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### Parliament Budget Session

## Deepfakes Pose Significant Threat To Democracy: Murmu



### 25 Cr Indians Moved Out Of Poverty In Last Decade

- India will respond decisively to any act of terror
- Op Sindoor showcased armed forces' valour and self-reliance
- Social Security Benefits Now Cover Nearly 95 Cr Citizens'
- India remains the fastest-growing major economy
- EU-India free trade pact to boost jobs and manufacturing
- Income up to Rs 12 lakh exempted under tax reforms
- Railways close to complete electrification
- India moving towards its own space station under Gaganyaan
- VB-G RAM G scheme sparks Opposition protests

### Over 11 Cr Free Treatments Under Ayushman Bharat

#### KO Web Desk

Srinagar: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said India has sent a firm message that any act of terror against the country will be met with resolute and decisive action. Addressing a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament at the start of the Budget Session, Murmu said the world witnessed the valour of Indian armed forces during Operation Sindoor, when | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Sets Up District Panels On Student Mental Health

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered the constitution of District Level Monitoring Committees across the Union Territory to oversee the implementation of measures related to mental health protection and prevention of suicides among students. According to an order issued by the General Administration Department, the committees have been constituted in pursuance of directions passed by the Supreme Court of India in

Criminal Appeal No. 3177 of 2025, arising out of a case related to student mental health and suicide prevention. As per the order, each district level committee will be chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, with the Chief Education Officer, Chief Medical Officer and District Social Welfare Officer as members. The committee will also include a representative from civil society to be nominated by the Deputy Commissioner. The terms of reference of the committees include overseeing the | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Sees Major Gains In Social Security Schemes

### Pulwama, Baramulla & Jammu Emerge as Best Performers

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: The districts of Jammu, Pulwama and Baramulla have emerged as top performers in major financial inclusion and social security schemes being implemented by the Jammu and Kashmir Government, showing notable progress in expanding citizen coverage and financial access during the current financial year. An official said that the Chief Minister has commended the efforts of the district administrations for significant improvement in the implementation of flagship schemes such

as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) during 2025-26. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, aimed at promoting universal access to banking facilities, 1,26,803 new accounts were opened in the first three quarters of the fiscal. "With this, the total number of PMJDY accounts in Jammu and Kashmir increased from 23,66,953 as of March 31, 2025, to 24,93,756 as of December 31, 2025. The top-performing districts under this scheme were Jammu, Samba and Reasi," the officials said. They said under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), | [More on P6](#)

## HC Upholds Fee Regulation Amendment, Backs Uniform FFRC Yardstick

#### M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Wednesday upheld the constitutional validity of amendments introduced to the Jammu and Kashmir School Education Act, 2002, providing for regulation of fees charged by private unaided schools, while simultaneously laying down strict limits on the functioning of the Fee Fixation and Regulation Committee (FFRC). A batch of petitions filed by unaided private schools challenged the amendments introduced through S.O. 3466(E) of 2020 and the Jammu and Kashmir Private Schools (Fixation, Determination and Regulation of Fee) Rules, 2022, contending that the statutory framework and



the functioning of the FFRC violated the autonomy of private unaided educational institutions as recognised by the Supreme Court in T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka. The schools had argued that the Committee had been acting arbitrarily by unilaterally fixing school fees without

proposals from institutions, failing to conduct physical verification of infrastructure and expenditure, and imposing unreasonable caps on tuition and transport fees, thereby undermining their ability to maintain quality education. After an exhaustive examination of Supreme Court

precedents including T.M.A. Pai Foundation, Islamic Academy of Education and P.A. Inamdar, a Division Bench of Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Sanjay Parihar held that Sections 20A to 20J of the Act do not per se violate Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, as the object of the amendments is to prevent commercialisation and profiteering in education. However, the Court made it clear that the FFRC cannot act as a price-fixing authority for every private school. It held that unaided private schools enjoy substantial autonomy in fee fixation and that regulatory scrutiny must be confined to cases of alleged profiteering or commercialisation, preferably based on complaints or | [More on P6](#)

## HC Strikes Down Bureaucrat Role In School Fee Panel

#### M Ahmad

The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Wednesday held that Section 20A(2) of the Jammu and Kashmir School

Education Act, 2002, to the extent that it carves out a role for a retired person who has held the office of Financial Commissioner or above in the Union Territory to head the | [More on P6](#)

## Jammu-Srinagar NH Reopens For Traffic

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: Traffic on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was fully restored on Wednesday, a day after being closed for vehicular movement in view of heavy snowfall, officials said. They said heavy motor vehicles, including trucks, were allowed to ply on the 270-km highway -- the only all-weather road link connecting the Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country. "The highway has been restored fully, and traffic has been allowed to ply in both directions," an official said. Earlier in the day, only light motor vehicles were allowed to ply on the road. According to the officials, National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) personnel sprinkled salt and urea to get rid of frosty conditions on the road and ensure safe driving. The reopening of the highway has come as a relief for the people, especially tourists, who were stranded in the Valley in the wake of its closure following | [More on P6](#)



The Long Walk for Essentials: A woman walks through snow-cleared roads to fetch water in Khag area of Budgam district. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

## Maharashtra Deputy CM Killed In Plane Crash

### Leaders Across Parties Mourn His Death

#### Observer News Service

Baramati: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was killed on Wednesday after the private aircraft he was travelling in crashed near the Baramati airfield in Pune district, triggering shock across the political spectrum. The Learjet aircraft, operated by a Delhi-based private firm, was flying from Mumbai to Baramati when it went down



shortly before landing. Pawar was on his way to address a

series of rallies in Pune district ahead of the February 5 zilla parishad elections. Five people, including Pawar, two crew members, his personal security officer and an attendant, were on board the aircraft at the time of the crash. Officials said the aircraft caught fire after impact, and all those on board were rushed to hospital but could not be saved. Flight tracking data showed that the | [More on P6](#)

## 'A Widely Respected Leader': LG, CM Express Grief

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday expressed grief over the death of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar in a plane crash near Baramati in Pune district, saying he served his state with distinction. "It is with shock and deep sadness | [More on P6](#)

