions, government buildings and commercial establishments. Recommendations were issued to strengthen fire-fighting infrastructure, evacuation systems and overall safety standards.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department also provided support during Operation Sindoor by deploying fire tenders and trained crews, particularly in Poonch, Uri, Sopore and Kupwara districts, the official said.

In addition, comprehensive fire safety arrangements were put in place during the annual Amarnath Yatra, with over 30 temporary fire stations established along the Baltal and Pahalgam routes to ensure the safety of pilgrims and prompt emergency response throughout the pilgrimage period.

Op Sindoor Sent

Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 innocent civilians.

Indian armed forces had launched a series of precision missile strikes on nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir under this military action, which resulted in a four-day conflict between India and Pakistan.

The ministry said the operation stands as a "resounding testament to India's unwavering resolve against terrorism -- a bold demonstration of decisive leadership, joint operational synergy and the nation's intent to safeguard its sovereignty against brutal killings by Pakistan-based terrorists".

The operation showcased "unmatched multi-domain capability" and was executed simultaneously across the traditional domains of land, maritime and air as well as the emerging domains of cyber, space and information warfare.

"With strategic foresight and restraint of the forces, Operation Sindoor highlighted India's sustained focus on capability development, i.e., from intelligence dominance to cutting-edge technology and joint operational readiness," the ministry said.

The operation was a "classic demonstration of execution of will of the nation" through "seamless integration of all organs of the government". The success of home-grown technologies and weapon systems in combat was validation of the success of the vision of "Aatmanirbharta" espoused by India, it said.

Operation Sindoor also marked a milestone in India's journey towards technological self-reliance in military operations -- whether in drone warfare, layered air defence, or electronic warfare. It was also a shining example of tri-Service coordination, the ministry said.

While the Indian Air Force launched attacks from the air, the Army soldiers stood firmly on the Line of Control and "delivered a befitting reply to every Pakistani action", the statement said.

The Indian Navy maintained its strong posture in the North Arabian Sea, "sending a clear message to Pakistan that India is capable and prepared to strike at every vital Pakistani base, from sea to land, the ministry quoted an earlier statement of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Singh had told Parliament that Operation Sindoor had only been halted, and not ended, it said.

"If Pakistan again tries to carry out any nefarious act, we are fully prepared for an even more intense and decisive action," Singh had said.

The ministry said Operation Sindoor was powered by the country's "transitional shift in its policy against terrorism".

From successfully destroying terror camps in Pakistan and PoK and safeguarding the borders from the "neighbouring country's misdeeds that followed", the nation, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Defence Minister Singh, "sent a clear message to its adversaries that the sovereignty, unity and integrity of Bharat will never be compromised", it said.

Singh had also said that the action was completely in self-defence, and was "neither provocative nor expansionist".

On May 10, at approximately 1:30 am,

Pakistan launched a "massive attack" on IAF bases, army ammunition depots, airports, and military cantonments using missiles, drones, rockets, and other long-range weapons, along with electronic warfare technologies, it said.

However, the Indian air defence system, counter-drone system, and electronic equipment "completely thwarted the attack by Pakistan". The adversary failed to hit any targets, and none of the vital assets were damaged, the ministry said.

"Major airbases like Chaklala, Sargodha, Rafiqi, Rahimyar Khan, Jacobabad, Sukkur, and Bholari were struck, and the mission was successfully accomplished. On May 10, Pakistan's DGMO contacted India's DGMO and appealed for a halt to military operations. On May 12, formal talks took place between the two DGMOs, and both sides decided to cease military operations," it added.

The effective use of state-of-the-art 'Made-in-India' weapons during the operation is testimony to the progress the country has made to attain self-reliance, which, in today's geopolitical landscape, is "fundamental to ensuring strategic autonomy".

From Operation Sindoor to Mission Sudarshan Chakra vision, from record defence production and exports to equipping the soldiers with latest weapons and technologies, and finalising deals for the future, "2025 gave a glimpse of a secure, self-reliant and prosperous India," it said.

New Year Scam

cyber fraud or suspicious activity have been asked to report incidents immediately through the national cyber crime helpline 1930 or the official cyber crime reporting portal.

Security Beefed

security arrangements and deployment plans.

Birdi directed that all preparations be completed well in advance and instructed officers to strengthen checking at naka points, particularly during night hours, and maintain strict vigilance at vulnerable locations across the Valley.

Emphasising the need for sustained alertness, he called for enhanced area domination within respective jurisdictions and strict monitoring of elements posing threats to peace and security.

With an anticipated surge in tourist footfall around New Year, police said special focus has been laid on securing cable car terminals, forest tracks, crowded tourist spots, and major access routes to ensure safe and smooth celebrations.

