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Kashmir Braces For Fresh Wet Spell

Heavy Snow Possible In Higher Reaches, Light Snow Or Rain In Plains
Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir is bracing for a fresh wet spell as a western disturbance is expected to affect the Valley from Monday evening, bringing rain and snowfall to several areas, officials said.

The Meteorological Department has forecast generally cloudy weather till Monday evening, after which light to moderate rain or snow is likely at most places. It said there is also a possibility of moderate to heavy rain or snowfall at a few locations, accompanied by thunder and gusty winds.

According to the department, light rain or snow may occur at isolated places on January 28, while the weather is expected to remain dry but cloudy over the following two days. Travellers and transporters have been advised to check the status of highways and roads before undertaking journeys, while farmers have been asked to suspend agricultural operations till January 28. Residents of snow-bound higher reaches have also been cautioned | **More on P6**



India's Military Might On Display At R-Day Parade



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: India celebrated its 77th Republic Day on Monday with a grand military parade on Kartavya Path, showcasing the country's defence preparedness, indigenous

capabilities and evolving battle doctrine before a domestic and international audience.

President Droupadi Murmu took the salute shortly after arriving at Kartavya Path in a traditional buggy, accompanied by the chief guests,

President of the European Council Antonio Costa and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, senior Union | **More on P6**

From Samavaar to Saffron

J&K Showcases Cultural Riches At R-Day Parade

Artifacts and cultural traditions of Jammu and Kashmir came alive on Kartavya Path during the 77th Republic Day Parade in New Delhi, as the Union Territory presented a tableau celebrating its rich artistic and cultural legacy.

The tableau highlighted the splendour of traditional crafts, beginning with the gleaming samavaar, intricately engraved in metal and long associated with Kashmiri social life. Exquisitely woven Kani shawls, known for their symbolic patterns and fine craftsmanship, featured prominently alongside

hand knotted carpets that reflected geometric harmony shaped on looms over months of labour. Carved walnut wood artefacts further underscored the region's reputation for skilled woodcraft.

Papier mache creations stood out with their vibrant colours and delicate detailing, while Pahari miniature paintings, particularly the expressive Basohli style, reflected refined aesthetics rooted in centuries of devotion and courtly traditions. Together, these crafts paid tribute to generations of artisans | **More on P6**

56 Honoured With J&K Govt Awards

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Sunday conferred awards on 56 individuals from diverse fields, including Adil Hussain Shah, who lost his life while trying to save tourists during the terror attack in Pahalgam in April last year, officials said.

The awards were announced through an order issued by Commissioner Secretary, General Administrative Department, M Raju. The recipients were recognised for bravery, public service, media, literature, sports, performing arts, crafts, social work and entrepreneurship.

Shah, a resident of Hapatnar village in Pahalgam, was posthumously honoured for his bravery. He had confronted Pakistani terrorists during an attack on tourists in the Baisaran Valley on April 22, in which he was killed along with 25 tourists. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a citation. Police Sub Inspector Nikhil Kumar of Gangyal police station was also recognised for bravery and will receive a cash award of Rs 51,000 along with a citation.

Twelve media professionals were among the | **More on P6**

R-Day Celebrated Across Kashmir With Fervour

Flag Hoisting, Parades, Cultural Shows Mark The Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour across Kashmir on Monday amid stringent security arrangements, with the main function in the Valley held at Bakshi Stadium here.

The national flag was unfurled at district, sub-division, tehsil and block levels across Kashmir, accompanied by impressive parades and cultural programmes. A three-tier security cover was thrown around Bakshi Stadium, with police and paramilitary personnel guarding all entry points. Additional forces were deployed within a one-kilometre radius, and only invitees were allowed inside the venue. Despite the tight security, mobile and internet services remained functional. Deputy Chief Minister

Surinder Kumar Choudhary presided over the main function at Bakshi Stadium, where he unfurled the Tricolour and took the ceremonial salute. Contingents of police, CRPF, NCC and schoolchildren participated in the march-past, braving the chilly weather. The programme concluded with cultural performances by artists from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Cabinet ministers Sakina Ittoo and Javed Dar unfurled the national flag at official functions in Anantnag and Baramulla, respectively. Former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, several National Conference MLAs from Srinagar, senior civil and police officers, and a large number of government employees attended the Srinagar function. The stadium, with a capacity of around 20,000, was nearly full. | **More on P6**

Every Act Of Terror Will Meet A Decisive Response: LG

Unfurls Tricolour, Says A New Dawn Has Arrived In J&K | 1.61 Crore Tourists Visited J&K in 2025 Till Nov Despite Pahalgam Attack'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Asserting that a new dawn has arrived in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said India has drawn a firm red line against terrorism, with Operation Sindoor continuing and the country's water resources now set to be utilised for its own development following the termination of the Indus Water Treaty.

Addressing the 77th Republic Day function at Maulana Azad Stadium here, the lieutenant governor said the occasion was a moment to remember the sacrifices of freedom fighters and martyrs and to renew the collective commitment to the democratic ideals enshrined in the Constitution.

Sinha unfurled the tricolour, inspected the Republic Day parade contingents and took



the ceremonial salute. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah was the chief guest at the function, which was attended by National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah, Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather, senior BJP leaders including Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, and top officers of the police, Army, paramilitary forces and | **More on P6**

- ◆ Bloodshed & Cooperation Cannot Coexist
- ◆ Youth, Women-Led Development Key to J&K's Future
- ◆ Nine New Tourist Destinations Identified
- ◆ Rail Link, Tunnels Strengthen J&K's Integration with India
- ◆ Mission YUVA to Create 1.35 Lakh Enterprises
- ◆ Merit-Based Recruitment, Jobs for Terror-Affected Families
- ◆ Major Hydropower Projects, Solar Push Reshape
- ◆ GI Tags, Agri Reforms Boost Farmer Incomes

R-Parade Reflects India's Democracy, Unity: PM

Says EU Leaders' Presence Underscores Strong India-EU Ties

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India celebrated the 77th Republic Day with great enthusiasm and pride, with the grand parade at Kartavya Path reflecting the strength of the country's democracy, the richness of its heritage and the unity that binds the nation together.

In a series of posts on X, Modi said Kartavya Path witnessed a powerful display of national pride during the Republic Day celebrations. "The magnificent parade at Kartavya Path showcased the strength of our democracy, the richness of our heritage and the unity that binds our nation together," he said.

The prime minister said India was privileged to host Antonio Costa, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the



European Commission, during the celebrations. He said their presence underscored the growing strength of the India-European Union partnership and India's commitment to shared values.

"Their presence underscores the growing strength of the India-European | **More on P6**

Kashmiri Flavors Take Center Stage In A Gujarat Winter

In Bhuj, as temperatures fall, saffron Kahwa and vegetarian dishes from Kashmir draw crowds, turning a winter festival into a shared moment between Gujarat and Kashmir.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Srinagar: A Gujarati couple stood near a copper samavar, holding small cups of steaming Kahwa. The woman took a sip and smiled right away. "This feels like tasting Kashmir," she said, surprised by the feeling.

Her husband leaned closer to the cup, letting the aroma rise. "It feels like magic," he said, warming his hands in the cold air.

The couple had walked into the Living and Learning Design Centre Winter Festival in Bhuj just as the evening



chill set in. Within minutes, they found themselves drawn toward the Kashmiri food stall, guided by steam, scent, and the silent

gathering of people around copper vessels. That reaction repeated itself across the festival grounds. | **More on P6**

3RD ENCOUNTER IN A WEEK

Search Op Extended In Kishtwar

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Security forces on Monday extended the ongoing combing operation in the higher reaches of Kishtwar despite fresh snowfall, following a gunfight with suspected terrorists in the snow-bound Chatroo area the previous night, officials said.

The encounter took place around 10.20 pm on Sunday in the Janseer-Kandiwar forest area of Chatroo when a joint search party of the Army and police spotted suspicious movement, they said. An exchange of fire ensued and continued for some time, but the terrorists, believed to be two or three in number, managed to escape under the cover of darkness and difficult terrain. Officials said | **More on P6**



Political leaders greet Lt Governor Manoj Sinha at the 'At Home' reception hosted by him at Lok Bhavan, Jammu, on Monday.



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'Regularly Engaging In Varied Physical Activities Could Extend Lifespan'

Press Trust Of India

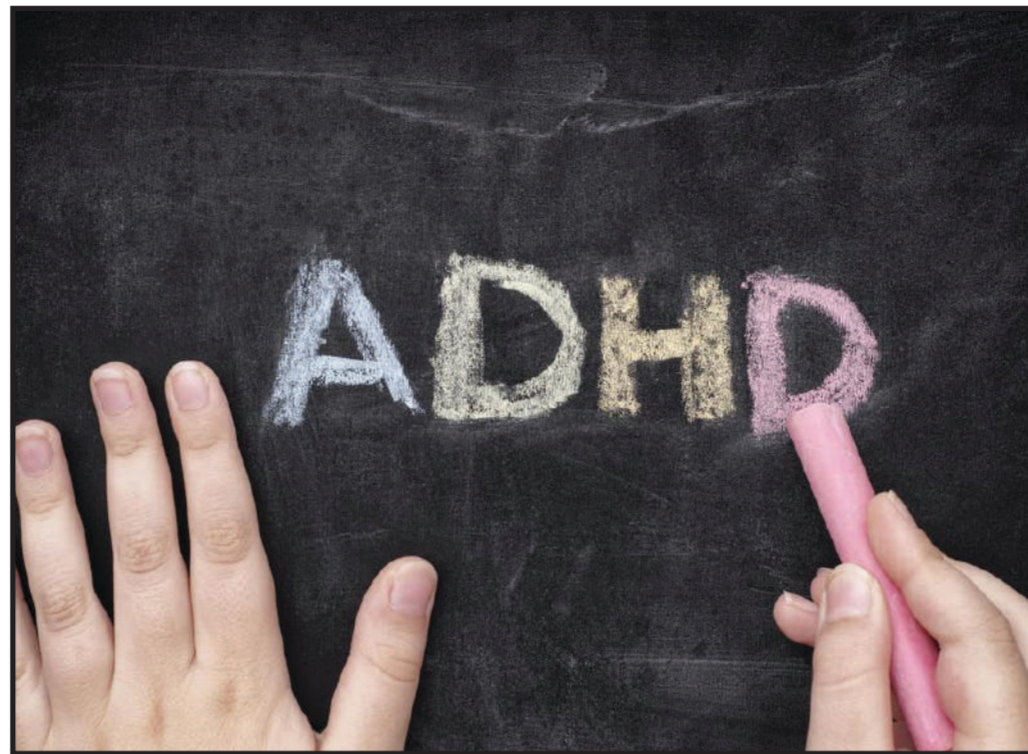
Regularly engaging in a variety of physical activity could be a good strategy for prolonging one's lifespan, according to a study. Findings published in the British Medical Journal suggest that a mix of physical activity, rather than doing more of the same, could be linked to a lower risk of death, regardless of total quantity -- an active lifestyle is however still important in its own right. The team, including researchers from the US' Harvard University's school of public health and China's First Affiliated Hospital of Chongqing Medical University, said that while physical activity has been consistently linked with a better physical and mental health, evidence is inconclusive as to how varied kinds of physical activity impacts one's health.

more likely to jog and run than women. Walking was also associated with the lowest risk of death at 17 per cent for those who did the most walking, compared with those who did the least, while climbing stairs was associated with a 10 per cent lower risk. Playing tennis, squash, or racquetball was related with a 15 per cent lower risk for those who played most, compared to those who played least and weight training or resistance exercises with a 13 per cent lower risk. However, a greater variety of physical activity was associated with a lower risk of death. When the researchers accounted for quantity of exercise, engaging in the broadest range of physical activity was associated with a 19 per cent lower risk of death from all causes and a 13-41 per cent lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, and other causes.