## J&K Fire Services Face 41% Staff Shortage: RTI

#### Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services is grappling with nearly 41 per cent manpower shortage with 1,490 posts vacant against a sanctioned strength of 3,639, an RTI reply has revealed. Of this, 103 posts fell vacant after termination of employees on December 15 last year, following findings of irregularities in their recruitment five years ago. "The department currently has 2,149 personnel in position, with vacancies across gazetted and non-gazetted cadres under both direct recruitment and promotional quotas. The issue has been taken up with the administrative department," the fire and emergency services department informed Jammu-based RTI activist Raman Kumar Sharma in a written response on Tuesday. Sharing the information with PTI, Sharma said the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services in Jammu and Kashmir is operating with about 59 per cent of its sanctioned staff strength. "The shortfall is significant for an emergency response department, especially as more than 50,000 major and minor fire incidents were reported across the Union Territory in the past decade," Sharma said. According | [More on P6](#)



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**OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE  
1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI**

Subject: Issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Birth & Death  
**Public Notice**

This office has received a written application from Mohammad Aqib bhat s/o mohammad Ramzan bhat R/o Edipora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of Son Mohammad Aqib Bhat who was Born on 29-03-1999 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar  
Executive Magistrate  
Bomai  
fko

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given to the general public that I, Enayat Ali Khan, S/o Hashmat Ali Khan, R/o Kullan, Gund, District Ganderbal, Jammu & Kashmir, am the absolute owner and lawful possessor of the property situated at Bot Kullan, Gund, District Ganderbal.

That the said property is proposed to be used for operating as a Guest House/ Home Stay under the name and style of "Yam-sar Resort," subject to obtaining necessary permissions and approvals from the Tourism Department and other concerned authorities as per rules in force.

If anyone has any objection with regard to the ownership or proposed use of the said premises as a Guest House/ Home Stay, the same may be submitted in writing along with valid documentary proof to the undersigned within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice failing which no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/-  
Enayat Ali Khan  
Kullan, Gund,  
District Ganderbal, J&K  
SS

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that on my Driving License bearing DL No. JK-0520060003874, my name has been incorrectly mentioned as ASHIQ HUSSAIN, whereas my correct name is ASHAQ HUSSAIN PIR. Further, my father's name has been incorrectly recorded as PIR SIRAJUDDIN, whereas his correct name is SIRAJ UD DIN PIR.

I am applying for correction of the above entries in my Driving License records. If anybody has any objection regarding the same, he/she may contact the ARTO Office Sopore within a period of 7 (seven) days from the publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained.

Name: Ashaq Hussain Pir  
S/o: Siraj Ud Din Pir  
R/o: Bismillah Colony, Model Town-D, Nowpora Kalan  
Sopore, Baramulla, J&K  
Pin Code: 193201  
AB

**ادفتر تائب تحصیلدار کلترہ**

درخواست تائب صاحب ساکن اعجاز اطردہ پانڈر تلہامی دین لون ساکن شہپرہ چٹیل پارہولہ، براد  
حصول RBA سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خد

**استخبارت مسرودا گاہی ہر حواس و عام**

معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان میں درخواست ساکن دفتر پانڈر تلہامی دین لون ساکن شہپرہ چٹیل پارہولہ، براد  
رپورٹ قبول طلبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گاہ جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے ساکن متبع ساکن  
شہپرہ چٹیل پارہولہ میں رہائش پزیر ہے۔ ساکن کے کنڈیکٹ ساکن آدانی 410600 گتے سے ساکن دھم  
کو کارڈ متعلقہ ہے۔ ساکن کا کنڈیکٹ پڑیل آڈر اسٹیشن ہے۔

1. غلام دین لون سربرہ 58 سال مزدوری
2. جینیدارا زوجہ 45 سال آنکھ اڑی پلیر
3. ماہرہ بانو applicant دختر 23 سال زین تعلیم
4. جینیدار احمدون پیر 21 سال //
5. ادریس بی بی پیر 19 سال //
6. مصروف بی بی دختر 17 سال //

اسکے علاوہ کوئی افراد میں تالی گیا مطابق سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اگر کرتے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص  
کو کارڈ یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا اعتراض یا اعتراض ساتھ ہون کے اندر نامہ تحریر پیش کریں مگر دوسرے کے بعد کوئی  
مزور یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

تائب تحصیلدار fko

**NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC  
THE JAMMU & KASHMIR  
STATE BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION  
CERTIFICATES-KD, NEW CAMPUS BEMINA SRINAGAR**

**ATTENTION PLEASE**

I have passed (Class 10th,) under Roll No. 117007012 Ses-sion Annual Regular Year 2025-26. Through the Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education. The error has been committed by the School authority against my Mothers name as HAMIDA instead of HAMEEDA BANO at the time of JKBOSE registration. However, the previous school records are correct.



Now I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu & Kashmir board of School Education, New campus Bemina, Srinagar. If any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Deputy Secretary, Certificates-KD within seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period, no objection will be entertained.

This is published for the information of the general public. The Correct particulars be recorded as under:

Name: MEHDI HASSAN BHAT  
Fathers Name: GHULAM HUSSAIN BHAT  
Mothers Name: HAMEEDA BANO  
Date of Birth: 09-09-2011  
Residence: GAZERGUND BUDGAM.  
FKO

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER, GANDERBAL  
NOTICE**

Whereas, an application for Re-registration / Transfer of Ownership has been received from Mr./Mrs./Miss Prem Sagar, S/D/W/o: Chatter Sain, Resident of: E-108, Baludhyan Road, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi - 110059, in respect of LMV / Three Wheeler / Motor Cycle / Motor Car, bearing Registration No.: DL10CT9102, Chassis No.: MAIAXMMRAGE488387, Engine No.: GE483871, in favour of Zahoor Ahmad Danga, S/D/W/o: Abdul Ahad Danga, Resident of: Patti Rampora, Ganderbal, Kashmir (Transferee).

Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general public that any representation/objection, if any, in connection with the proposed Re-registration / Transfer shall be received within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Leading Papers to the address of the undersigned.