NIA Court Acquits

the alleged place of occurrence is a busy public area with regular traffic and surrounding shops, facts conceded by three prosecution witnesses. "Yet, no shopkeeper, commuter, passer-by or CRPF personnel from the nearby bunker has been examined, nor even cited as a witness," the court said.

The explanation that people fled on seeing grenades, he court said, was found to be inconsistent across witnesses and appeared "more an afterthought than a consistent circumstance."

In a case under the UAPA and Arms Act where the prosecution story hinges on recovery, the non-joining of independent witnesses, when clearly possible, weighed against the prosecution, the court held.

The court further noted that there were serious lapses in handling case property, including failure to record identifying marks or numbers, preserve seal impressions, or maintain proper Malkhana records.

The court found contradictory versions on whether the grenades were sealed when presented to the bomb disposal squad, coupled with the absence of seal descriptions.

"This contradiction prevents this Court from safely concluding that the grenades examined by the BD Squad are the same as those allegedly recovered from the accused at the Naka," the judge said, adding that once the identity of the case property is not firmly established, expert opinion loses probative value.

The court also found discrepancies on how the accused were apprehended, whether they tried to flee, were standing and called for search on suspicion, or had already been apprehended when another officer arrived.

Even the direction from which they came varied between Batamalo Chowk and Rekha Chowk, the court said. "While each

discrepancy might be minor alone, cumulatively they cast doubt on the prosecution's version," the court said.

On the UAPA charges, the court said that mere possession allegations were insufficient without proof of specific intention or nexus with terrorist activity. The only material relied upon were alleged disclosure statements claiming association with banned outfit Al-Badr and transport of arms between Kulgam and Qamarwari. However, the court said, no recoveries followed, no suspect at Qamarwari was identified or arrested, and no call detail records, technical evidence, communication data, financial trail or other corroboration was produced.

Concluding that the prosecution failed to establish conscious and unauthorised possession of the alleged arms on 10 October 2022, the court said that the charge under Sections 7/25 of the Arms Act was not proved and extended the benefit of doubt to the accused. Ultimately, the court acquitted the trio and ordered their release if not required in any other case.

Nimesulide Oral

it is necessary and expedient in the public interest to prohibit the manufacture, sale and distribution of the drug in the country for human use.

"Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and after consultation with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board, the Centre, hereby prohibits the manufacture, sale and distribution of the drug, with immediate effect," the notification said.

Srinagar Case

Officials there, including a senior officer on the verge of retirement, accepted the presence of a technical glitch and directed corrective action. Subsequently, the department adjusted the account and reflected a credit balance of about 34,500.

However, Makhdoomi has alleged that the correction was applied only for a limited period from February 2025 to December 2025, covering roughly 10 months, despite the error persisting since the installation of the smart meter nearly three years ago.

"Over 3 lakh has been paid during this period. Correcting just 10 months of billing does not address the full extent of overcharging," he said, adding that the department is legally bound to provide complete billing data from the date of meter installation.

The credited amount has been adjusted as an advance in the consumer's account, rather than refunded, and does not include any interest on excess collections, Makhdoomi pointed out.

He has sought full retrospective correction of bills, refund of excess payments, and has also raised concerns over the absence of a maker-checker mechanism to verify bill accuracy before charges are levied on consumers.

"The department needs to attach a certificate with each bill so that the correctness of calculations of bills are assured and checked under maker checker provisions," Makhdoomi said.

The incident has raised broader questions about the reliability of smart meter billing systems and the safeguards in place to protect consumers from systemic errors. If a smart meter configuration error doubled billing in this case for years without detection, how many other consumers may be facing the same issue, and has the department conducted any system-wide audit to identify them?

Nissar Ahmad Lone, Chief Engineer (Distribution), KPDC, said "Such billing glitches appear to be an isolated case and not systemic in nature."

He told Kashmir Observer that in the present case, the officials would look into the matter and take corrective measures wherever required.

The Chief Engineer maintained that the department's smart metering programme has largely functioned smoothly and insisted that any confirmed error would be rectified in accordance with established procedures.

"Around 3.81 lakh smart meters have been installed across the Union Territory since 2024 without major difficulties or widespread complaints," he added.

The Chief Engineer said that one of their key advantages is transparency, as consumers can monitor their electricity consumption in real time, enabling them to manage usage more efficiently.

Year Ender 2025

Police Register 172 NDPS Cases in 2025, Seize Drugs Worth Crores

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police on Wednesday released consolidated data highlighting major achievements under the NDPS Act during the year 2025, reflecting an intensified crackdown on drug trafficking and abuse across the district.

According to official figures covering the period from January 1 to December 29, 2025, a total of 172 NDPS cases were registered in Srinagar. These included 84 cases involving small quantity, 66 medium quantity cases and 22 cases of commercial quantity. Police said 291 persons were arrested in connection with these cases during the year.

The data revealed large-scale recoveries of narcotic substances, including 1.473 kilograms of heroin, 9.110 kilograms of brown sugar, 20.583 kilograms of charas and 71.506 kilograms of poppy straw, bung and cannabis.