Over 70,700 women and 40,600 men, who reported engaging in physical activity and were free of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer, were looked at. Physical activity assessments were collected over a follow-up period of 30 years. Higher levels of physical activity were related with a lower baseline prevalence of hypertension, hypercholesterolaemia, body mass index, a higher energy intake, better quality of diet, and more variety in physical activity. Walking was the most frequent type of leisure physical activity in both groups; men were

"Habitual engagement in most types of physical activity was associated with lower mortality. The variety of physical activity was inversely associated with mortality, independent of total physical activity levels," the authors wrote. "Overall, these data support the notion that long term engagement in multiple types of physical activity may help extend the lifespan," they said. The study participants came from two cohort studies -- the Nurses' Health Study (1986-2018) and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study (1986-2020).



Study Relates ADHD Traits In Childhood With Physical Health Problems In Mid-Life

Press Trust Of India

People who exhibited ADHD traits at age 10 could be 14 per cent more likely to report two or more physical health issues, such as migraine, back problems, cancer or diabetes by the age of 46, a study has found. Compared to men, women were more likely to be affected due to the association between ADHD traits and physical health-related disability, findings published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open show. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is marked by short attention spans and restless, impulsive behaviour. The neurodevelopmental condition is commonly diagnosed during childhood and in some cases can persist into adulthood. Researchers, led by those from the UK's University College London (UCL) and University of Liverpool, looked at 10,930 people, who were recruited for the 1970 British Cohort Study. The participants were born in England, Scotland, and Wales during the same week in 1970, and

follow-up data were collected over 46 years. Further, those who were likely to meet ADHD diagnosable criteria in childhood were estimated to have a 42% chance of a physical multimorbidity by age 46, compared to a 37 per cent chance for those without high ADHD traits. "Here we have added to the concerning evidence base that people with ADHD are more likely to experience worse health than average across their lifespan," senior author Joshua Stott, professor of ageing and clinical psychology at the University College London, said. The analysis suggests that the poorer health outcomes were partly explained by increased mental health problems, a higher BMI and higher smoking rates among people with ADHD, the researchers said. Studies have shown that people with ADHD are also more likely to experience stressful life events and social exclusion, and are less likely to get timely access to screening and medical care, they added. "All of these potential explanatory factors align with the fact that ADHD makes impulse control more difficult, the need for instant

gratification and reward more intense, and is also associated with worse mental health in part due to the social disadvantage people with ADHD face," Stott said. The authors wrote, "Higher childhood ADHD traits were associated with more physical health conditions, increased odds of physical multimorbidity (14 per cent), and (a) greater physical health-related disability by age 46 years. "Participants who had a high likelihood of meeting ADHD criteria in childhood (5.5 per cent) had an estimated probability of 42.1 per cent of physical multimorbidity by age 46 years compared with 37.5 per cent for those without high ADHD traits," they said. The study determined ADHD traits based on child behaviour questionnaires completed by parents and teachers when the participants were aged 10, regardless of whether they had ever been diagnosed with ADHD. The research group had published a study in January 2025, which found that adults diagnosed with ADHD tend to have a reduced life expectancy, compared to the general population. The findings were published in the British Journal of Psychiatry.

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Director SKIMS Outlines Expansion Plans on Republic Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Director, Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Prof Muhammad Ashraf Ganie, on Monday highlighted key achievements and future plans of the institute, saying SKIMS continues to progress despite operational challenges and remains committed to quality healthcare delivery.

Speaking after unfurling the National Flag at SKIMS Soura on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day, Prof Ganie said the mission of service at the institute is deeply rooted in the constitutional values of equity, care, and responsibility. He said SKIMS has maintained a steady growth trajectory while strengthening its role as a leading tertiary care and research institution.

The Director said the progress of the hospital has been a collective effort, acknowledging the contribution of employees across all cadres. He said doctors, nurses, paramedical staff,

and support personnel have been working in close coordination to ensure uninterrupted patient care and institutional development.

According to KNT, highlighting recent developments, Prof Ganie said SKIMS has undertaken several initiatives on a fast track basis, including the expansion of specialised medical services and the upgradation of emergency care facilities. He said employee promotions and the filling of referred posts through recruiting agencies have also been taken up to strengthen manpower.

He added that further enhancement of human resources and essential services is expected in the near future to meet increasing patient load and improve service efficiency. The Director also said the work being done at SKIMS has received recognition from the public and government authorities, reflecting growing trust in the institution.

KU Celebrates 77th Republic Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Reaffirming its steadfast commitment to the constitutional ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, the University of Kashmir (KU) on Monday celebrated the 77th Republic Day with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm across its main and satellite campuses.

The main function was held at the university's main campus, where Vice-Chancellor KU Prof. Nilofer Khan unfurled the National Flag at the lawns of the Vice-Chancellor's Secretariat. The ceremony began with the singing of the National Anthem, creating an atmosphere of pride, unity and collective resolve.

Extending warm Republic Day greetings to the university fraternity and the nation, Prof. Khan described the occasion as a moment of reflection as much as celebration.

"Republic Day is not merely a ceremonial occasion; it is a powerful reminder of our shared responsibility towards building a just, inclusive and progressive society," she said, adding that the day reaffirms faith in the democratic values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The Vice-Chancellor urged

students, faculty and staff to pursue excellence in their respective domains while upholding ethical standards and democratic principles that form the foundation of the nation. She also lauded the unwavering dedication of the teaching and administrative fraternity in strengthening the university's academic and institutional ethos.

Referring to the Padma Shri 2026 conferred on Prof. Shafi Shauq, former faculty member and former Dean, School of Arts, KU Prof. Khan said that the honour is a testament to the immense contribution of the university's staff to the nation's rich literary heritage and cultural legacy. She noted that the prestigious recognition reflects the depth of talent nurtured by the University of Kashmir and underscores its enduring role in shaping intellectual and cultural discourse at the national level.

"This meaningful gathering reflects the collective commitment of the university community to uphold the democratic fabric of our country," Prof. Khan remarked, while extending Republic Day greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in particular and the nation at large.



77th Republic Day celebrations Dy CM Unfurls National Flag at Bakshi Stadium

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The 77th Republic Day celebrations kicked off with great pomp and enthusiasm at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar, where Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary unfurled the National Flag and took the ceremonial salute.

The event was marked by a coordinated parade featuring contingents from the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Armed Police Forces, NCC cadets and school children, showcasing the region's rich cultural heritage and developmental milestones.

Extending Republic Day greetings, the Dy CM congratulated the security forces and the Indian Army for their unwavering vigilance and sacrifice in safeguarding the nation. He expressed special gratitude to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, acknowledging their 36-year-long fight against militancy and paying homage to the brave personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty. He emphasized that, besides maintaining security, there is a growing responsibility to eradicate the drug menace and protect the youth from drug addiction.

Paying tributes to the tourists killed in the Pahalgam terror attack, the Dy CM said Pakistan has repeatedly attempted to harm Kash-

mir's peace and tourism sector but asserted that such conspiracies will no longer succeed. "Our people and our security forces stand united to defeat every such attempt."

Appealing to the tourists from across the country and abroad, he said Kashmir today enjoys a peaceful atmosphere and is ready to welcome the visitors. "Come and witness the divine beauty of Paradise on Earth and experience the hospitality and brotherhood of Kashmir," he said, assuring the tourists of a safe and home-like environment.

Highlighting the significance of Republic Day, the Dy CM said January 26 symbolizes pride, honour and patriotism, marking adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950 and establishment of India as a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic.

Emphasizing youth empowerment, the Dy CM said the government recognizes youth as the backbone of society and is implementing strict measures to combat drug abuse. He highlighted the initiatives like Mission YUVA Digital Empowerment, a comprehensive web portal and mobile app offering AI-based DPR generation, around 25,000 educational videos and nearly 600 e-courses for aspiring entrepreneurs.

On skill development, he informed that new-age courses have been introduced at ITI Srinagar, with

68 additional seats in Smart City-related trades such as IoT Technician, Solar Technician and Smartphone Application Tester. Under Vision 2030, the government aims to transform Jammu and Kashmir into the Skill Capital of North India, targeting skill development for 1.5 million youth by 2030. He further stated that the government is prioritizing industrial development and is formulating a Local Employment Policy to ensure first right to employment for local youth in upcoming industrial estates.

Highlighting progress in health and education sectors, the Dy CM said that medical facilities are being strengthened to improve healthcare and medical education. He added that buildings of seven Degree Colleges at Domel Pouni, Sunderbani, Hyderpora, Purmandal, Eidgah, Boniyar and Nagrota have been completed.

In line with the vision of Developed India @2047, the Dy CM said various initiatives have been taken like launch of futuristic programs in artificial intelligence, cyber security, robotics and nanotechnology by Kashmir University, five main research colleges have been identified and 'Design Your Degree' (DYD) initiative has been launched as a pilot project in select institutions, that empowers the students to design their learning paths according to their career goals, aspirations, and interests.

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ZUHR	12:42	
ASR	4: 18	
Magrib	5:59	
ISHA	7: 22	

This Day In History

- 661 - Rashidun Caliphate, then the largest empire in history, ends with death of Ali. Succeeded by the Umayyad Caliphate
- 1695 - Mustafa II becomes the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul on the death of Ahmed II. Mustafa rules until his death in 1703.
- 1880 - Thomas Edison patents electric incandescent lamp
- 1897 - British troops occupy Bida Gold Coast (Ghana)
- 1926 - US Senate agrees to join World Court
- 1926 - Physicist Erwin Schrödinger publishes his theory of wave mechanics and presents what becomes known as the Schrödinger equation in quantum mechanics
- 1945 - Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camps in Poland
- 1967 - Treaty signed banning military use of nuclear weapons in space
- 1973 - US & North Vietnam & #39;s William Rogers & #39; Nguyen Duy Trinh sign cease-fire, ending longest US war and military draft
- 1976 - Morocco-Algeria battles in West Sahara
- 1985 - 15th Space Shuttle (51-C) Mission-Discovery 3 returns to Earth
- 1989 - Detroit Red Wings center Steve Yzerman becomes the 4th NHL player to record 100 points in 50 games or less with a goal and 2 assists as Red Wings beat Toronto, 8-1
- 1989 - German war criminals Fischer & Aus der Funten freed
- 1989 - Kevin Johnson (Phoenix) begins NBA free throw streak of 57 games

SMC Commemorates 77th Republic Day with Flag Unfurling Ceremony

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Municipal Corporation on Monday commemorated the 77th Republic Day of India with solemnity and patriotic fervour at its Central Office, Karan Nagar.