No representation/objection shall be considered unless it is made in writing and submitted within the aforesaid period.  
No.: JK/ARTOG/1615/MVD/GBL  
Dated: 28-01-2026

Sd/-  
Authorized Signatory  
Assistant Regional Transport Officer  
Ganderbal  
MGB

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 38513568338 the name of my son is entered as SUFYAN ALI while his actual name is MOHAMMAD SUFYAN. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

SARFRAZ ALI  
F/O MOHAMMAD SUFYAN  
R/O GUND GUJRAN KUPWARA.. MCB

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 868152920783 the name is entered as SYED FAROOQ HUSSAIN QADRI while my actual name is FAROK HASSAN QADRI. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

FAROK HASSAN QADRI  
S/O GHULAM JEELANI  
R/O GULBARG COLONY HYDERPORA. MCB

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 391839812036 the name of my daughter is entered as AYESHA BUKHARI while her actual name is SYED AYESHA. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

SYED SHAHNAWAZ  
F/O SYED AYESHA  
R/O HAJI BAL BARAMULLA 193101.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform the general public that my passport bearing No. P-328913, issued on 08/10/1993 at Srinagar vide File No. C/28897/93 and valid up to 07/10/2003, has been lost. The passport was lost near Alamgari Bazar a few months back. Despite best efforts, the same could not be traced.

I am therefore applying for issuance of a duplicate passport. If anyone has any objection in this regard, he/she may contact the Passport Office, Srinagar, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Thereafter, no objection shall be entertained.  
Hakim Yasir Abbas  
S/o: Dr. Abid Hussain  
Address: Sharibat, near P.S. Zadihal, Srinagar  
Mob: 9596049501, 9186162659

**Government of UT of Jammu & Kashmir**

**OFFICE OF THE COLLECTOR LAND ACQUISITION  
(SUB DIVISIONAL MAGISTRATE KANGAN)**

Subject:- Preliminary Notification for the Land Acquisition of Towers vide Location Nos.K1 to K9 of 132 KV S/C LILLO from USHP-I, USHP-II Kangan Transmission Line for under Construction 132/33 KV CIS Sumbal meant for providing Power Supply to Z- Morh Tunnel.

Ref:- 1. Indent placed by Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII Srinagar vide No. ILMD- VIII/L/3300-03; dated:15.10.2024 with the Administrative Approval accorded vide No.NHIDCL/PMU-SMG/Z-Morh/ASATPL/2022-23/202; Dated:01.0.2022.

2. Transfer of Case file referred above to SDM Kangan vide Letter No.DCG/LAS/24/1305-07; dated: 10.12.2024.

3. Revenue papers attested & authenticated by the Revenue & Indenting Department/ Requiring Body (Executive Engineer TLMD, VIII, Bemina Srinagar) vide No.TLMD- VIII/TS/3054-55; dated:22.08.2025.

4. NOC conveyed by Executive Engineer Civil Maintenance Division USHP-II Kangan regarding utilization of land by Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII, Bemina Srinagar vide communication bearing No.CMD/USHPJI/781-83; Dated:09.09.2025.

**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION**

Whereas the Requiring Body i.e Executive Engineer TLMD-VIII Bemina Srinagar placed an indent vide his office Letter No TLMD-VIII/L/3300-03; dated: 15.10.2024 with the administrative approval accorded vide No.NHIDCL/PMU-SMG/Z-Morh/ASATPL/2022-23/202; Dated:01.0.2022 before the District Collector Ganderbal for acquisition of land measuring 03 Kanals, 04 Marlas & 171 sq. feet for public purposes with the nomenclature "Land Acquisition of Towers vide Location Nos.K1 to K9 of 132 KV S/C LILLO from USHP-I, USHP-II Kangan Transmission Line for under Construction 132/33 KV GIS Sumbal meant for providing Power Supply to Z- Morh Tunnel".

Whereas, it appears to the appropriate Authority that land measuring 03 kanals, 04 Marlas & 171 sq. feet at village Hariganwan is required for public purpose with the nomenclature "Land Acquisition of Towers vide Location Nos.K1 to K9 of 132 KV S/C LILLO from USHP-I, USHP-II Kangan Transmission Line for under Construction 132/33 KV GIS Sumbal meant for providing Power Supply to Z- Morh Tunnel" through indenting Department namely Transmission Line Maintenance Division VIII, Bemina Srinagar.

Whereas vide SO 237 Dated: 23-07-2020 issued by Revenue Department J&K Government, the Collector Land Acquisition (Sub Divisional Magistrate Kangan) has been designated as Collector Land Acquisition to perform duties under Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.

Whereas, preliminary enquiry in terms of sub-rule (1) of Rule 4 of S.O 440 issued by the Revenue Department was conducted by the team constituted vide this office Letter No. SDM/KGN/N/2025/99-125; dated:16/01/2025, followed by a Reminder vide No. SDM/KGN/N/2025/164-83; Dated: 18.02.2025 and the team so constituted submitted report vide No.TK/OQ/25/845; dated:06.08.2025, which reads as under:-

6. That the indenting department was offered/ Government land at various locations for the proposed acquisition and has not found any feasible suitable land and agreed to the proposed land at Hariganwan which serves the public purpose.

7. That the extent of the land proposed for instant acquisition is the absolute bare- minimum needed for the purpose/project

8. That the acquisition of the land at alternate place has been considered but not found feasible.

9. That there is no utilized land which has been previously acquired in the area.

c. That the land if any, acquired earlier and remains unutilized, may be used for such public purpose.

f. That the acquisition is consistent with the provisions of Section-10 of the Right to Fair Compensation act.

g. That the Committee has come to the conclusion that there is no involuntary displacement of persons due to the acquisition of land and there is no adverse impact, and no rehabilitation is involved.