Police also seized 1.950 kilograms of crystal meth and similar synthetic substances.

In addition, officials said 23,767 psychotropic tablets and capsules, 89 injectable vials, 130.143 kilograms of ganja and 799 bottles of psychotropic syrup including codeine-based formulations were recovered during various operations.

Police further said cash amounting to Rs 2,93,890 was seized during NDPS investigations. As part of financial disruption measures, 208 bank accounts were frozen, and Rs 25,62,081 in cash was seized.

Significant action was also taken against properties acquired through drug trafficking. Police attached nine movable properties valued at approximately Rs 0.311 crore and 29 immovable properties valued at around Rs 40.27 crore. The total market valuation of attached properties stood at Rs 40.58 crore.



A farmer cuts fresh collard greens, locally known as haakh, on the outskirts of Srinagar. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Div Com Reviews Natipora Junction, Barzulla Underpass

Observer News Service

Srinagar To address persistent traffic congestion and ensure smooth vehicular movement on the Rambagh-Natipora-Chanapora road, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, conducted a spot visit of Natipora Junction and Barzulla underpass.

During the visit, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the existing traffic scenario and issued a slew of directions for implementing strategic interventions.

He instructed the Public Works Department (PWD) to develop a T-junction at Natipora by utilizing available land of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) to facilitate smoother traffic movement and reduce congestion.

The Div Com further directed the PWD to expedite the removal of structures falling within the alignment of the right-side bund road

of Doodh Ganga. He also instructed the department to establish connectivity of the left-side bund road of the Doodh Ganga from Barzulla to the Sanatnagar Flyover.

While inspecting the ongoing construction of the Barzulla Bridge underpass, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized extending the bund road beyond the underpass to connect it with IG Road, aimed at eliminating wrong-side traffic movement from bridge to Rambagh Chowk.

Besides, Garg directed the PWD to take up land acquisition matter with the CRPF required for road widening and instructed the concerned authorities to prepare detailed drawings showcasing the proposed road layout, including the "before and after" configuration.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, SSP Traffic Srinagar, senior officers of the PWD, and the Commanding Officer of CRPF were present during the inspection.

Stronger Enforcement, Higher Compliance
Srinagar's Traffic Policing Shows Gains in 2025

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In the year 2025, Traffic enforcement in Srinagar city saw marked improvement, with higher challan disposal rates, reduced pendency, and a sharp rise in fine collections.

Addressing the year-end press conference here, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic City Srinagar, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, according to KNO said the department recorded a 56 percent disposal rate of traffic challans, up from 30 percent last year, while revenue generation crossed 1 crore rupees.

"Last year there was hue and cry over nearly five lakh pending challans in courts. This year, our disposal rate has improved from 30 percent to 56 percent, and pendencies have come down to 44 percent. That is a major achievement," SSP Bhat said.

He attributed the progress to focused enforcement, closer coordination with courts, and better public compliance. "This means people are now clearing their dues. We have also forwarded lists of repeated violators to the RTO and Transport Commissioner for license impoundment," he added.

COURT COORDINATION, TECHNOLOGY AND COMPLIANCE

The SSP said the department worked closely with court authorities to

streamline pending challans. A dedicated investigator was appointed to verify and update old records, which led to quicker disposal and higher realization of fines.

Another key step, Bhat said, was linking traffic challans with pollution certificate issuance. "Now, violators who haven't cleared previous dues cannot obtain pollution certificates for their vehicles. This linkage has become an effective compliance tool," he said.

CITY-WIDE ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC COOPERATION

The SSP said Srinagar's traffic management has improved visibly, though challenges persist due to limited infrastructure and rising vehicle density. "Our staff works under stress, but enforcement alone cannot solve congestion. Infrastructure and public cooperation are equally critical," he said.

He also acknowledged the media's constructive criticism, calling it "a mirror that reflects both strengths and shortcomings."

"Sometimes media criticism helps us identify gaps. We consider it positive feedback that pushes us to perform better," he said, thanking journalists and citizens for their support.

STRUCTURAL AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Highlighting recent interventions, the SSP said E-rickshaws were banned on MA Road and Residency Road, earn-

ing positive public feedback.

Several traffic restructuring measures were also introduced in downtown Srinagar:

The Rajouri Kadal-Gojwara stretch was made one-way for public transport, easing congestion in the busy Nowhatta hub.

The Barbar Shah bridge, too narrow for two-way flow, was converted into a one-way corridor.

Targeted drives were intensified at Chhati Padshahi and Kanyar, where frequent bottlenecks were reported.

"These small but significant measures have brought visible improvement in movement," Bhat said, adding that similar area-specific interventions would continue in 2026.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The SSP said the department's approach now follows a three-tier framework, with short-term, medium-term and long-term planning.