The highlight of the observance was a dignified flag unfurling ceremony, symbolising the nation's unity, democratic values, and abiding faith in the Constitution of India.

The National Flag was unfurled by the Commissioner, Faz Lul Haseeb, in the presence of senior officers and officials of the Corporation. The ceremony reflected deep reverence for the constitutional ideals and democratic ethos that form the bedrock of the Indian Republic.

Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner underscored the historic significance of Republic Day and reaffirmed the Corporation's unwavering commitment to transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance. He emphasised the pivotal role of urban local bodies in nation-building, particularly in translating constitutional principles into effective public service delivery at the grassroots level.

The unfurling of the Tricolour served as a poignant reminder of collective responsibility towards inclusive development, civic discipline, and sustainable urban growth.



It also reinforced the resolve of the Corporation to work with renewed dedication for the holistic development of Srinagar.

On the occasion, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation reiterated its pledge to uphold excellence in urban governance and to continue striving towards a cleaner, resilient, and progressive city, in true spirit of the Constitution of India.


SAD DEMISE

We announce with profound grief the sad demise of Syed Shoukat Rizvi, S/o Syed Hyder Rizvi, of Kathimaidan, Alamgiribazar, Srinagar, who passed away on Sunday afternoon after a protracted illness. He was laid to rest at Baba Mazar, Zadibal.

Congregational Fateha Khwani will be held at 8:00 AM on Wednesday at his burial site. Thereafter, Fateha Khwani will continue throughout the day at our residence in Kathimaidan, Insha Allah.

BEREAVED FAMILY

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



In Loving Memory of
Mohammad Shafi Dar

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Mohammad Shafi Dar on 26th January 2026.

Spirited, active, respected and adored by all, he was a dedicated family man and a pillar of our community.

His Rasm e Chahurum will be observed on 29th January, Thursday at 10:00 AM at the ancestral graveyard, Ram Bagh, Srinagar.

Bereaved: Ghulam Qadir Dar, Dr Aijaz Muzamil, Sons in Law, Brothers, Dar, Mir, Baba and Zam Zam Families

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KO VIEW

Kashmir's Old Wisdom

Kashmir's satirist and oral historian, Zareef Ahmed Zareef, recently reminded people why old wisdom still matters for a place like Kashmir celebrated for its hospitality and humanity.

Speaking to a local news outlet, he reflected on the pride Kashmir has lost over the years. He pointed to neglected rivers and mountains, weakening cultural bonds, and a society that sometimes forgets its own identity.

Many problems today come from choices we made ourselves, whether ecological, cultural, or financial. Old wisdom has always guided people through difficult times and continues to offer insight today.

Life in Kashmir feels more complicated than before. Young people face unemployment, social pressures, and uncertainty. Many older people spend their days alone, and old-age homes are becoming more common. Families no longer gather to hear lessons from those who have lived through decades of experience. This gap affects both families and the community.

Old wisdom links generations and shares knowledge gained through experience. It provides direction when decisions feel uncertain and builds confidence in handling challenges. It helps young people understand responsibility, care for others, and honour traditions while still exploring new ideas.

Kashmir has always produced scholars, artists, and teachers who thrived because people listened to old wisdom. That guidance shaped thoughtful decisions and a culture that valued learning, reflection, and community care. Today, communities become stronger when they recognize this wisdom, giving people a sense of purpose that goes beyond daily struggles.

Old wisdom serves as a guide for families and society. It encourages careful thinking and practical action. When life feels overwhelming, the experiences of those who came before provide stability and reassurance. Listening to it helps young people face challenges while staying connected to a history that stretches back thousands of years.

Zareef's words remind us that old wisdom offers direction when life feels heavy. It shows people what matters, helps them make better choices, and strengthens the bonds that hold families and communities together.

Honouring it allows Kashmir to nurture thoughtful, capable generations who respect the past while shaping a meaningful future.

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Helping Kashmiri children learn to save, grow, and protect money.

Irshad Mushtaq

Kashmir is beautiful but the economy is brittle. Kids here need to learn about money from an early age.

Beyond earning, it is about saving, spending, investing, and keeping money safe. These skills help them become independent and even start their own businesses when jobs are hard to find.

Many people in Jammu and Kashmir know only a little about managing money. National guidelines say schools should teach financial education from a young age. Programs like NCFE's "Money Smart School" show how this can work. If schools in Kashmir made money lessons part of everyday learning, it could change the future.

Children can start with a piggy bank to learn the habit of saving. They can keep a small diary to track how much they save and what they are saving for. The next step is a savings account in a bank where they can learn deposits, withdrawals, and using digital payments safely. Older students can explore fixed deposits, mutual funds, and simple stock market games to understand growth, risk, and patience. Families also need to learn about insurance to protect what they build.

Parents and communities can help too. They can show kids how they manage household money, open small accounts, and talk about saving in banks instead of only cash or gold. Schools, local bankers, and NGOs can run fun workshops and quizzes to make learning real.

Kashmiri children can grow up confident with money. If schools, families, and communities work together, every child can learn to save, grow, and protect their money and build a strong future.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



Why Is It Snowing Less in Srinagar?

As snow transformed large parts of Kashmir lately, Srinagar remained dry, leaving residents confused and the internet amused.

Haris Mashooq Zia

“**Memes and social media chatter aside, Srinagar's snowfall anomaly highlights a pressing urban climate challenge. The city, as the summer capital, demands active societal engagement apart from state attention. Restoring green spaces, protecting forests, and reducing pollution are essential for bringing back the winters that sustained the city's climate and culture.**”

Major parts of Kashmir were recently covered in thick blankets of snow. In the countryside, snow sculpture contests drew crowds, reviving traditional snow fights and winter adventure. Tourists chased postcard-perfect photographs as they moved through frozen villages. Rivers slowed as heavy sheets of ice formed across their surface.

Srinagar, in contrast, remained almost dry.

City streets stayed bare, and rooftops were clear. Social media filled up with jokes and memes, poking fun at a city famous for its winters suddenly missing its snow.

The contrast was striking, pushing one question to the fore: why is Srinagar missing the snow that surrounds it?

The answer lies in a mix of local factors that have gradually changed the city's winter climate and culture.

Rapid urbanization has transformed the cityscape, replacing trees, wetlands, and open spaces with concrete buildings and asphalt roads.

These materials trap heat and radiate it back into the environment, raising ground temperatures and preventing snow from settling.

When snow does fall, it disappears within hours, leaving residents with brief glimpses instead of the lasting winters they remember.

Pollution intensifies this effect. Emissions from petrol and diesel vehicles, factories, and coal-powered brick kilns trap heat in the atmosphere, increasing local tem-

peratures.

A rise of even one or two degrees in winter can decide whether precipitation falls as snow or rain.

In Srinagar, this subtle warming turns what should be snowfall into rain, and any snow that does arrive melts almost immediately.

Deforestation around the city has weakened natural barriers against warming.

The Zabbarwan range, once a cooling shield, has lost many of its forests, reducing its ability to stabilize moisture and regulate local weather.

Without these natural buffers, the city becomes more vulnerable to warming, and snowfall declines further.

But beyond the current climate crisis, Srinagar's winters once featured long-lasting snow on rooftops, streets lined with icicles known locally as shishar gaant, and children playing in drifts that defined everyday life.

These scenes are now rare, and each passing year reduces the city's connection to the winters that gave it character and identity.

Local action can restore some of these conditions.

Reforestation of the Zabbarwan range could help cool the air, while tree planting in the city, even in tight spaces using the Japanese Miyawaki method, can increase greenery and reduce heat.

Transitioning to electric vehicles and reducing coal use in industries could cut emissions that trap

heat, while construction materials that absorb less heat can help cool the environment.

Cleaner energy and pollution control measures also play an important role in supporting winter conditions that favour snowfall.

Memes and social media chatter aside, Srinagar's snowfall anomaly highlights a pressing urban climate challenge.

The city, as the summer capital, demands active societal engagement apart from state attention.

Restoring green spaces, protecting forests, and reducing pollution are essential for bringing back the winters that sustained the city's climate and community.

Snowfall in Srinagar is part of its identity that generations have celebrated and relied upon to mark the seasons.

Local steps today, including plantation, cleanliness, and redesigning drives can safeguard the winters of tomorrow.

Without thoughtful and informed actions, future urban generations may know snow only through photographs and punchlines.

But if the city acts decisively, it can recover its winters, revive its green spaces, and maintain the climate and cultural character that once defined it.

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Letter to Editor

As a Young Lawyer I Face Lawlessness on Kashmir Roads

I study law in Kashmir, and most of my day is spent reading rules that are supposed to protect people. Then I step outside, and the roads tell me a completely different story.

Traffic is heavier than ever, horns keep blaring, and everyone seems to be in a rush. What worries me the most is how normal it has become to see kids driving cars and scooters.

Many of them don't even have a driving licence. Parents hand over the keys proudly, and schools often let students park vehicles on campus without checking.

The law clearly says this is illegal, but on the street, it feels like nothing.

People cheer when they see a young boy or girl driving confidently. Pride replaces caution. Few stop to think about what could happen next.

Road accidents happen every day

across Kashmir, and so many of these deaths could have been avoided. Safety rules exist, but people only follow them when someone is watching.

Seat belts get clicked only near traffic police. Signals stand at crossings, but drivers push past them to save a few seconds.

Going fast feels smart, while driving carefully feels slow.

This mindset shapes everything on the road. Overtaking becomes routine. Getting somewhere faster feels more important than getting there safely. People think saving a minute makes life easier, but that minute can change everything.

Traffic police patrol roads, licence rules exist, and laws are written clearly. But accidents still happen because rules mean nothing when people ignore them.

One scene sticks with me every time I read about a crash. A mother waits at

home for her child to return from school or work. The food is ready, she keeps checking the door, and then the phone rings.

One call destroys her world. Grief enters without warning. One careless move on the road can break an entire family.

Reports often talk in numbers, but each number is a real person. Children lose parents, parents lose children, and families lose dreams. These losses are lives beyond statistics.

Rash driving now falls under Section 281 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Offenders can face up to six months in prison, a fine of up to one thousand rupees, or both. Police can act immediately. Section 125 deals with putting life or safety at risk. The punishment increases with the harm caused, reaching up to three years in prison and a ten thousand rupee fine for serious injury.

These laws are meant to protect lives, but their impact depends on proper enforcement on the roads.

Parents should also not give vehicles to kids who are too young. Schools can ban student parking and make sure rules are followed. Traffic police can monitor roads regularly and ensure signals are obeyed. Cameras can watch busy crossings, and fines can discourage reckless driving. Heavy vehicles can follow schedules so daytime roads are safer.