Whereas, the revenue Team headed by Tchsildar Kangan conducted preliminary enquiry and furnished detailed report vide Letter No.TK/OQ/25/844; dated:06/08/2025 citing therein that the Indenting Department on spot intends to acquire land measuring 03 K-04 Marla & 171 sq. feet in estate Hariganwan, Tchsil Kangan. Also Khasra-Paimaish, Current Jammabandi & Girdawari of the land, Shajira have been duly attested and authenticated by the Revenue Department and Indenting Department in token of their correctness and relevance to the site, details of which are tabulated as under:-

SR NO	TOWER NO.	KHASRA NO	VILLAGE NAME	AREA OF LAND COMING UNDER THE ALIGNMENT OF TOWER			CLASS OF LAND	NAME OF LAND OWNER/ PERSON BELIEVED TO BE HAVING INTEREST
				K	M	Sq. feet		
1	K-01	680	Hariganwan	0	05	154	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Jankinath son & Somnath adopted Son of Tika Ram in equal share R/o Hariganwan
2	K-01	672	Hariganwan	0	01	90	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Shamilat Section-04
3	K-02	2180/671	Hariganwan	0	06	244	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Jankinath son & Somnath adopted Son of Tika Ram in equal share R/o Hariganwan
4	K-03	1203/665	Hariganwan	0	10	105	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Gh. Mohiuddin S/o Mohd Ali Gojar (Shamilat-Section-05)
5	K-04	556	Hariganwan	0	07	266	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Gh. Mohammad S/o Mohd. Abdullah Gojar Khatana R/o Hariganwan
6	K-05	2062/1558/547	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	USHP-II
7	K-06	2054/1540/540	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Abdul Qayoom S/o Abdullah Charra R/o Hariganwan
8	K-07	1545/543	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	USHP-II
9	K-08	1551/546	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	USHP-II
10	K-09	672	Hariganwan	0	02	60	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Shamilat-Section-04
11	K-09	2193/677	Hariganwan	0	03	154	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Mohd Shafi, Gh Nabi, Nazir Ahmad sons & Mst. Fazi Widow of Ramzan in equal shares out of one share & Farooq Ahmad son, Mst. Hasceena (Non-Adolescent Daughter) & Mst. Hajra Widow of Aziz one share out of 02 shares.
12	K-09	2180/671	Hariganwan	0	01	30	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Jankinath son & Somnath adopted Son of Tika Ram in equal share R/o Hariganwan
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>171</b>		

Whereas, the Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal vide this office letter No. DCG/LAS/25/171-174 dated 19-04-2025 was apprised about the details of the land and had sought instructions with regard to the USHP-II Kangan land measuring 19 Marlas & 49 sq. feet and requested for guidance as to whether such land can be transferred from Department to Department; and Whereas, the Deputy Commissioner, Ganderbal vide letter No. DCG/LAS/2025/123-24 dated 03-05-2025 instructed taking the matter with the Upper Sindh Hydel Power Project before proceeding ahead in the instant matter; and Whereas, this office vide communication bearing Nos. SDM/KGN/LAS/25/328-332 dated 01-08-2025 and SDM/KGN/LAS/25/370-373 dated 01-09-2025 took up the matter with the Executive Engineer, Civil Maintenance Division, USHP-II Kangan and Executive Engineer, Generation Division, USHP-II Kangan, and requested them to furnish NOC or comments with regard to the acquisition of land measuring 19 Marlas & 49 sq. feet for Transmission Line Maintenance Division, VIII Bemina, Srinagar; and Whereas, the Executive Engineer, Generation Division, USHP-II Kangan vide communication bearing No. GDK/USHP-II/409 dated 12-08-2025 furnished a report citing therein that the matter is the prerogative of the Civil Maintenance Division, USHP-II Kangan and the matter be taken up with them; and Whereas, the Executive Engineer, Civil Maintenance Division, USHP-II Kangan conveyed No Objection Certificate for the construction of transmission towers of the 132 KV S/C LILLO

...transmission line falling in their land measuring 19 Marlas & 49 sq. feet under Survey Nos. 1545/543, 1551/546 & 2062/1558/547 in estate Hariganwan, subject to the following conditions:

1. Compensation shall be strictly paid in terms of the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act.

2. No damage shall be caused to any component of the USHP-II Project, Kangan during execution of the aforesaid works.

3. The towers shall be aligned in such a way that they neither affect the functioning nor cause any impediment to the smooth functioning of the USHP-II Project, Kangan.

Whereas, vide this office letter No. SDM/KGN/LAS/25/374-78 dated 10-09-2025, advised Tehsildar Kangan to submit stamp rates against the type of lands in the instant acquisition.

In return, Tehsildar Kangan, through communication bearing No. TK/OQ/25/955 dated 15-09-2025, submitted details of survey numbers along with stamp rates against the type of lands. The stamp rate communicated by Tehsildar Kangan is 8.90 lacs per Kanal for Un-irrigated Agriculture land in estate Hariganwan, Tehsil Kangan.

In view of the above, I, Collector Land Acquisition (Sub Divisional Magistrate, Kangan), in exercise of powers vested in me vide Section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, hereby notify the land details given below, required for public purpose i.e. Land Acquisition of Towers vide location Nos. K1 to K9 of 132 KV S/C LILLO from USHP-I, USHP-II Kangan Transmission Line under construction 132/33 KV GIS Sumbal, meant for providing power supply to Z-Morh Tunnel. The description of the land is as under

SR NO	TOWER NO.	KHASRA NO	VILLAGE NAME	AREA OF LAND COMING UNDER THE ALIGNMENT OF TOWER			CLASS OF LAND	NAME OF LAND OWNER/ PERSON BELIEVED TO BE HAVING INTEREST
				K	M	Sq. feet		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	K-01	680	Hariganwan	0	05	154	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Jankinath son & Somnath adopted Son of Tika Ram in equal share R/o Hariganwan
2	K-01	672	Hariganwan	0	01	90	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Shamilat Section-04
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4	K-03	1203/665	Hariganwan	0	10	105	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Gh. Mohiuddin S/o Mohd Ali Gojar (Shamilat-Section-05)
5	K-04	556	Hariganwan	0	07	266	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Gh. Mohammad S/o Mohd. Abdullah Gojar Khatana R/o Hariganwan
6	K-05	2062/1558/547	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	USHP-II
7	K-06	2054/1540/540	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Abdul Qayoom S/o Abdullah Charra R/o Hariganwan
8	K-07	1545/543	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	USHP-II
9	K-08	1551/546	Hariganwan	0	06	107	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	USHP-II
10	K-09	672	Hariganwan	0	02	60	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Shamilat-Section-04
11	K-09	2193/677	Hariganwan	0	03	154	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Mohd Shafi, Gh Nabi, Nazir Ahmad sons & Mst. Fazi Widow of Ramzan in equal shares out of one share & Farooq Ahmad son, Mst. Hasceena (Non-Adolescent Daughter) & Mst. Hajra Widow of Aziz one share out of 02 shares.
12	K-09	2180/671	Hariganwan	0	01	30	Un-Irrigated Agriculture	Jankinath son & Somnath adopted Son of Tika Ram in equal share R/o Hariganwan
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>03</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>171</b>		

Objections to the Acquisition, if any may be filed by the person interested within 60 days (Sixty days) from the date of Publication of this notification as provided under section 15 of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 in Govt. Gazette/local news papers.