"Short-term interventions bring immediate relief, medium-term plans stabilize traffic over six months and long-term strategies span five years," he said.

A multi-disciplinary committee is already working on comprehensive traffic management and many of the department's proposals have been accepted by the government. "The administration has been cooperative in executing our recommendations," Bhat said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No:- 209-2025-26-DEN-TRACK-FZR Date: 30.12.2025

DEN/HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date-21.01.2026 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. In place of Earnest money deposit, "Bid Security Declaration" is to be submitted or prescribed format as available in document section on the portal.

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	Single
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
29.12.2025	07.01.2026	21.01.2026 15:00 Hrs.

S.No. : 1 Tender No. 209-2025-26-DEN-TRACK-FZR

Details of Tender: Provision of ballast depot for stacking, unloading, loading ballast into DMT of BOBYN including the work of levelled earthen surface with toe wall, provision of approach road and other Misc. Work at DIW yard area on JUC-ASR Section under ADEN-2/ASR.

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1,31,87,154.47	2,15,900.00	60 Days	06 Months

Similar nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".

Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. 4029/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL AND HOSPITALS DIVISION SRINAGAR
(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089,

Subject: Supply of winter gear shoes for operational and maintenance staff of Mechanical and Hospital Division, Srinagar

Ref : This office e-NIT No. M&HDS/TS/2025-26/114/e-tendering, Dated: 06-12-2025

CANCELLATION

In view of administrative reasons, the NIT referred above is hereby cancelled.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical & Hospitals Division,
Srinagar.

No: M&HDS/TS/7481-84 DIPP-9533/25 Dated:31.12.2025

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No:- 175, 210-2025-26-ADEN-1-FZR & 201-2025-26-ADEN-2-FZR Date: 31.12.2025

DEN/HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 22.01.2026 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft/Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Packet System
Open	Works	Single Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Tender Closing Date/Time
30.12.2025	08.01.2026	22.01.2026 & 15:00 Hrs

S/ Tender Number Details of Tender

1 175-2025-26-ADEN-1-FZR Heavy repair and replacement of doors and windows and Repair to corroded water supply pipeline & Cleaning of Jungle/Grass/Bushes wood/Sapling etc. from sides of approach roads and nearest staff quarter in colony no.1 to 4 at FZR and Repair and maintenance of Community hall at FZR in the jurisdiction of SSE/W/FZR under ADEN-1/FZR.

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1,79,75,338.95	2,39,900.00	60 Days	06 Months

Similar Nature Work:- "Any civil work other than track work."

2 201-2025-26-ADEN-2-FZR Improvement to road surface and construction to park in railway colonies at JBD, FZP, FKA, LNK, MXH, SQR & MWX under ADEN-2/FZR.

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
2,56,47,994.32	2,78,200.00	60 Days	06 Months

Similar Nature Work:- "Any civil work other than track work."

3 210-2025-26-ADEN-1-FZR Provision of cover shed at 04 LHS at LC C-36, C-43 on KKP-FKA along with C-44, C46 at BTI-FZR Section in severely waterlogged crossings in the LHS under ADEN1/FZR.

Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
3,47,80,688.07	3,23,900.00	60 Days	06 Months

Similar Nature Work:- "Any civil work other than track work."

Note: 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender. 4034/25

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUB TRANSMISSION DIVISION-IIND, RAJBAGH, SRINAGAR

Extension Notice 2

Due to poor response, the date of submission of bids in respect of below mentioned e-NIT is hereby extended with the details enumerated below:-

SNO	E.NIT No.	Name of the work	Tender ID	Cost tender document (In Rs)	EMD Cost (In Rs)
1	eNIT No STD-II / 55 of 2025-26 Dated 29-11-2025	Construction of Additional Bay for Receiving Station Wangpanora, Electrical part.	2025 PDD_296906_1	Rs 500.00	Rs 15240.00

Last Date of Bid Submission extended up to	06-01-2026; 4.30pm
Bid Opening Date	07-01-2026; 2.30pm

No: STD-II/9911-13/TS DIPP-NB-2895/25 Dated:- 31-12-2025

Sd/-
Executive Engineer, Sub Transmission Division-II,
Rajbagh, Srinagar.