If we change the way we drive, our roads can change too, and Kashmir can become a place where everyone reaches home safely.

Sincerely,

Khushboo Amin Bhat
khushbooamin786a@gmail.com

When a Kashmir Village Took Back Power

A winter afternoon, a crackling mosque loudspeaker, and a call for help pulled neighbours into the cold, where shared effort once again kept homes alive during Kashmir's long winter.

Ansar Hussain

I had my hand halfway to the plate when the mosque loudspeaker started crackling.

The announcement cut through the house just as lunch sat steaming on the floor. The room held that heavy feeling of a winter afternoon that everyone here knows so well.

Snow days stretch time in a silent way, making meals slower, the world softer, and it is easy to lose track of the day.

So hearing that voice made the day feel different, like a sudden emergency had come to interrupt a lazy winter routine.

The mosque message came fast and uneasy, saying that the electricity line had broken under the snow-fall from Friday.

Three days had already passed without power, and now the villagers were being asked to go out and fix it themselves.

Everyone listening understood immediately what this meant without anyone spelling it out.

I stepped outside soon after, and the cold hit my face, mixed with the smell of snow and wet earth. White patches were still clung stubbornly to the rooftops and fences, as if they had no plans to leave.

Along the narrow road, neighbours were walking in the same direction, wrapped in worn pherans, boots soaked through with slush.

Their faces reflected the tired look that comes after living through winters like this for years.

Even though we were all walking toward the same problem, there was a sense of familiarity, like this was something we had done many times before.

When we gathered around the pole where the wire hung loose, people talked all at once.

One man pointed upward and discussed who would climb first, while another looked up at the



AS I WALKED HOME, ONE QUESTION STAYED WITH ME: HOW LONG CAN PEOPLE KEEP DOING WORK THAT IS MEANT FOR OTHERS TO HANDLE? Every snowfall in Kashmir tests wires and poles, and it also shows the space between the people who struggle to live and the systems that are supposed to serve them.

wires, measuring the risk. And then a few people laughed, a little nervous and relieved.

That small sound made the task feel a little smaller, a little less frightening, as words in Kashmiri flew back and forth and courage spread from one person to another.

This work did not belong to us, at least on paper, because climbing poles and handling live wires

is supposed to be done by trained staff, by official teams. But over the years, villagers here had learned another way of getting through winter, passing tools from house to house, trusting the hands of people used to hard work.

Every snowfall added another story like this to our lives.

Bonahama is described as a forward-looking village in official

files, a place with development and progress. But life here tells a very different story through flickering bulbs and long hours spent waiting.

Standing there in the cold, watching people decide who would climb next, that label of progress felt far away, because here progress is often what happens when people hold each other up when the system does not show up.

Near the edge of the group stood a man who barely spoke. His hands were deep inside his pheran, and he was moving slowly. When someone asked if the electricity would come back that day, he replied in a low, strained voice that sounded like a question more than an answer. The worry in it had nothing to do with comfort.

His mother was at home critically ill, on an oxygen ventilator, and every hour without power tightened the pressure on the family.

He spoke of electricity as the difference between life and darkness. His words came from long nights

spent listening to breath and waiting for light.

Others shared their worries nearby.

A shopkeeper spoke about medicines that could spoil without electricity, a student mentioned exams that were getting closer by the day, and another man talked about days spent feeling unclean and worn out.

Electricity here touches every part of life, from health and work to the smallest daily routines.

As the afternoon went on, people took turns climbing, holding ladders, passing tools, guiding hands from below, and the repair slowly came together, built on years of care and trust that everyone knew from living this way.

By evening the power flowed again through the line. The repair looked rough, but hope spread across faces.

Soft claps broke out, and smiles appeared as people thought of lights coming back at home, warm tea waiting, and a night that would feel a little easier.

Later, the officials arrived, and the mood shifted immediately.

Instead of checking the repair or ensuring safety, they disconnected the line again, leaving people in darkness once more without a clear explanation.

Homes went dark again, including the house where the old woman struggled to breathe as cold pressed in and snow reflected the dim sky.

People froze for a moment, then walked back slowly, because years of living like this had taught everyone to accept moments such as these, and to keep moving even when the system fails.

As I walked home, one question stayed with me: how long can people keep doing work that is meant for others to handle?

Every snowfall in Kashmir tests wires and poles, and it also shows the space between the people who



THAT EVENING, THE LOUDSPEAKER STAYED SILENT, THE WIRES STAYED DARK, AND IN BONAHEMA, a son sat beside his mother, watching the hours pass, trusting that the light would come back through the hands of people standing together, the way it always has.

struggle to live and the systems that are supposed to serve them.

When villagers climb electric poles in freezing weather, it says a lot about care, courage, and the gaps left behind by those who should be responsible.

That evening, the loudspeaker stayed silent, the wires stayed dark, and in Bonahama, a son sat beside his mother, watching the hours pass, trusting that the light would come back through the hands of people standing together, the way it always has.

—The author works as Multimedia Editor at Kashmir Observer.

Stories in Snow

Beyond mountains and lakes, Kashmir's culture, community, and identity deserve to lead their own stories.

Seema Sangra



FILMS AND NEW MEDIA WILL ALWAYS SEE KASHMIR AS A PERFECT BACKDROP FOR THEIR STORIES, BUT THE REAL STORY OF KASHMIR RUNS MUCH DEEPER. It is a civilizational tale shaped by centuries of art, thought, and resilience. Reducing it only to its beauty or its conflict does injustice to both the people and the place. It is time for Kashmir to move from being a setting to becoming the storyteller of its own narrative.

Long before cameras rolled, stories were told by firelight, passed from one voice to another. Then cinema was born, and the same old magic moved to a new stage: the screen.

From early black-and-white films to today's virtual experiences, cinema has been harnessed as a tool for storytelling, one that shapes perception, reinforces or challenges prejudices, asserts cultural supremacy, and wages ideological wars.

Ultimately, every story forges its heroes, and in doing so, it must also create its villains.

Before the late 80's disruptions, Kashmir was the beating heart of the Indian film industry, a muse woven into the very fabric of Bollywood's dreams.

For decades, its snow-capped peaks stood as silent custodians to epic romances, its pristine lakes mirrored stolen glances, and its flower-carpeted meadows set the stage for countless promises of love.

This legendary on-screen affair was ignited by classics like Raj Kapoor's Barsaat and Shakti Samanta's Kashmir Ki Kali and Aradhana, but it was Yash Chopra who truly immortalized the valley in the modern Indian cinema.

In films like Kabhi Kabhie and Silsila, he painted with the colours of Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and the Dal Lake, convinced that true romance could only breathe in this "Paradise on earth".

It was a golden era that lasted until a shifting political landscape gently nudged Bollywood's gaze from the valleys of Kashmir to the Alps of Switzerland.

Meanwhile, along with early films shot in Kashmir, 1964 saw the re-



lease of Mainz Raat, a landmark first film in the Kashmiri language.

Directed by Ali Mohammed Lone, a man with a strong literary background, the film was deeply enriched with local culture. It boasted a simple storyline, authentic music, Kashmiri nuances, and powerful performances.

Particularly remembered for its use of traditional folk songs, the film was an absolute delight for Kashmiri audiences and was honoured with the President's Silver Medal.

Over six decades later, Songs of Paradise was launched on Amazon Prime, as another profound celebration of Kashmiri identity.

The film is a long-overdue tribute to the legendary Raj Begum

and makes one wonder why her inspiring story took so long to reach the screen. For years, Bollywood has returned to Kashmir, using its mountains, lakes, old town streets, shikarwalas, and nomadic Bakarwals with their flocks as part of its stories, but it overlooked the woman whose voice once gave the valley its song.

In Vishal Bhardwaj's stark cinematic adaptation of Hamlet, Haider, the setting is not a misty Danish castle but the fractured, snow-blanketed valleys of Kashmir.

The film, which weaves Shakespeare's tragic prince into the region's complex political fabric, finds its soul in the haunting ruins of Paritashpora in Pattan. It is here, amid

the echoes of ancient kingdoms, that the movie's most powerful sequences and the song 'Bismil' were shot.

Some films reduced Kashmir's intricate social tapestry to a single, gigantic narrative, threatening to unravel the threads that bound its community together, to set a new narrative, unfamiliar to many Kashmiris.

With films like Mission Kashmir, Article 370, Shikara, and others, the image of the Kashmiri protagonist has changed sharply over the years.

In the 1965 romantic film Jab Jab Phool Khile, Raja was a simple and sentimental boatman who fell in love with a wealthy tourist. Decades later, that innocence gave way to

darker portrayals, like Hrithik Roshan's vengeful character in Mission Kashmir or Narendra Dubey's intense role in Ground Zero.

This new kind of character came with its own layers. In Songs of Paradise, Noor Begum's husband, Azaad Maqbool, stands out as a rare example. He challenges social expectations to support his wife's dreams, showing a version of Kashmiri masculinity that is both strong and compassionate. His character reflects the changing and complex identities taking shape within Kashmir's society today.

Unlike the often flat portrayals seen in films, television has offered a more balanced view of Kashmir. The classic series Gul Gulshan Gulfaam builds empathy for a family of houseboat owners struggling to survive as political unrest affects their livelihood.

In a different way, The Family Man also touches on Kashmir with scenes that explore its complex realities and resist the temptation to paint all Kashmiris with the same brush.

Films and new media will always see Kashmir as a perfect backdrop for their stories, but the real story of Kashmir runs much deeper.

It is a civilizational tale shaped by centuries of art, thought, and resilience. Reducing it only to its beauty or its conflict does injustice to both the people and the place.

It is time for Kashmir to move from being a setting to becoming the storyteller of its own narrative.

—Seema Sangra, from Jammu and Kashmir, is the Program Leader for Media Studies at Amity University, Dubai. She is also the Media Advisor to the Kashmir World Film Festival.

India, EU Conclude Free Trade Agreement Talks After 18 Years

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India and the European Union (EU) have concluded official-level negotiations for the proposed free trade agreement which will help boost two-way commerce and strengthen economic ties between the two sides, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Monday.

"Official-level negotiations are being concluded and both sides are all set to announce the successful conclusion of FTA talks on 27th January, Tuesday," the Commerce Secretary said.

He said the trade deal from the Indian perspective is balanced and forward-looking, which will help in better economic integration of India with the EU.

It will propel trade and

investments in both economies, he said.

"Negotiations have been successfully concluded. The deal has been finalised," Agrawal said.

Legal scrubbing of the FTA text is underway and the endeavor will be to complete the processes and sign the pact at an early date, he said.

The deal is expected to be signed this year, and it may come into effect early next year. Implementation of the deal takes time, as it requires approval from the EU Parliament. In India, it requires only the nod of the Union Cabinet.

The pact is finalised after 18 years of negotiations. The talks started in 2007.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has termed this free trade agreement

(FTA) "the mother of all deals" the country has signed so far.