Collector Land Acquisition  
Sub Divisional Magistrate  
Kangan

NO:- SDM/KGN/LAS/2025/379-90  
DIPK-10409/25  
Dated:-28/01/2026



SMC Executes City-Wide De-Watering Drive

Observer News Service

Srinagar: On the directions of the Commissioner, Faz Lul Haseeb, the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) launched an intensive, city-wide de-watering operation to mitigate waterlogging triggered by recent snowfall and subsequent snowmelt.

SMC deployed men and machinery round the clock, leveraging modern high-capacity de-watering pumps and field teams to ensure swift drainage.

All identified waterlogging hotspots have been cleared, with focused interventions in low-lying pockets, major corridors, traffic-prone stretches, and residential-commercial clusters.

To ensure seamless coordination and rapid response, a dedicated 24x7 Control Room has been activated

for grievance redressal, while the SCADA-enabled monitoring system is being used to track drainage performance and pump operations in real time. Senior officers conducted on-ground supervision to guarantee timely execution and inter-departmental coordination.

The prompt and coordinated measures restored normalcy across affected areas, significantly easing inconvenience to residents and commuters. SMC reiterates its commitment to proactive civic management during adverse weather and urges citizens to report any residual waterlogging through the helpline for immediate action.

SMC remains fully geared to respond swiftly to weather-related challenges, prioritising public safety and uninterrupted civic services across Srinagar.

Flight Operations Resume at Srinagar airport

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Flight operations at the Srinagar International Airport resumed on Wednesday, a day after all schedules were cancelled due to fresh snowfall in the valley, officials said.

Airport authorities said the runway was cleared of snow and operations were given a "green signal" Wednesday morning.

"Flight operations to and fro Srinagar International Airport have

resumed. The runway was properly cleared this morning and clearance was given for flights to operate," a senior airport official told KNS.

The official advised passengers whose flights were cancelled on Tuesday to contact their respective airlines for updated schedules and re-booking.

All flights were grounded on Tuesday as heavy snowfall swept across Kashmir, leading to the cancellation of all air traffic.

KU Extends Deadline for Diploma & Certificate Admissions

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir has extended the last date for submission of online applications for admission to various diploma and certificate programmes offered through its Centre for Distance and Online Education.

According to a date extension notice issued by the Directorate of Admissions and Competitive Examinations, the deadline for submission of online applications has been extended up to and including February 5, 2026. The extension applies to admissions notified under Admission Notification No. 01 of 2026 for the academic session January 2026 and academic year 2025.

Officials said that all other terms and conditions of the admission process shall remain unchanged. The extension is expected to provide relief to aspirants who were unable to

complete the application process within the earlier deadline.

The programmes covered under the extension include Diploma in Computer Applications, Diploma in Web Designing, Diploma in Cyber Law, Diploma in Consumer Law and Practice, Diploma in Tourism Management, Diploma in Business Administration, Diploma in Business Entrepreneurship, Diploma in Home Science, Diploma in Urdu Journalism, Diploma in Urdu Translation, Diploma in Kashmiri Language and Literature, Diploma in Pre Primary Teachers Training, and Certificate Course in Kashmiri.

According to KNT, the notice has been issued by the Director of Admissions and Competitive Examinations, University of Kashmir, and is applicable to all eligible candidates seeking admission to the listed programmes through distance and online mode.

Health Coverage Boosted as 12,000 Seniors Enrolled Under AVV

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to ensure timely and effective delivery of benefits under flagship health sector schemes, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Wednesday conducted a comprehensive review of the implementation and progress of major citizen-centric health initiatives in the district.

The review meeting, held at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex here, was attended by senior health functionaries and focused on enrolment under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), coverage of eligible beneficiaries under the Ayushman Vay Vandana Yojana (AVV), and the status of Tuberculosis (TB) control and surveillance measures.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a detailed Medical Zone and Block-wise assessment of the schemes and stressed the need for accelerating enrolment drives to achieve universal coverage across the district.

While reviewing the progress under the Ayushman Vay Vandana Yojana, the DC emphasized mass awareness and swift enrolment of senior citizens to ensure that they can avail free and cashless healthcare services under the scheme. He underscored that all eligible individuals aged 70 years and above must be brought under its ambit without any delay.

Directing the Zonal and Block Medical Officers to intensify their efforts, the DC asked them to work with added zeal and coordination to ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left out. He also stressed the importance of door-to-door outreach and awareness campaigns, particularly in vulnerable and underserved areas.

The meeting was informed that over 12,000 senior citizens in Srinagar district have already been issued Ayushman Vay Vandana (AVV) cards, enabling them to avail additional free health coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year. The DC expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved so far but called for further acceleration to achieve full saturation.

Reviewing the enrolment status under the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), the DC noted the need for



The meeting was informed that over 12,000 senior citizens in Srinagar district have already been issued Ayushman Vay Vandana (AVV) cards, enabling them to avail additional free health coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year,"

enhanced registration drives and effective mobilisation at the grassroots level. He directed the concerned officials to ensure seamless registration of citizens to meet the comprehensive coverage targets set under the initiative.

The Deputy Commissioner also took stock of the district's performance under the Tuberculosis (TB) control programme. He appreciated the efforts of the District TB Control Team for achieving commendable progress and urged them to complete the remaining targets within stipulated timelines. Emphasizing the importance of early detection, treatment adherence and surveillance, he called for sustained efforts to further strengthen TB control measures in the district.