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- (Closed)

HIJRI CALENDAR
11 Rajab
1447

PRAYERS
FAJR 6: 08
ZUHR 12:34
ASR 3: 53
Magrib 5:35
ISHA 7: 00

This Day in History

- 1724 - Glassblower Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit proposes system for making thermometers and the Fahrenheit temperature scale in a paper to the Royal Society of London and is elected a fellow on its basis
- 1758 - The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature establish the "starting point" for standardized species names across the animal kingdom, based on the binomial nomenclature by Carolus Linnaeus 10th edition of Systema Naturae
- 1772 - First traveler's cheques go on sale in London, can be used in 90 European cities
- 1800 - Dutch East Indies Company dissolves
- 1801 - The Irish Parliament votes to join the Kingdom of Great Britain, forming the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland
- 1804 - Haiti gains independence from France (National Day), making it the only state ever founded by former slaves and without slavery
- 1842 - 1st illustrated weekly magazine in US publishes 1st issue, NYC
- 1846 - Yucatan declares independence from Mexico
- 1860 - Slavery ends in Neth Indies
- 1863 - Battle of Galveston, Texas-Confederates recapture the city
- 1869 - War of the Triple Alliance: Paraguay's capital Asunción falls to Brazilian forces led by General João de Souza da Fonseca Costa
- 1890 - Eritrea is consolidated into a colony by the Italian government.
- 1891 - French troops occupy Nioro, West-Sudan, 3000 killed
- 1895 - Norway adopts Mid-European time
- 1896 - German physicist Wilhelm Röntgen announces his discovery of x-rays
- 1903 - In Delhi, a great durbar, or formal reception, marks the coronation of King Edward VII as Emperor of India; the British release some 16,000 prisoners in honor of the occasion
- 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt and Edith Roosevelt unveil new renovations to the The White House, including a new West Wing 1927 - Turkey adopts the Gregorian calendar: December 18, 1926 (Julian), is immediately followed by January 1, 1927 (Gregorian).

From Office of the Advocate Muneer Ahmad Dar

In the case of
1. Ghulam Nabi Sheikh
2. Mohammad Shafi Sheikh
Both sons of of Abdul Aziz Sheikh
Both residents of Seeto Sopore

(Caveator)

V/s
Public at large
In the Petition in terms of Section 148-A

The caveators have reason to believe that Non-Caveator may file any Application, Petition, Ap-peat, 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 seek in obtaining some relief/order at their back/in exparte against the caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put in irrepa- rable 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.

fko Sd/advocate

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR
NOTICE

Whereas, an application for Re-Registration/Transfer of Ownership has been received from Mr./Mrs./Miss Bilal Mohi uddin. S/D/W of Gulam Mohiuddin Dar Resident of Nathan Vihar Ranholah nanglo New Delhi in respect of Maruti Car/Scooter/Motor Cycle Duster Bearing Regn. No. DL8CAF1905 Chassis No. D7028091 Engine No. 028741 Model 2014 in favour of Andleeb Ansari W/o Sajjad Haider Ansari R/o Darul Ansar Eidgah Hawal Road Srinagar (Transferee)

Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general public that representation/objection, if any in connection with proposed Re-Registration/Transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper to the address of undersigned.

No. representation/objection shall be considered unless it is made in written and shall be submitted within the aforesaid period.
No. JK/RTOK 3806
Dated: 31/12/25

Sd/-
Authorized Signatory
Regional Transport Officer
Kashmir

ajko

Kashmir's Handicraft Exports Show Remarkable Growth in FY 2025-26

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As Financial Year 2025-26 comes to a close, Jammu & Kashmir's world-renowned handicraft sector has maintained a steady export performance, reaffirming its role as a key economic and cultural pillar of the Union Territory.

According to official data accessed by KNO the first quarter of April-June 2025 recorded 309.62 crore rupees, up from 126.90 crore rupees in Q1 FY 2024-25, a 243 per cent increase.

The second quarter, from July to September 2025, contributed over 100 crore rupees, bringing the H1 total from April to September 2025 to 410 crore rupees, the data reveals, adding, "Third-quarter data for October-December 2025 is currently under consolidation and expected in January 2026. Officials noted that the last two quarters of the financial year are usually more buoyant, often driving year-end export figures higher."

The total handicraft exports in FY 2024-25 stood at 733.59 crore



rupees, impacted by global conflicts and market disruptions.

Officials remain optimistic that FY 2025-26 may surpass last year's figures of geopolitical tensions—including the Ukraine-Russia war and conflicts in the Middle East—ease.

Reviving a heritage economy
Kashmir's handicrafts, including pashmina and Kani

shawls, hand-knotted carpets, papier-mache products, wood carvings, crewel embroidery, and chain-stitch items, continue to employ thousands of artisans across Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, and South Kashmir, providing both livelihoods and cultural continuity.

Officials highlighted sustained demand from Gulf, European and North American mar-

DESPITE GLOBAL SLOWDOWN PRESSURES, OUR ARTISANS HAVE SHOWN REMARKABLE ADAPTABILITY, from eco-friendly packaging to modern design innovations, without losing the essence of Kashmir's craft traditions,"

kets, strengthened by quality improvements, product diversification, and efforts to explore new niche markets.

"Despite global slowdown pressures, our artisans have shown remarkable adaptability, from eco-friendly packaging to modern design innovations, without losing the essence of Kashmir's craft traditions," said Masrat Zia, Director Handicrafts and Handloom. "We are actively exploring new markets to ensure our crafts reach global buyers directly, strengthening both

incomes and the cultural legacy of the region."