The conclusion of talks for the agreement will be announced formally in the India-EU (European Union) Summit here on Tuesday.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Antonio Costa will hold summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 27.

The pact is likely to provide duty free access to a number of Indian goods from labour intensive sectors such as textiles, chemicals, gems and jewellery, electrical machinery, leather and footwear.

The EU's tariffs on Indian goods are about 3.8 per cent, but labour-intensive sectors attract about 10 per cent import

duty. India's weighted average duty on EU goods is about 9.3 per cent, with particularly high duties on automobiles, parts (35.5 per cent), plastics (10.4 per cent), and chemicals and pharmaceuticals (9.9 per cent).

In an FTA, two sides reduce or eliminate import duties on over 90 per cent of goods traded between them. An FTA also liberalises norms to promote trade in services sectors such as telecommunications, transportation, accounting, and auditing. The NDA government has finalised seven trade pacts since 2014: Australia, the UK, Oman, New Zealand, the UAE, the EFTA bloc, and Mauritius.

This pact is important, as the US' imposition of high tariffs has disrupted global trade flows. India is facing steep 50 per cent tariffs. The FTA is expected to

help Indian exporters diversify their shipments. It will also help reduce dependence on China.

Besides FTA, the two are also negotiating a pact in investment protection and Geographical Indications (GI). The India-EU FTA covers 24 chapters, including trade in goods, services and investment.

India's bilateral trade in goods with the EU was USD 136.53 billion in 2024-25 (exports worth USD 75.85 billion and imports worth USD 60.68 billion), making the EU India's largest goods trading partner. The services trade in 2024 was USD 83.10 billion.

India has a trade surplus of USD 15.17 billion in 2024-25.

The EU market accounts for about 17 per cent of India's total exports, and the bloc's exports to India constitute 9 per cent of

its total overseas shipments.

As per reports, the EU, with a GDP of about USD 20 trillion and a population of over 450 million, is the major global trade player, exporting about USD 2.9 trillion and importing more than USD 2.6 trillion annually.

India, with a population of 1.4 billion, exported USD 437 billion in goods and USD 387.5 billion in services. It imported goods worth USD 720 billion and services worth USD 195 billion in 2024-25.

India's major goods exports to EU in FY2025 included petroleum products (USD 15 billion); electronics (USD 11.3 billion); smartphones (USD 4.3 billion); textiles (USD 1.6 billion); garments (USD 4.5 billion); machinery, computer (USD 5 billion); organic chemicals (USD 5.1 billion); iron and steel (USD

4.9 billion); gems and jewellery (USD 2.5 billion); pharma (USD 3 billion); auto parts (USD 1.6 billion); footwear (USD 809 million); aircraft (USD 6.3 billion); medical devices, scientific instruments (USD 3.8 billion); gems and jewellery (USD 3 billion) - rough diamonds USD 1.7 billion); organic chemicals (USD 2.3 billion); plastics (USD 2.3 billion).

India's key services exports to the EU were other business services, telecommunication and IT, and transportation services. Imports included intellectual property services, telecommunication and IT.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Braces

against venturing into avalanche-prone areas.

Independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif said the system is not very strong but active enough to trigger snowfall in higher elevations. He said moderate to locally heavy snowfall is likely in the upper reaches, while lower areas may experience mixed precipitation.

Arif said snowfall is possible in the plains as precipitation is expected to begin during the night, though the chances of significant accumulation remain low. "If temperatures remain around 3 to 4 degrees Celsius, accumulation in the plains will be limited or unlikely," he said, adding that the probability of snowfall in the plains stands at around 50 percent, with chances of decent accumulation at 30 to 40 percent.

Region-wise, he said north and central Kashmir plains have a 30 to 40 percent chance of dry snow, while south Kashmir areas such as Shopian and Kulgam, particularly near the Pir Panjal range, have a higher probability of 60 to 70 percent for dry snow and better accumulation. The Chenab Valley, Poonch district and the Qazigund-Banihal stretch are also likely to witness snowfall.

Night temperatures across the Valley improved slightly due to overcast conditions. Srinagar recorded a minimum of minus 0.1 degrees Celsius, Gulmarg remained the coldest place at minus 9.0 degrees Celsius, while Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 4.6 degrees Celsius. Other areas hovered around minus 1 degree Celsius.

This is the second active weather spell within a week during the ongoing Chillai Kalan period. The Valley had witnessed heavy snowfall last Friday, followed by a windstorm that disrupted normal life. The administration is currently engaged in restoring road connectivity and power infrastructure affected by the previous weather event.

India's Military

ministers, top military leadership, foreign diplomats and senior officials were present at the ceremonial boulevard.

The overarching theme of this year's parade was the completion of 150 years of Vande Mataram, reflecting the song's enduring place in India's national consciousness. Around 100 artistes opened the celebrations with a cultural performance on the theme Vividata Mein Ekta, presenting a musical ensemble that highlighted the country's unity and cultural diversity.

The parade was led by Parade Commander Lieutenant General Bhavish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area. It marked several firsts, most notably the phased Battle Array Format of the Indian Army, which included an integrated aerial component. This new presentation highlighted coordination between ground forces and air assets in modern combat scenarios.

The Battle Array featured a high mobility reconnaissance vehicle and India's first indigenously designed armoured light specialist vehicle. Providing aerial support were the Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter and its armed variant Rudra, flying in Prahar formation to demonstrate battlefield shaping capabilities.

The mechanised and combat elements followed, with T-90 Bhimsa tanks and the indigenous Arjun main battle tank rolling past the saluting dais. These formations were supported from the air by Apache AH-64E and Prachand light combat helicopters. Other mechanised columns included the BMP-II infantry combat vehicle and the Nag missile system Mk-2 in its tracked version.

Among the major weapon systems showcased were the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, the Akash missile system and the Suryastra Universal Rocket Launcher System, underscoring India's growing emphasis on indigenous defence production and operational readiness.

Adding an international dimension to the parade, a military contingent from the European Union also marched on Kartavya Path. Carrying military staff flags along with the flags of Operations Atalanta and Aspidos, the EU's naval missions, the contingent's participation marked the first time the European Union featured in such a parade outside Europe.

The Republic Day parade concluded with a strong display of synchronisation between land, air and mechanised forces, reflecting India's focus on integrated warfare capabilities. The event stood as a reaffirmation of the country's military strength, technological progress and commitment to national security on the 77th anniversary of becoming a republic.

J&K Showcases

whose patience and skill have sustained

living traditions.

Saffron blossoms were also showcased on the tableau, with purple flowers and crimson strands symbolising a timeless identity deeply rooted in land, labour and heritage. The visual display was accompanied by a harmonious fusion of rabab, santoor and flute, creating a resonant soundscape along the ceremonial boulevard.

Performers in vibrant attire brought the tableau to life through traditional folk dances. The graceful Rouf, the powerful Kud and spirited Pahari, Bhadarwahi and Gajri dance forms reflected the cultural diversity, joy and collective spirit of the region.

The Jammu and Kashmir tableau at the Republic Day Parade stood as a vibrant reminder of the Union Territory's enduring cultural wealth and the artisans and performers who continue to preserve and celebrate its heritage on the national stage.

56 Honoured With

awardees. Those recognised include PTI Srinagar Bureau Chief Inayat Jehangir and PTI video journalist Somil Abrol from Jammu. Others honoured in the media category are Avtar Krishan Bhat, Vivek Suri, Sunil Ji Bhat, Dinesh Manhotra, Bilal Ahmad Bhat, Razia Noor, Ishfaq Gowhar Zargar, Syed Khalid Hussain, Sarosh Kafeel and Neeta Sharma.

Former IAS officer Mohammad Shafi Pandit was posthumously awarded the lifetime achievement honour.

In the category of meritorious public service, awards were given to Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu, V S Senthil Kumar; Managing Director, Jammu and Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation, Tariq Ganai; Additional Secretary in the General Administration Department, Rohit Sharma; Superintending Engineer, Public Works (R and B) Department, Pooja Wazir; and Dr Majid Jahangir, Principal of Government Medical College, Baramulla.

Writers and litterateurs honoured include Yashpaul Nirmal for Dogri literature, Choudhary Hassan Parwaz for Gojri, Parwaiz Manoo for Pahari, Fayaz Dilbar posthumously for poetry, Kewal Krishan Sharma as writer and poet, and Rattan Lal Sharma for writing and translation.

In sports, awards went to cricketers Aquib Nabi Dar and Brijesh Sharma, judokas Rakesh Singh and Vishal Khajuria, wushu player Saleem Kumar, athletes Ravees Ahmad and Mohammad Iqbal, gymnast Sudipti Khanna, and skater Aiyza Naz Chib.

The performing arts category recognised singer Tanya Dev Gupta, actor Anil Tickoo, actor and director Ayash Arif, rabab artist Abdul Hamid Bhat, Dogri folk singer Raman Singh Slathia, singer and music director Sunil Sharma, theatre artist Ajay Kumar Sharma, producer and director Suresh K Verma, and tabla artist Neeraj Verma.

Awards for excellence in arts and crafts were presented to Sozni artisan Sajjad Husain Bhat, artist and art educator Bhushan Kesar, Kani artisan Mohammad Shafi Bhat, artisan Razia Mushtaq, and senior craft instructor in paper pulp, Ishfar Ali.

For social reforms and empowerment, honours were given to Arhan Bagati, founder of Kashmir's Yumberzal Applied Research Institute; Mehjabeen Nabi, president and founder of the Care Foundation and Charitable Trust, Srinagar; and Saadat Nasir Wani Sogami, chairman of Team Red NGO, Kashmir.

In the category of outstanding industrial entrepreneurship, Mohammad Niyaz ul Kabir of GR8 Sports, Sheikh Yameen of Heaventure Adventures Private Limited, and Sunil Singh, walnut grower from Kishtwar Gold Walnut Farm, were recognised.

The awards were announced on the occasion of Republic Day, highlighting contributions across sectors to public life, culture, service and resilience in the Union Territory.

R-Parade Reflects

Union partnership and our commitment to shared values," Modi said, adding that the visit of the EU leaders would give fresh momentum to India's engagement and cooperation with Europe across diverse sectors.

Highlighting the security dimension of the parade, the prime minister said the Republic Day celebrations showcased India's formidable security apparatus, reflecting the nation's preparedness, technological capability and unwavering commitment to safeguarding its citizens. He said the parade offered a glimpse into the strengthening capabilities of India's security forces, describing them as the pride of the nation.

Modi also said the celebrations presented a vivid display of India's cultural mosaic. He

noted that vibrant performances and tableaux at Kartavya Path celebrated the country's cultural diversity and reflected the rich and diverse heritage of the nation.

Separately, the prime minister thanked several world leaders for extending greetings on India's 77th Republic Day. Expressing gratitude to Emmanuel Macron, Modi said he looked forward to welcoming him to India soon and further deepening and diversifying the India-France strategic partnership. Macron, in his message, recalled his visit as the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations in 2024.