Meanwhile, keeping in view the prevailing weather conditions, the DC stressed the need to ensure improved patient care facilities in all health institutions across Srinagar. He directed the health authorities to maintain adequate heating, availability of essential medicines, and smooth functioning of healthcare services to meet seasonal challenges.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Medical Officer Dr Tahir Sajad, Medical Superintendents of JLN, SMHS and CD Hospitals, the District Tuberculosis Officer, all Zonal Medical Officers, and Block Medical Officers of Srinagar district.

CRPF Head Constable Dies of Suspected Heart Attack

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A personnel of 44 Battalion died due to a sudden heart attack during the intervening night in HMT area of Srinagar, officials said on Wednesday.

The deceased has been identified as Head Constable Hari Nath of 44 Battalion. Officials said he complained of discomfort during the night and was later found unresponsive in his room.

Preliminary assessment suggests that the cause of death was a sudden heart attack. However, officials said all required legal and medical formalities are being followed to ascertain the exact cause.

According to KNT, senior officers of the unit were informed immediately, and necessary procedures were initiated as per protocol. The body has been taken up for further formalities.

DLSA Conducts Awareness Program at Central Jail

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: An awareness programme was conducted at Central Jail Srinagar by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar Chairman DLSA (Pr. Dist. & Sessions Judge), Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA, Srinagar to sensitize inmates about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for premature release, parole and furlough, and the legal rights of prisoners.



During the programme, Jahan Ara, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel elaborated in detail on the procedures, eligibility criteria and documentation required for seek-

ing premature release, parole and furlough, enabling the inmates to better understand the legal remedies available to them.

Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel highlighted the

constitutional and legal rights of prisoners, including access to legal aid, humane treatment, and the right to seek redressal through appropriate legal forums. The inmates were encouraged to avail free legal services provided by DLSA Srinagar.

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

Table with AIRPORTS, RAILWAYS, and HIGHWAY STATUS sections.

Table with HIJRI CALENDAR and PRAYERS sections.

This Day In History

- 661 - Rashidun Caliphate ends
1258 - Mongols defeated by Dai Viet at the battle of Dong Bo Dau
1523 - Sermon of Constanz: Zwingli defends 67 Schlussreden
1574 - Sea battle of Reimerswaal - Admiral Boisot beats Spanish fleet
1587 - Deventer and Zutphen surrender to Spain
1594 - Mathematician John Napier dedicates his "Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John" to King James VI, predicts end of the world in 1688 or 1700/1595 - William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" is thought to have been first performed. Officially published early 1597.
1676 - Feodor III succeeds his father and becomes Tsar of Russia
1728 - John Gays' "Beggar's Opera" premieres in London [NS=Feb 9]
1732 - Paris churchyard of Saint-Medard closed after Jansenistic ritual Music release announcement, John Hancock resigns as Governor of Massachusetts, allegedly due to his failing health

Expression of gratitude

We are deeply grateful to all those friends, relatives and neighbors, residents of BTM First Stage Bangalore, Gulpoth Colony Bypass near, Amina Hospital, Chinar Lane Lal Bazaar, Traders of Kashmir Traders Welfare Association, Pattaparathi Andhra Pradesh, Kashmir Welfare Association, Bangalore, who supported us in this hour of grief by calling or visiting our house. May Allah Almighty reward all those people.

Syed Mujahid Husain(9980001068)
Tariq Ahmed Shah (9492990916)
Malik Ishtiaq (9149937564)
Muhammad Fahim Shahdar
Qazi Sarwar Hilal Ahmed Mattoo inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the electricity connection with Consumer ID: 0213040003962, presently standing in the name of Mohd Abdullah Bhat S/o wali mohd bhat R/o ussan Khole, is proposed to be changed in favour of Ab Rashid Bhat S/o Mohd Abdullah Bhat, R/o Ussan. Objections, if any, may be conveyed to the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication

Ab Rashid Bhat
Cell No: 9682657025 fko

Two Tourists Die in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Two male tourists were brought dead to hospitals in Srinagar on Wednesday.

Officials said one tourist was brought in an unconscious condition to SMHS Hospital Srinagar from a hotel near Dal Lake. Doctors at the hospital declared him brought dead on arrival.

NORTHERN RAILWAY Notice Inviting Tender. Sr. DEE/TRS/LDH acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. 2025-26-01B Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date 20.02.2026 at 15:00 Hrs.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE. The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Construction, Jalandhar City for and on the behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Single Packet system for the under noted work:-

PUBLIC NOTICE. I, Javeed Saleem, S/o Shah Mohammad, resident of Upper Humhama, Srinagar-Budgam Road, hereby intend to register my residential house measuring approximately 1200 sq. ft., comprising six rooms including one suite, along with other basic amenities, as a Homestay with the Department of Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir.

PUBLIC NOTICE. I have lost my Passport bearing no K6963628 issued on 18/03/14. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the Passport Office Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

از ریاضت بیومی عنوان: درخواست منجانب عزیز احمد ولد شمس الدین انبگر ساکنہ تجرچیلی ہاربراد عطاقک SRO 176 تحت OBC for Central اشتہار ہرخاص و عام معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بفرض OBC FOR central سرفیٹیکیشن پیش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں بنواری ملتے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن واقعی انبگر ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور تجرچیلی ہاربراد رہائش پذیر ہے اور کئی بھی ترک سکونت نہیں کی ہے ساکن کا تعلق ڈپٹی ایف ایف آر میں ہے شمس الدین انبگر ولد غلام احمد مزدوری 45 سال 6000 افروزہ بیگم زوجہ شمس الدین گھریلو کام 43 سال عزیز احمد پسر زیر تعلیم 19 سال صاحب احمد پسر 18 سال فرحان احمد پسر 10 سال ساکن مذکورہ OBC for central حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کنڈیکٹی ہوارڈ آمدنی 6000 روپے تک سے سرفیٹیکیشن زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عجز یا عراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخباریات رسد ان کے اندر اندر آتے ہے مذکورہ عراض عدالت حد کو کوئی عارضی اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد از رسد معاولی عدلیہ عراض قائل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔ تائب تحصیلدار FKO

## KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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# Strategic Hustle

Stalled government jobs and economic uncertainty have pushed Kashmiri youth to forge digital paths and micro-enterprises, blending ambition with immediate opportunity in a constrained landscape.