Challenges and the road ahead
High logistics costs, competition from machine-made replicas, and the need for further supply chain digitisation remain challenges. The government is working on cluster-based support, artisan insurance, and export facilitation measures to sustain long-term competitiveness, Zia said.

Cultural capital with global reach

Experts said the export figures reflect more than economic numbers; they highlight the endurance of Kashmir's heritage industry, its global appeal and renewed confidence among artisans after years of pandemic and market disruptions.

With third-quarter data due next month, stakeholders remain optimistic that FY 2025-26 will close on a strong note, continuing the positive trajectory of Kashmir's handcrafted legacy in world markets.

Govt Mulls Mechanism to Regularise Daily Wagers: Minister Javid

In a significant development, the National Conference-led government on Wednesday said it is contemplating the creation of a mechanism for the regularisation of daily wagers.

Speaking to reporters as per KNO, cabinet minister Javid Ahmad Dar said the government is actively considering such a mechanism to address the issue.

"You should know that after several SROs were abolished through the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, our efforts are now focused on creating a mechanism for the regularisation of daily wagers," Dar said.

He added that the matter was discussed in the last council of ministers meeting.

"It would be premature to comment further, but our efforts are directed towards taking positive steps for daily wagers," he said.

In the last budget session, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah constituted a high-level panel headed by the Chief Secretary to examine the regularisation of employees working as casual, seasonal labourers, and other workers.

The previous PDP-BJP government had enacted a regular engagement policy-SRO-520 of 2018-but only 577 workers were regularised under it. (Observer News Service)

Locals seek removal of debris near Masjid Sheikh Hamza, Kalashpora

Inhabitants of Kalashpora area in Srinagar have raised serious concern over the non-removal of construction debris following cement and concrete slab work carried out by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, alleging that the unattended waste has been causing public hardship and safety risks for over two and a half months.

According to locals, officials and workers of the municipal corporation undertook slab laying and surface treatment work in a lane situated near Masjid Sheikh Hamza at Kalashpora on Babadem Link Road. However, after completion of the work, large quantities of construction debris including stones, broken concrete, rubble and other waste material were left dumped just opposite the Masjid Shareef.

The inhabitants said the debris has remained unattended for nearly ten weeks, turning the area into what they described as an unauthorised dumping site. They alleged that repeated appeals for clearance have yielded no response from the concerned authorities.

According to KNT, the inhabitants termed the prolonged neglect as a violation of basic civic responsibility, sanitation norms and public safety standards, particularly in a religious and densely inhabited locality. They said instead of providing relief through development works, the incomplete execution has added to the daily inconvenience of the public.

The inhabitants have urged the concerned departments and grievance redressal authorities to intervene without further delay and ensure immediate removal of the dumped construction material. They have also sought restoration of the lane to a clean and walkable condition and fixing of responsibility to prevent recurrence of such negligence in future civic works. (Observer News Service)

SIA Conducts Raid in City Outskirts

A team of the State Investigation Agency, along with Jammu Kashmir Police, conducted a raid at Bonpora in the Nowgam area of Srinagar on Wednesday, sources said.

The raid was carried out at the residential house of an accused who is presently under custody in connection with a poster-related case registered at Police Station Nowgam.

Sources told KNT that the search operation was conducted as part of an ongoing investigation linked to a case registered by the State Investigation Agency. The case has been registered under FIR No. 03/2025 under sections 11, 13, 18, 38 and 39 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

Sources said the raid was aimed at collecting further evidence and leads connected to the case. The operation was conducted following standard legal procedures, with security arrangements put in place in the area during the search.

Officials added that further investigation in the matter is underway and more details will be shared as the probe progresses. (Observer News Service)

YEAR 2025: GMC Anantnag Records Over 700 New Cancer cases

In 2025, the Government Medical College Anantnag registered over 700 new Cancer cases taking the total to 3500.

Principal GMC Anantnag Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb said that there is a growing burden of Cancer in the region and GMC Anantnag's expanding role in providing comprehensive oncology services.

She informed that 730 new Cancer patients have been registered during the current year, while the total number of registrations has crossed 3,500 mark.

She added that the department is conducting thousands of chemotherapy administrations and palliative care procedures annually, reflecting the increasing demand for Cancer care services in the region.

She inaugurated the advanced day care chemotherapy facility at the institute. The newly inaugurated day care Chemotherapy Ward is expected to greatly enhance patient convenience by enabling timely chemotherapy delivery, reducing hospital stay, and minimizing the need for referrals to tertiary centers outside the district. The facility has been developed with a focus on patient safety, comfort, and efficient service delivery.