Modi also thanked Tshering Tobgay for his wishes, saying the special bonds of friendship and unique ties between India and Bhutan would continue to grow stronger.

Replying to greetings from Nikos Christodoulides, the prime minister described Cyprus as a close friend and trusted partner and reaffirmed India's commitment to deepening the comprehensive partnership. He also said he looked forward to welcoming the Cypriot president to India.

The prime minister said the Republic Day celebrations reflected India's democratic spirit, cultural vibrancy and expanding global partnerships, reinforcing the country's position as a confident and engaged nation on the world stage.

Every Act Of

civil administration, including Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat.

Earlier, the lieutenant governor laid a wreath at the Police Martyrs Memorial and Balidan Stambh, paying tribute to personnel of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and Central Armed Police Forces who made the supreme sacrifice. He also expressed condolences over the deaths of police and civil administration personnel in an accidental explosion in Nowgam.

Referring to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, Sinha paid tribute to civilians who lost their lives and commended the security forces for eliminating the three Pakistani terrorists involved through Operation Mahadev. He also lauded the Jammu and Kashmir Police for uncovering a nationwide terror network last November and preventing several attacks in time, calling the force the nation's true heroes.

Sinha said Operation Sindoor, launched in retaliation to the Pahalgam attack, marked a defining moment in India's national security doctrine. "Operation Sindoor was not merely a military action, it was a declaration of India's strategic resolve," he said, adding that India had struck at the heart of the enemy, dismantled terror infrastructure, exposed the hollowness of nuclear threats and reaffirmed its commitment to protecting national sovereignty.

He said India has made it unequivocally clear that any terrorist attack on its soil would be treated as an act of war. Operation Sindoor continues, he added, with every hostile move being closely monitored. As part of non kinetic measures, India has terminated the Indus Water Treaty, sending a strong message that bloodshed and cooperation cannot coexist. "India's water resources will now be utilised for India's development," he said.

Declaring that a new dawn has arrived in Jammu and Kashmir, Sinha said employment was being provided not to those associated with terrorism but to families who have suffered because of it. He assured that every case linked to terrorism would be thoroughly examined, fresh investigations conducted and the guilty given the strictest punishment.

Turning to development, Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir's economy is estimated to grow by 11 per cent at current prices, with the Gross State Domestic Product projected at Rs 2,62,458 crore for 2024-25, up from Rs 2,36,059 crore in the previous year. He said the Union Territory is among the fastest growing regions in the country due to sustained government initiatives, infrastructure expansion and business friendly policies.

Highlighting tourism, the lieutenant governor said Jammu and Kashmir recorded 1.61 crore tourist visits in 2025 up to November. While this was lower than last year's 2.36 crore visits due to the Pahalgam terror attack and floods in August-September, he said sustained government efforts had ensured resilience and revival. Nine new tourist destinations have been identified and are being developed to international standards, he said.

Sinha said the Kashmir Marathon is being developed as a flagship sports tourism initiative, while the maiden Jammu Marathon has been launched and is scheduled for March 2026. He said these events project Kashmir as a safe, open and welcoming destination.

On employment and youth empowerment,

he said Mission YUVA aims to create 1.35 lakh entrepreneurial units and provide employment to 4.5 lakh youth. Over 1.51 lakh youth have already registered on the platform, with more than 12,000 credit linked cases sanctioned involving loans exceeding Rs 800 crore. Merit based recruitment has been ensured for 7,650 government posts during 2025, while recruitment for over 23,800 posts is underway. He also said 910 compassionate appointments were provided during the year, including to next of kin of terror affected families.

Sinha detailed major connectivity initiatives, including the rail link connecting Kashmir with the rest of India, sanctioning of a full fledged railway division for Jammu, expansion of Jammu Tawi railway station and modernisation of Jammu airport. He said road connectivity has improved through expressways, national highways, ring roads and tunnels, including the completion of the Sonamarg tunnel and progress on the Zojila tunnel. Nineteen new national highway projects have been sanctioned at a cost of over Rs 10,600 crore.

In the power sector, Sinha said major hydro-power projects including Pakal Dul, Ratle, Kuru and Kwar are under execution, while the long stalled Sawalkote project has been revived. He said losses have reduced and revenue increased following distribution and transmission upgrades and installation of smart meters. Solarisation of government buildings and households under PM Surya Ghar Yojana is also underway, he said.

He said over 15.62 lakh rural households have been provided tap water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission, while agriculture and allied sectors have witnessed structural transformation through diversification, improved seed replacement rates, oilseed expansion under the Yellow Revolution, growth in honey production and wider insurance coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

Sinha highlighted industrial growth, saying over 2,200 industrial units have commenced production since 2020, generating employment for more than 73,000 people, while over 1,000 units are in the pipeline. He also referred to the growth of startups, women led enterprises, handicrafts and handloom sectors, which together provide livelihoods to over 4.45 lakh people.

He outlined reforms in education, health, housing, urban development and digital governance, including expansion of medical colleges, AIIMS, cancer institutes, digital services, Direct Benefit Transfer, social security schemes and women led self help groups.

Calling for unity, Sinha said drug abuse among youth remains a serious challenge and urged society to collectively dismantle the terror ecosystem and reject violence. He assured that the government would continue to pursue inclusive development, peace and prosperity.

"I assure every citizen that this government will continue to create meaningful opportunities for all and work towards a peaceful, fearless and developed Jammu and Kashmir," the lieutenant governor said.

R-Day Celebrated

Republic Day celebrations were also held with enthusiasm across districts including Budgam, Bandipora, Kulgam, Kupwara, Pulwama, Ganderbal, Shopian and Baramulla. District Development Council chairpersons and deputy commissioners unfurled the national flag at district headquarters, inspected parade contingents and took the salute.

March-pasts featuring contingents of the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, CRPF, IRP, Home Guards, NCC cadets and schoolchildren marked the ceremonies, while cultural programmes showcasing folk dances, patriotic songs and traditional performances highlighted the region's cultural diversity.

Speakers across districts paid tributes to freedom fighters and martyrs, reiterated commitment to the ideals of the Constitution and highlighted developmental achievements. Prize distribution ceremonies and felicitation of meritorious individuals, officials, students, artisans and sportspersons were also held at several venues.

Similar flag-hoisting ceremonies took place at government offices, educational institutions and public spaces across the Valley to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.

Search Op Extended

this was the third encounter in the Chatroo belt over the past week, as security forces continue a massive operation against terrorists believed to be linked to the Jaish-e-Mohammad outfit.

On January 18, a fierce gunbattle in Sonnar

village near Mandral-Singhpura in the same district left a paratrooper dead and seven other security personnel injured. Although the terrorists escaped that encounter, they were intercepted again a few kilometres away on January 22. However, they managed to evade capture once more, using thick vegetation and rugged terrain.

The operation continued despite more than two feet of snowfall in the area on Friday, officials said. On Monday, Army helicopters were seen hovering over the encounter site and adjoining areas to maintain aerial surveillance, while multiple search parties were fanned out in different directions.

The area of operation has now been expanded to new locations along the Kishtwar-Sinthan road. Officials said the Army has also deployed unmanned aerial vehicles and drones, along with sniffer dog units, to track down and neutralise the terrorists.

Security forces have maintained heightened alertness in the hilly district as operations continue to prevent militant movement and dismantle terror hideouts in the region.

Kashmiri Flavors

As temperatures dipped, Kashmiri food and Kahwa became the strongest pull. Visitors arrived curious and stayed longer than planned. Many stood close to the stall, watching cups being filled and hands being warmed before taking their first sip.

"People come here just to look," said Raashed Ashraf, one of the team members at the stall. "Then they smell the Kahwa, and they stop talking. After the first sip, they smile and ask for another cup."

Imran Khan Mutwa watched the crowd grow thicker as the night deepened. "The cold helps," he said. "When the air gets sharper, people want something that comforts them. Kahwa does that gently."

The flavour of Kashmir carried far, turning distance into intimacy on a cold Gujarat night.

Saffron, almonds, cardamom, and soft spices filled the air and pulled people in without effort. Some stopped and watched, others walked straight toward the stall.

After the first sip, faces relaxed and voices grew softer.

Ramesh Mangeria watched visitors return again and again. "Many people came back two or three times," he said. "They wanted to taste everything slowly. They wanted to understand what they were eating."

The food moved at the same pace as the evening.

Chana Badam Chaat brought gentle crunch and balance. Rumah Soup warmed the cold air from within. Desserts stayed without asking to be noticed. Bamchoonth Halwa glowed with saffron. Shahi Tukda carried sweetness without excess. And Akhroot Badam Fernet felt smooth and familiar.

Plates returned empty, and visitors drifted back to the stall.

Rohit stood near the dessert counter, answering questions. "People kept asking what goes into these dishes," he said. "They wanted to know where the flavors come from. That curiosity felt special."

"I did not expect this," said a visitor from Bhub, holding his cup carefully. "These flavors feel calm. Winter feels different with this food."

The Kashmiri stall was run by a small team that included Raashed Ashraf, Imran Khan Mutwa, Ramesh Mangeria, Rohit, and Zakaria. Their aim was to serve Kashmiri vegetarian food as it is cooked and shared at home, while making it easy for new visitors to connect with the flavors.

Zakaria watched the samavars empty and fill again. "Kahwa carries patience," he said. "People do not rush it. They stand, sip, and speak less."

Kahwa became the clear favourite as the evening cooled. Hundreds of cups were poured. People came back after walking the festival, some with friends, others alone, drawn again by the warmth.

"Some visitors said they had never imagined Kashmiri like this," Imran Khan Mutwa said. "They only knew what they had seen on screens. Food changed that."

Many visitors spoke about discovering a side of Kashmiri food they had rarely encountered. "We usually hear about meat dishes," one woman said. "This feels comforting. It fits winter."

As the festival moved toward its final hours, the same Gujarati couple returned. The air felt sharper, and the crowd had thinned. They ordered another round of Kahwa.

"This warmth stays with you," the woman said. "You feel closer to Kashmir standing here in Gujarat."

Republic Day Celebrated with Fervour across Judiciary Institutions of Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with enthusiasm and solemnity across judiciary institutions of the Kashmir Division, reaffirming commitment to the Constitution, rule of law and democratic values.

At Srinagar, the District Judiciary and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) celebrated the occasion at the District Court Complex with the unfurling of the National Flag by Principal District & Sessions Judge Haq Nawaz Zargar. Judicial officers, members of the Bar, prosecution



officials, court staff, CRPF representatives and legal aid functionaries participated. Patriotic performances by children and

distribution of appreciation certificates marked the event.

Similar celebrations were held at district court complexes in Kulgam, Kupwara, Anantnag, Baramulla, Pulwama and Shopian, where Principal District & Sessions Judges unfurled the Tricolour and took salutes. Judicial officers, Bar members, prosecution staff, police and legal services functionaries attended the ceremonies.

Speakers across districts highlighted the significance of Republic Day, constitutional values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, and the vital role

of the judiciary in upholding the rule of law. Sweets and appreciation tokens were distributed at some venues to police and security personnel.