Uzma Qadir Mir

### KO VIEW

## Kashmir's Other Fog

While the fog over Kashmir's landscape is easy to see, few notice the mist that has settled over the region's mind-scape.

Everyday talks and exchanges now carry a phrase people use to describe a feeling that is hard to put into words. Thoughts come slowly, focus drifts easily, and tasks that once felt simple now take extra effort.

Brain fog makes it hard to focus, clouds memory, slows thinking, and tires the mind. It can affect anyone, young or old, educated or not, whether at work, in school, or at home.

Studies from clinical and neurological research describe it as trouble remembering things, difficulty staying focused, and a feeling that the mind is just not working properly.

People across walks of life, whether in offices, fields, craft shops, or homes, share these experiences, and their stories match what medical research calls cognitive fatigue, which can interfere with daily life and relationships.

Some causes of this fog are measurable. Thyroid imbalance is one of them.

Research measuring hormone levels and iodine status in tribal communities found that about 33 out of every 100 adults had some form of thyroid dysfunction, most often a mild form of low thyroid activity that develops slowly. A smaller number showed immune activity affecting the gland, about 7 out of 100 had visible thyroid enlargement, and nearly 28 out of 100 had iodine levels low enough to be considered deficient. Iodine is essential for healthy brain and nervous system function.

But thyroid problems are only part of the story. Long-term effects after Covid infection can leave people with forgetfulness and poor concentration that last for weeks or months. Chronic stress and anxiety, which many have lived with for years, alter how the brain functions and make focus harder to sustain. Poor sleep and disrupted rest interfere with the brain's ability to process and clear mental fatigue, while diet, especially deficiencies in vitamin B12, vitamin D, and healthy fats, can slow thinking further.

Modern lifestyle factors only make things worse. Constant screen use and digital alerts wear down attention spans, while inactivity reduces blood flow to the brain, contributing to mental tiredness.

Brain fog emerges from a combination of biology, past illness, lifestyle, and mental strain.

Doctors say the fog can be addressed. A thorough evaluation that checks thyroid function and nutrient deficiencies can identify treatable causes. Consistent sleep and rest help the brain process and store information. A diet rich in vitamins and healthy fats supports cognitive health, while physical activity improves circulation and mental energy. Stress-management strategies also help the mind feel lighter and more present.

Understanding the many factors behind unclear thinking brings clarity and direction.

Listening to people, checking what the data show, and taking small practical steps can help clear the invisible fog over Kashmir's mindscape.

### CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

## Silver Lining For Valley

Global demand rises, opening opportunities for Kashmir's silver artisans.

Irshad Mushtaq

Silver is rising on the international market, and Kashmir has always been a home to silver like nowhere else.

Kashmiri artisans have spent generations shaping it into jewelry, filigree, and traditional pieces that reflect the region's soul. Seeing prices climb, the moment is ripe for turning this heritage into a global opportunity.

The world is watching, and every intricate motif or delicate curve, can be shared beyond the valley's borders.

Kashmiris have an instinct for craftsmanship and an eye for beauty. Combining that with awareness of global demand can create new pathways for income and recognition.

Online marketplaces, curated exhibitions, and partnerships with international designers can connect local artisans directly with collectors and customers who value authenticity, quality, and tradition. Selling silver is about stories, skill, and culture.

Local workshops and artisan cooperatives can help younger generations learn how to present their work to the world. Every bracelet or pendant can carry a tale that justifies its price and makes it sought-after globally.

The rising market invites innovation without losing the essence of Kashmiri artistry. Smart design, storytelling, and market knowledge can transform heritage into prosperity.

This is the time for Kashmiris to blend centuries-old tradition with modern opportunity. Silver can become both a cultural emblem and a livelihood.

International interest signals a chance to create lasting value while celebrating artistry that has always been part of Kashmir's identity.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

A coding assignment for a Dubai-based firm, freelance design contracts from Europe, or an Instagram-based handicraft shop has become the practical definition of success.

Government jobs continue to hold symbolic weight, representing stability and social mobility that families once treated as nearly sacred. But the arithmetic of deficiency and delay has encouraged young people to diversify pathways.

Mission Youth and Mission YUVA, by promoting nano-enterprises of five to six lakh rupees, have subtly legitimized this pivot. Small-scale ventures that prioritize survivability over scale are multiplying, bridging a gap left by tra-

This pragmatic approach, however, is not devoid of cost.

Digital income remains volatile, social security is absent, and long-term planning becomes difficult.

Unrealistic portrayals of success on social media create psychological pressure, and when projects fail, failure often feels personal.

Emotional strain intensifies during adolescence and early adulthood, where identity formation meets economic uncertainty. Limited guidance and support allow anxiety and self-doubt to build, placing heavy emotional weight on strategic pragmatism.

At the same time, the new economic avenues are rooted in local culture,

tainty.

Kashmiri youth benefit from career guidance grounded in the realities of remote and freelance work, skill certification linked to market demand, mental health support, and financial literacy suited to fluctuating incomes.

Policy recognition of gig workers offers a path toward stability, turning short-term survival strategies into more secure economic footing.

Strategic pragmatism demonstrates intelligence and adaptability, but it exists in a space shaped by constraints rather than pure choice. It signals a generation acting within structural gaps rather than unbounded opportunity.

By recalibrating ambition, young people show courage and innovation.

The challenge is for institutions to match that adaptability, providing pathways, protections, and realistic support that convert temporary fixes into sustainable progress.

The story of Kashmiri youth has moved beyond exam halls and notice boards. It now lives on screens, in small workrooms, through social media shops and freelance work.

These efforts reflect careful thinking and real risk-taking, driven by a clear desire to move forward.

The open question is whether institutions will support these paths or keep leaning on youth to absorb endless pressure.

A young entrepreneur shutting her laptop at midnight pushes at what feels possible, claims agency in a tight system, and gives ambition a new form.

Kashmiri youth have adapted. The years ahead will show whether institutions can keep pace.

The author is pursuing Master's in Public Administration at a Delhi-based University. She can be reached at muzmaqadir@gmail.com.