Head of the Department of Radiation Oncology Dr Shahid Bashir told KNO that the new ward would significantly strengthen the department's treatment capacity and improve overall patient care. He put emphasis on collective efforts needed to raise awareness and work towards a Cancer free society.

He said that significant advancements in Cancer treatment have emerged in recent years due to which survival rates have increased. (Observer News Service)

J&K Sees Sustained Sporting Rise in 2025

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Sports in Jammu and Kashmir have thrived on raw talent and resilience for decades despite limited infrastructure and exposure. However, in 2025, that approach changed as potential turned into recognition, systems began delivering results, and athletes made their mark nationally and globally. This year-end captures the moments and milestones that redefined J&K's sporting journey.

At the heart of this sporting renaissance stood Baramulla pacer Auqib Nabi Dar, whose Rs 8.40 crore IPL auction deal with Delhi Capitals did more than re-write record books.

Auqib Nabi Dar: The Moment That Changed Everything

When the auction hammer fell, sealing Auqib Nabi Dar's fate with Delhi Capitals for Rs 8.40 crore, history was made. The 28-year-old right-arm pacer became the most expensive IPL buy from Jammu & Kashmir.

Ranji Trophy Returns to



Srinagar

Another highlight of 2025 was the return of Ranji Trophy cricket to Srinagar, with Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Srinagar hosting the season opener against Mumbai.

Youth Engagement Reaches Record High

Away from headlines and auctions, the numbers told an equally powerful story. Over 61 lakh youth participated in sports activities across J&K in one year, according to official data accessed by KNO.

In medal tallies alone, J&K athletes delivered standout performances:

2023-24: 549 national medals, 16 international medals

2024-25: 639 national medals, 15 international

medals

Gulmarg: India's Winter Sports Capital

While sports in summer thrived on fields and courts, winter sports flourished on snow. The Khelo India Winter Games firmly established Gulmarg as the country's winter sports capital.

Young Achievers Shine Globally

2025 also belonged to teenagers who carried J&K's flag overseas.

17-year-old Nasir Aijaz Sufi from Sopore clinched bronze at the ISF World School Volleyball Championship in China.

In martial arts, Kupwara's Rashid Shafi struck gold at a Wushu championship in Sweden.

MMA fighter Owais Yaqoob secured a dominant first-round victory at BRAVE CF 103 in Uzbekistan.

Institutional Growth and Inclusion

Behind these achievements stood expanding institutional support. Academies for football, volleyball, wushu, hockey, gymnastics and water sports continued to grow. The Gymnastics Academy at MA Stadium, Jammu, operated at international standards, while Srinagar's Gindun Stadium facility neared completion.

A Year That Redefined Belief

2025 was a year when systems met talent, when belief replaced doubt, and when success stories inspired more participation rather than isolated celebration.

As Auqib Nabi Dar prepares for the IPL spotlight and hundreds of youngsters lace up their boots across J&K, one thing is clear: Jammu & Kashmir sport is no longer knocking on the door; it has stepped firmly inside.

Incidents of 'Attack' on Kashmiri shawl Sellers Spark Concern

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Voicing concern over the alleged incidents of attacks and harassment of Kashmiri shawl sellers in some parts of northern states, leaders and outfits from Jammu and Kashmir have called for coordinated action by the Centre and state governments to ensure the safety and livelihood of migrant traders.

In Haryana's Kaithal district, police have registered an FIR and launched a manhunt following an assault on a Kashmiri shawl seller, the Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) said on Wednesday.

Kaithal Superintendent of Police Upasana told PTI that the "police have taken suo motu cognisance of the offence and registered an FIR. Further investigation is underway".

A purported video of the incident, which occurred earlier in the week, surfaced on social media platforms, showing a Kashmiri shawl seller allegedly being forced to chant 'Vande Mataram'.

The Haryana Chief Minister's Office has assured strict action, saying that harassment or violence against Kashmiri traders would not be tolerated, the association added.

Another incident reported from Fatehabad district is under investigation, the JKSA said.

The Association has also flagged similar incidents from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, alleging a rise in intimidation, threats and assaults against Kashmiri shawl sellers during the winter trading season.

It claimed that at least 18 such incidents were reported from Himachal Pradesh this year, with several traders forced to leave the state due to fear.

On Monday, the JKSA wrote to



Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking his intervention and urging the Centre to direct states to ensure the safety and dignity of Kashmiri traders working outside the Valley.

"This year alone has witnessed at least 18 incidents of assault, intimidation, and harassment of Kashmiri shawl sellers in Himachal Pradesh," the letter said, adding that in several cases there was "no prompt or effective registration of FIRs, no visible arrests or deterrent measures".

JKSA, a students' body, said that while students remain at the core of its mission, it has taken up issues of migrant workers, traders, shawl sellers, or families in distress.

Reacting to the issue, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said in a post on X that continued harassment of Kashmiris was "very disturbing" and called it a basic human rights issue.