Republic Day functions were also organised at tehsil levels by Tehsil Legal Services Committees. Additionally, the Juvenile Justice Board, Kupwara, observed the day with a special ceremony focusing on child rights and reformative justice.

The celebrations concluded in a dignified atmosphere, reflecting unity, patriotism and dedication to constitutional ideals across the Kashmir judiciary.

Baramulla Celebrates 77th Republic Day with Grandeur

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: The 77th Republic Day celebrations unfolded with great fervor at District Police Lines Baramulla, with Minister for Agricultural Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives, and Elections, Javid Ahmad Dar, unfurling the National Flag, inspecting the parade and taking the ceremonial salute.

The impressive parade featured contingents from BSF, CRPF, J&K police, SSB, IRP, Armed Police Ladies, and the J&K Police Band, alongside NCC cadets from Government Degree College Baramulla, Boys' Higher Secondary Baramulla and various schools and colleges, showcasing the region's patriotic spirit and unity.

The Minister paid tributes to the visionary leaders instrumental in shaping our constitution. He also offered homage to the brave freedom fighters and martyrs who sacrificed everything to uphold the nation's freedom and democracy.

Javid Dar highlighted the district's notable progress across a wide range of key sectors, including agriculture, healthcare and education, along with impactful initiatives in women and youth empowerment, road connectivity, social welfare, self-employment and other avenues of holistic development.

During the event, the students from different schools and cultural artists



showcased a range of performances highlighting the region's rich cultural diversity and heritage.

On the occasion, the Indian Army had established a series of stalls offering the public a unique opportunity to witness an impressive display of their state-of-the-art weaponry, allowing the visitors to gain a closer insight into the Army's operational capabilities and technological advancements.

Meanwhile, the guests of honour visited the stalls set up by the Indian Army and by various departments, including Education, Agriculture, Health, ICD among others showcasing a range of government schemes, services and facilities aimed at benefiting the general public.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of prizes for the march past and cultural performances. Additionally, the employees from various departments were honored for their outstanding contributions in public service.

Sakeena Unfurls National Flag at Anantnag

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today unfurled the National Flag at Shaheed Himayun Muzamil Memorial Government Degree College Boys here to mark the 77th Republic Day celebrations.

She inspected the parade and saluted the contingents of CRPF, J&K Police, Home Guards, J&K Police Band, Fire & Emergency Services, NCC and students of various schools.

In her Republic Day address, Minister Sakeena highlighted the significance of Republic Day, adding that on this day the Constitution was implemented in India and our country became a democratic nation.

She also said that this supreme day makes us remember that the original power lies in public rather than any institution or person.

The Minister, in her address, highlighted the key achievements of the Government during the past 15 months, stating that focused governance, people-centric policies, and transparent administration have strengthened public service delivery across sectors, particularly in health, education, social welfare, R&B and others.



She remarked that J&K is witnessing a new dawn of development in every sector since this Government led by Omar Abdullah took over. "J&K is a welfare state, implementation of various welfare schemes has been made effective and the deserving persons are reaping benefits of these schemes", she stated.

Minister Sakeena further said that various welfare measures like increasing the marriage assistance scheme, old age pension, widow pension, disability pension, besides removal of education bar for availing marriage assistance scheme have been some remarkable achievements of the Government in the last 12-14 months.

The Minister also said that

Health infrastructure has been upgraded across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir, with special focus on rural and far-flung areas. She added that doctors and other needful medical staff has been posted in hospitals and health centres in rural and peripheral areas in order to have best treatment facilities for the public near their vicinity.

"Health sector has witnessed rapid transformation in J&K. Cath Labs, MRI facilities, CT Scans, other high end medical facilities are being established in all GMCs and District Hospitals, Dialysis Centres are also being established in all Sub-district hospitals besides health care staff has been made accountable for the needs of public", she stated.

BOPEE Observes Republic Day Celebration

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations celebrated the 77th Republic Day with full patriotic zeal and fervour.

The flag unfurling ceremony was simultaneously held at the JKBOPEE office Bagat-e-Barzulla Srinagar and JKBOPEE office Bahu Plaza, Jammu.

At Jammu office, Chairperson J&K BOPEE, Professor Minu Mahajan unfurled the National Flag in presence of Member BOPEE, Professor Surinder Kumar Sharma, Secretary BOPEE, Dr. Shabir Hussain Keen, COE BOPEE, Professor Gurvinder Raj Verma and other officers and officials of the Board.

In her address, she called upon the gathering to take a solemn pledge to work towards a prosperous India.



She expressed gratitude to the visionary leaders who gifted the nation its constitution, declaring India a Republic on this momentous day.

At Srinagar office Member, J&K BOPEE, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone, unfurled the National Flag in presence of the officers and officials of JKBOPEE.

In his address, Dr. B A Lone exhorted the gathering to express profound gratitude to the nation's founding fathers for gifting India its sacred Constitution, a timeless testament to their vision and wisdom.

Bazm-e-Sukhan Organized in Gund Khwaja Qasim

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Under the auspices of Payaam International Organization, a spiritually uplifting and intellectually enriching literary gathering titled "Bazm-e-Sukhan" was organized in Gund Khwaja Qasim (Kantrabug) on the occasion of Youm-e-Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS).

The programme was held with devotion and dignity at the residence of the devotee of Imam Hussain (AS), Master Zulfiqar Ali Haidari.

During the gathering, poets and speakers eloquently presented the universal message of truthfulness, patience, steadfastness, and sacrifice embodied in the lives of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS), Syeda-e-Karbala Hazrat Bibi Zainab (SA), Alamlad-e-Karbala Hazrat Abbas

(AS), and Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (AS).

The event witnessed the participation of Syeda Zahra, Tabinda Zahoor, Mohammad Hussain Al-Hussaini, Mohammad Ramzan Malla, Ashfaq Hamid, Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil, Fazil Mahmood, Imtiaz Dildar, Nisar Hussain Mir, Muntazir Haigami, Ghulam Hassan Shabnam, Sabir Shabbir, Haq Nawaz, Ghulam Mohammad Gohar, Syed Rizwan, Wasim Ali Kazim, Syed Mehdi Hassan, Syed Ghazanfar, Mohammad Afzal Hashmi, Zulfiqar Haidari, Syed Asadullah Safvi, and Malik Zahoor Mehdi Kashmiri.

The speakers appreciated the intellectual and social role of Payaam International Organization, describing it as an effective platform for the promotion of knowledge, awareness, tolerance, and human values.

Indian Army provides Computers to Schools

Observer News Service

DODA: On the auspicious occasion of the 77th Republic Day, the Indian Army's 10 Rashtriya Rifles, under the leadership of its Commanding Officer, Colonel Rahul Katiyar, distributed 20 computers among government schools of District Doda under Operation Sadbhavna.

The programme was organized at the Sports Stadium, Doda, as part of the Republic Day celebrations, in the august presence of Chairman, District Development Council (DDC), Dhananter Singh Kotwal and Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh.

The initiative aims to promote digital education, bridge the digital divide and enhance learning facilities in government schools, especially in remote and rural areas. By providing modern educational tools, the Indian Army reaffirmed its commitment towards youth empowerment, inclusive de-

velopment and nation-building through education.

The computers were provided to Government High School Shankhli, Government Middle School Gurmul, Government Upper Primary School Laloor, Government Middle School Barno, Government High School Ugad, Government High School Gadi, Government Girls High School Kanhal, Government Girls Middle School Bhagwah, Government Upper Primary School Hash and Government City Middle School (Boys), Doda.

The school authorities and the district administration lauded the Indian Army for its continued support to the civil population under Operation Sadbhavna. The initiative is expected to significantly improve digital literacy, academic exposure and overall educational standards of students in District Doda, truly reflecting the spirit of service, cooperation and national integration on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day.

Rising Footfall Triggers Parking Woes at Pakharpora Shrine

BUDGAM: Rising footfall at the historic Pakharpora shrine in Budgam district has led to persistent parking and traffic congestion, with local residents and devotees facing inconvenience during peak visiting hours due to the absence of a designated parking facility near the shrine.

Pakharpora is home to the centuries-old shrine of Hazrat Syed Ali Aali Balkhi (RA), a revered Sufi saint believed to have arrived in Kashmir from Balkh in present-day Afghanistan nearly 650 to 700 years ago. The shrine holds deep spiritual significance for devotees, many of whom visit regularly, especially on Saturdays, to offer prayers and seek guidance before taking important life decisions.

The shrine witnesses a steady inflow of devotees throughout the year, with footfall increasing on weekends and during special religious occasions. An annual urs held in August draws large gatherings, requiring coordinated arrangements by the shrine management and local authorities. The presence of a busy local market in the vicinity further adds to daily movement in the area.

However, residents and devotees said the growing number of visitors has resulted in frequent parking and traffic-related problems. With no designated parking space close to the shrine, vehicles are often parked along narrow approach roads, affecting smooth movement and causing inconvenience for both locals and pilgrims. (Arshina Aslam)

Republic Day Observed with Patriotic Zeal at Juvenile Justice Board, Kupwara



KUPWARA: The 77th Republic Day of India was commemorated with great dignity, solemnity and patriotic fervour at the premises of the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Kupwara where the National Tricolour was unfurled in a ceremonious manner and in strict adherence to the directions issued by the Hon'ble High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The National Flag was unfurled by the Principal Magistrate, Juvenile Justice Board Kupwara, Mr. Mudasir Bashir in the esteemed presence of Member JJB Mr. Ishaq Ahmad, the staff of the Juvenile Justice Board, Members of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Kupwara and the officers and staff of the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) Kupwara.

While addressing the gathering, the Principal Magistrate eloquently reflected upon the historic significance of Republic Day and the enduring values enshrined in the Constitution of India. He further observed that the juvenile justice system stands as a vital pillar in safeguarding the rights, dignity and future of children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection, through a balanced approach of compassion, reformative justice and rehabilitation. (Observer News Service)

J&K Bank Celebrates Republic Day with Patriotic Fervour



JAMMU: As part of countrywide festivities, J&K Bank celebrated the 77th Republic Day with great fervour across its areas of operations.

MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee unfurled the national tricolour during the main function held at the Bank's Jammu Divisional Office, in the presence of Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, Chief General Manager Sunil Kumar, General Managers, DGMs, senior officers amid a large gathering of Bank staff.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "On this solemn occasion, we reaffirm our commitment to the constitutional ideals that continue to guide India's march towards progress, prosperity and self-reliance. Economic self-reliance, therefore, is both a national imperative and a moral responsibility - one that places people, productivity and purpose at its core."

Highlighting the relationship between the Bank's rich legacy and national vision, he added, "For J&K Bank, this vision resonates deeply with our legacy. Established with the mission of 'serving to empower', the Bank has, for decades, functioned not merely as a financial institution but as a development partner in the socio-economic transformation of Jammu & Kashmir with emphasis on self-reliance. Our journey has been shaped by the aspirations of our people and the belief that sustainable growth must be inclusive, equitable, and rooted in local strengths." (Observer News Service)

DIPR Pays Homage to Martyrs



JAMMU: Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) celebrated 77th Republic Day at the Media Complex, Rail Head here.

Director Information and Public Relations, Nitish Rajora, unfurled the tricolour and paid high tributes to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the nation.

On the occasion, the Director along with the officers and officials of the department paid floral tributes to Anil Kumar Abrol (Field Publicity Officer), Harbans Singh (Projector Operator) and Anchal Singh (Projector Operator) who attained martyrdom, while performing their duties on this day in 1995.

Joint Director Information, Jammu, Joint Director Information (Hqrs), Deputy Director PR/AV, Deputy Director (PR), Jammu, Accounts Officer, Information Officers, Administrative Officer and other officials of the department were also present on the occasion. (Observer News Service)

77TH REPUBLIC DAY

Minister Rana Highlights Development Milestones

Observer News Service

Poonch: The 77th Republic Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at the Sports Stadium, Poonch, where Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana unfurled the National Flag.

The celebrations featured an impressive parade by 28 contingents, including personnel from JKP, JKAP, NCC, CRPF, the Police Band and students from various educational institutions. A vibrant cultural programme showcasing the rich traditions and talent of the region added colour and energy to the event.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister congratulated the people of Poonch on Republic Day and



underlined the significance of the Indian Constitution in empowering the citizens to democratically elect their government. He paid rich tributes to the bravery and resilience displayed by the people of Poonch during Operation Sindoor, describing their courage and sacrifices as unparalleled.

The Minister made special mention of village Kalaban, which was hit by a devastating landslide in September 2025, leaving 123 families without belongings and causing losses worth crores of rupees. He said the Omar Abdullah government and district administration ensured timely relief

and assistance and informed that the Chief Minister has ordered allotment of five marla land to each affected family.

Highlighting the development works, the Minister stated that during the current financial year, over ₹67 crore have been approved under the district administration through which 2,762 works related to water supply, electricity, health, roads and public infrastructure are being executed. He added that work on the Jammu-Poonch National Highway has been accelerated and the opening of the Kundi and Nowsheera tunnels has significantly eased travel in hilly areas.

The Minister further informed that a ₹650 crore power project is under execution in Poonch district, which will generate 37

megawatts of electricity. Work is also progressing rapidly on 40 new roads under PMGSY Phase-IV.

Under the SASCI programme, eight projects worth ₹167.6 million are under execution by the Public Works Department. Under NABARD, two important bridges at Sathra and Santi are being constructed at a cost of ₹19 crore. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, 132 schemes worth ₹502 crore are being implemented, with 18 already completed and 14 nearing completion. Additionally, 52 new water schemes have been approved under UT CAPEX, with ₹478.8 million allocated during the current financial year.

The Minister also noted that under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), around 50,000 pucca houses have been constructed in the district.

Patriotic Spirit Marks Republic Day 2026 Celebrations Across Jammu Division

Observer News Service

JAMMU: A vibrant display of patriotism, unity and democratic values marked the 77th Republic Day celebrations across the Jammu division on Monday, as thousands of people gathered at district headquarters, sub-divisions, tehsils and institutions to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India. The day-long celebrations were held amid elaborate security arrangements and unfolded smoothly, reflecting meticulous planning and seamless coordination by the district administrations.

Across the region, impressive march-pasts by contingents of the Armed and Police forces, stirring band performances and colourful cultural programmes showcasing India's unity in diversity set the tone for the national celebration. From the snow-clad hills of Doda and Kishtwar to the plains of Samba and Rajouri, the Tricolour fluttered high as citizens paid homage to the freedom fighters, martyrs and constitutional architects who laid the foundations of the Republic.

Doda Celebrates With Fervour

In Doda, the main function was held at the Sports Stadium, where Chairman District Development Council (DDC) Dhananter Singh Kotwal unfurled the National Flag amid the melodious rendition of the National Anthem by students. A large gathering of citizens, officials and students witnessed the celebrations marked by enthusiasm and patriotic zeal.

The Chief Guest inspected the parade and took the salute of an impressive march-past presented by contingents of CRPF, SSB, Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police, Jammu and Kashmir Police, First Women Battalion, Forest Protection Force, Home Guards, NCC Senior and Junior Divisions, Government Degree College, Government Higher Secondary School Boys and students from various government and private schools. The parade reflected discipline, dedication and collective commitment to the nation.

Vice Chairperson DDC Sangeeta Rani, Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, SSP Sandeep Kumar Mehta, ADC Anil Kumar Thakur,



CPO Manesh Kumar Manhas, senior district officers, representatives of political parties and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Dhananter Singh Kotwal extended Republic Day greetings and paid rich tributes to brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the nation, also remembering the army personnel who lost their lives in the recent tragic accident in Bhandarwah. Highlighting India's progress, he said the country has achieved significant growth across sectors and is steadily moving towards becoming the world's third-largest economy.

He lauded improvements in road connectivity, education and healthcare, successful implementation of initiatives such as HADP and JKIP, promotion of tourism through winter festivals and adventure activities, and ongoing campaigns including Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The role of the district administration and the media in nation-building was also appreciated.

The celebrations were enriched by vibrant cultural performances by students and artists associated with Kala Utsav and the Education Department. Performances in Gogri, Dogri, Seraji, Bhandarwah and Kashmiri highlighted the district's rich cultural heritage. The programme concluded with distribu-

tion of mementos to participating schools and officials.

Bhandarwah, Udhampur and Ramban join celebrations

At Bhandarwah, the main function was held at the New Bus Stand, where Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunil Kumar Bhutyal unfurled the Tricolour and took the salute during a march-past by contingents of J&K Armed Police, NCC units of GDC and Higher Secondary School Bhandarwah, along with students from various schools. Senior officers, officials and citizens participated in the celebrations with enthusiasm.

In Udhampur, DDC Chairperson Lal Chand unfurled the National Flag at Government PG Degree College Boys and took the salute at a march-past comprising 31 contingents from District Police, SKPA, Home Guards, NCC and the Police Band. DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range Sarah Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai, SSP Amod Ashok Nagpure and senior officers from the civil administration, police and armed forces attended the event.

In his address, the DDC Chairperson recalled the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950, calling Republic Day a celebration of democratic traditions and national values. Highlighting development in the district, he spoke about progress in road connectivity, healthcare, agriculture and youth empowerment, including

the near-completion of the Chenani-Sudh Mahadev road project and achievements under PMGSY, PM-KISAN and Mission YUVA. Cultural performances by students and artists enthralled the audience.

At Ramban, DDC Chairperson Dr Shamshad Shan unfurled the Tricolour at the District Police Lines and took the salute of a march-past by 23 contingents of police, CRPF, IRP, Home Guards, NCC and school students. She highlighted key developmental milestones, including improved connectivity on NH-44, progress under PMAY-G and achievements across health, education and allied sectors. The celebrations concluded with cultural programmes and felicitation of outstanding performers.

Kishtwar, Samba and Rajouri resonate with national pride

In Kishtwar, the main function was held at the Mini Secretariat, where DDC Chairperson Pooja Thakur unfurled the National Flag and inspected the parade presented by JK Police, IRP, CRPF, CISF, Home Guards, NCC units and schoolchildren. Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma, SSP Naresh Singh and other senior officers attended the event.

Addressing the gathering, the DDC Chairperson paid homage to martyrs and freedom fighters and highlighted the significance of Republic Day as a symbol of India's unity, sovereignty and democratic strength. She outlined achievements under the District Apex Budget, social security schemes, power sector upgrades and agriculture, and paid tribute to the late Sudhir Sharma for his dedicated service. Students and officers were felicitated for their achievements.

In Samba, the district-level function was held at Rani Suchet Singh Sports Stadium, where DDC Chairman Keshav Dutt Sharma unfurled the Tricolour and took the salute at a march-past by security forces, police, NCC cadets, veterans and students. The celebrations featured vibrant cultural performances reflecting India's rich heritage. MLA Ramgarh Dr Davinder Kumar Maniyal, Deputy Commissioner Ayushi Sudan and SSP Varinder Manhas were among those present.

Republic Day Celebrations Reflect New Aspirations of J&K: Satish Sharma

Observer News Service

KATHUA: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Information Technology, Science & Technology, ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma on Monday extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day, recalling the nation's constitutional values, sacrifices of freedom fighters and the collective resolve to build a strong and inclusive India.

The Minister hoisted the Tricolour and took salute at March past contingents drawn from Police, Paramilitary forces, College and School students, at Sports Stadium Kathua.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that Republic Day is not merely a national holiday but a reminder of the day in 1950 when the Constitution of India came into force after nearly three years of dedicated effort under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He noted that January 26 also holds historic significance as the day when the pledge of 'Purna Swaraj' was taken in 1930.

Highlighting the spirit of national unity, Satish Sharma said that the Tricolour symbolizes courage, peace, and prosperity and reflects the shared heartbeat of the nation from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, irrespective of diversity.

The Minister paid rich tributes to the brave heroes of Jammu and Kashmir including General Zorwar Singh and Brigadier Rajinder Singh, and expressed gratitude to the Army, Police and security forces for safeguarding peace and stability in the region.

Speaking about the progress of Jammu and Kashmir, Minister Sharma said that the past few years have marked a new era of peace, development, and public welfare. He said that under



the leadership of Chief Minister Jenab Omar Abdullah, the government is committed to ensuring equitable development and improved facilities for every citizen.

The Minister highlighted that farmers are being supported through the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), which has encouraged the cultivation of high-value crops such as strawberries, dragon fruit and lavender, significantly enhancing rural incomes. He added that Kathua district has emerged as a leading agricultural district in Jammu and Kashmir, with mushroom cultivation witnessing major growth and local crafts such as Basohli paintings and Pashmina receiving global recognition through GI tags.

Satish Sharma said that millions of families are benefiting from the strengthened Public Distribution System, ensuring food security across the Union Territory. He also informed that free bus travel facilities for women and new pilgrimage bus services to destinations including Mata Vaishno Devi, Shahdara Sharief, Haridwar and Amritsar have been introduced to improve accessibility.

Referring to transport reforms, the Minister said that

initiatives such as Inland Water Transport and the Water Metro System have been launched to address public transport challenges and enhance mobility.

On housing and urban development, Minister Sharma said that under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana 2.0, permanent houses are being provided to previously excluded families, while cities are being developed into cleaner and modern urban centres.

He further said that significant progress has been made in providing safe drinking water, with work completed in 165 villages and tap water now reaching over 70 per cent rural households. For the first time since Independence, drinking water facilities have reached villages such as Chown, Taddi, Beril, Bagni, Sundhar, Matandi, and Badoli Charpas.

Highlighting industrial growth, the Minister said that major companies are establishing manufacturing units in Kathua, creating employment for thousands of youth. Facilities such as Bamboo and Agarbatti Common Facility Centres (CFCs) and the Kirti Showroom have also been made operational to promote local entrepreneurship.

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