Congress Rajya Sabha MP and former Kaithal MLA Randeep Singh Surjewala also expressed concern, alleging that such incidents reflected a wider pattern of targeting people from different regions.

"These are not stray incidents but part of a rot stemming in, where Indians are 'othered', 'attacked', 'targeted', 'killed' in our own country," Surjewala said in a post on X on Tuesday, while referring to other alleged attacks linked to people from different states

facing hate crimes.

J-K BJP leader Ravinder Raina said in a post on X, "Home Minister Amit Shah has taken strong notice of the reports of harassment of Kashmiri shawl sellers and has passed stern directions to the State Government for action in such matters."

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said last week that there was a growing intolerance in the country and urged the Jammu and Kashmir chief minister to send a ministerial team to different states to ensure the safety of Kashmiris.

"The intolerance in the entire country has increased. Lynchings are taking place. What is happening in Bangladesh pains us, but those who criticise it watch as mute spectators when lynchings take place here," she told reporters.

Peoples Conference chief and Handwara MLA Sajad Lone also said that the alleged harassment of Kashmiris in some parts of the country should be treated as a matter of national security.

"This behaviour against Kashmiris in the rest of the country should not be taken lightly. This is a matter of national security," Lone said at a press conference last week, urging the lieutenant governor and chief minister to intervene.

JKSA National Convenor Nasir Khuehami urged prompt registration of cases, arrests of those involved and time-bound deterrent action to prevent further incidents.

"We appeal to the Home Minister Amit Shah, to put an end to this growing pattern of harassment and violence against Kashmiri traders across North India and to ensure the prompt identification and arrest of those responsible, so that a clear and strong deterrent is established," Khuehami said in a post on X.

MMU Concerned About 'Vande Mataram' Competition

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema (MMU), the largest conglomerate of Islamic organisations in Jammu and Kashmir, has expressed concern over the circulation and promotion of publicity material related to a singing competition themed on "Vande Mataram" by certain government departments, as well as its reproduction in local newspapers.

In a press statement issued here, the MMU clarified that expressions and anthems carrying devotional and theological meanings rooted in non-Islamic belief systems raise serious Shar'i concerns for adherents of the Islamic monotheistic faith. The statement emphasised that Islam strictly regulates religious expressions and does not permit participation in acts that symbolically or verbally sanctify or deify any created entity.

"In view of this well-established religious position in Islam," the MMU advised all those whose religious conscience is guided by Islamic teachings to respectfully refrain from participating in such programmes.

The MMU also expressed

concern over local newspapers reproducing and promoting such publicity material without due sensitivity to the religious identity and faith boundaries of Jammu and Kashmir—a region historically known for respect towards religious conscience and sensitivities.

Reiterating that respect for religious belief and conscience is essential for social harmony and peaceful coexistence, the MMU appealed to all concerned institutions, departments, and media organisations to exercise greater cultural and religious sensitivity in public communication and outreach.

The statement further noted that the Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema comprises, among others, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Mufti Azam Nasir-ul-Islam, Maulana Muhammad Rahmatullah Qasmi, Aga Syed Hasan Al-Mousavi Al-Safvi, Dr. Adil Latif Al-Kandi, Maulana Ghulam Rasool Hami, Aga Syed Muhammad Hadi, and Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari, along with several other prominent religious scholars. Besides individual scholars, the MMU represents a wide range of religious, social, and educational organisations.

On New Year, Gulmarg Witnesses Huge Tourist Influx



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The world-famous ski resort Gulmarg is witnessing massive tourist arrivals as New Year celebrations kicked off with grandeur, snow and music on Wednesday.

According to the details available with KNO, the destination has registered nearly full occupancy in hotels and guesthouses, turning it into the hub of winter festivities in Kashmir.

"In view of the heavy footfall, extensive security and logistical arrangements have been put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the festivities. Adequate deployment of police and rescue teams, crowd management systems and medical facilities have been stationed across the resort to cater to the rush of visitors," said an official.

Chief Executive Officer, Gulmarg Development Authority, Tariq Hussain Naik, while welcoming tourists, expressed gratitude to nature and the visitors for making Gulmarg come alive

this season. "Nature has always been kind to Gulmarg and this snowfall was much needed for the tourism industry, which is the backbone of the Valley," he said.

The CEO added that the destination has always remained the first choice for tourists across the country. "With prayers for peace, we welcome everyone and assure that we remain committed to maintaining a united, vibrant and secure Gulmarg."

He said that the local community's warmth and hospitality transform visitors into ambassadors of Kashmir's positive image. "With love, care and positivity, tourists carry the message of harmony wherever they go. We thank them for choosing Gulmarg and assure that we will always be here to serve them," he said.

Earlier, the Department of Tourism, along with the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA), inaugurated a seven-day Winter Carnival that features a lineup of snow sports, skiing events, musical evenings, and cultural shows.