**The story of Kashmiri youth has moved beyond exam halls and notice boards. It now lives on screens, in small workrooms, through social media shops and freelance work. These efforts reflect careful thinking and real risk-taking, driven by a clear desire to move forward. The open question is whether institutions will support these paths or keep leaning on youth to absorb endless pressure.**

ditional employment avenues.

Micro-startups and digital ventures now drive Kashmir's economic imagination, with freelance designers, online tutors, YouTube creators, and remote tech workers setting new benchmarks.

Income levels rise and fall, and platforms keep evolving, while these ventures deliver immediacy that traditional employment rarely matches.

They foster a sense of agency within existing structures, turning skills into visible outcomes and encouraging young people to move with initiative and purpose.

skills, and context.

Content creators, online tutors, and small entrepreneurs tap into regional crafts, language, and tourism services.

Diversified income eases pressure within families, and skill-based gains build confidence in a generation facing constraint. Freelance contracts and digital transactions signal growing agency.

But these shifts raise some pertinent questions for policy and society.

Digital work now sits alongside structured employment as a growing part of youth livelihoods, bringing flexibility along with exposure to uncer-

### Letter to Editor

## The Day the Emergency Room Stood Still in Kashmir

To the Administration, the Medical Faculty, and the Conscience of GMC Anantnag,

I write this as a plea from someone who belongs to this system, hoping the silence of a broken machine never again becomes the silence of a lost life.

On January 13 at 4:00 PM, I stood at the gates of your emergency department, without wearing my scrubs that day. I was a grandson, holding his grandmother's frail hand.

But my eyes, trained for years in ICU corridors, noticed everything.

I could feel the pulse of the hospital, but even in its familiar disorder, what I saw was not normal.

There was neither stretcher waiting, nor wheelchair to ease her steps. From that first moment, the system was working against her.

My grandmother was struggling for breath, collapsing inward with every step, and still the door offered nothing.

I know the chaos of government hospitals. I have faced the flood of patients

and the pressure that bends even the strongest doctors.

But chaos cannot be a shield for denying the most basic care.

When we reached the emergency desk, I expected triage to kick in. The "Golden Hour" should have begun. Instead, I watched stable patients, those who could speak, walk, and wait, being attended while my grandmother sank into crisis.

Every moment spent on the less critical patient was a moment slipping from her.

Finally, attention turned toward her, and I was told to move her, in a struggling, breathless, and barely conscious state, onto a chair. The moment felt surreal.

Years of ICU training screamed at me, but here I was, helpless, watching her condition worsen in the very place that should have saved her.

We moved to casualty, hoping the next ward would hold answers. It did not. Beds were scarce, and when one was found, the oxygen port did not work.

We shifted her ourselves, searching desperately for a functioning outlet, each second etching fear deeper into my chest.

The ward overflowed with patients. The doctor was alone, no nurse to assist, trying to hold back a tide that no one person could manage.

Then came the moment I cannot forget.

My grandmother became unresponsive. Her pupils dilated.

We asked for a simple ECG, something that should never have taken fifteen minutes.

A technician finally arrived. The first machine was dead. Then a second was brought in. It was dead too.

Each blank screen felt like a door closing.

How can a tertiary care hospital serving two districts operate without a single working ECG for emergencies?

I understand the burden on doctors.

I know how much they carry. But systems exist to support them, to flag critical arrivals, and to shift attention from the stable many to the dying few.

Without such systems, even the

most dedicated professional is left fighting alone.

Hospitals often appear efficient when minor complaints are treated quickly. But the real test comes when someone is breathless, crashing, or fading fast.

That afternoon, the system failed that test.

My grandmother died there. I am writing as someone who has spent years in these halls and still believes change is possible.

Stretchers must wait at the door. Triage must guide care. Equipment must function. And nurses must stand where life hangs in the balance.

Through this letter, I am hoping for prompt action from the concerned departments so that no other family walks through those doors and leaves with the same loss.

Sincerely,

Sheikh Salman Amin  
ICU Nurse & A Grieving Grandson

# In the Shadow of Shahid

How Agha Shahid Ali's poetry and presence shaped my heart, my homeland, and my language abroad.

Subail Manzoor

Years before I ever read him on the iconic Bund by the Jhelum, just across from his home, I learned that the heart could be a weapon.

I was just a boy then, walking among the chinar leaves with the damp smell of earth all around, when someone recited Agha Shahid Ali's lines.

I felt it in my chest, a strange feeling that had nothing to do with understanding the words and everything to do with recognizing something inside me.

Years later, the lesson came back to me when I read about the beloved bard's airport encounter.

"Are you carrying anything dangerous for the passengers?" the officer asked him, eyes flicking over the passport, the boarding pass, perhaps even the shadow of a poet.

"My heart," Agha Shahid Ali replied, hand pressed over his chest, and eyes glinting like broken fragments of memory.

It was a simple answer, but it carried a fierce honesty. It stayed with me. His heart had never left Kashmir.

Years later, in February of 2022, I landed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The air smelled unfamiliar, and the world seemed to have opened its arms wider than I had imagined. I had dreamed of life beyond the mountains, but stepping onto foreign soil tugged something inside me backward, a gentle but insistent pull.

The farther I travelled, the closer I came to a self I had almost forgotten.

I carried no dangerous heart with me. What I carried, like Agha Shahid Ali, in a metaphor only he could have meant, was my mind, restless, curious, weighted with stories that the world rarely asks for and seldom hears.

At the airport, the questions began. "Where are you from?" they asked.

"Kashmir," I said.  
Her brows knit. "Kashmir... you mean India?"



"Kashmir," I said again, steady now.

"What language do you speak?" I said it slowly, deliberately, as if the words themselves were talismans: "Koshur."

Her eyes widened, flickering with curiosity. She had heard of the snow-capped mountains, the lakes that mirrored the sky. I smiled, though there was a tug of melancholy in the gesture. "Yes, it's beautiful. You should visit."

She could not grasp what it meant to be Koshur.

Seven times that morning, seven strangers asked the same or similar questions. Seven times I returned to the same answer. Seven times I felt the strange irony of home: people around me, people who shared my blood, forgetting their tongue in pursuit of progress, modernity, and survival.

We had code-switched since childhood, hiding our voices, translating ourselves into English or Urdu, thinking we were evolving. Now, far away, the void of those choices pressed against me.

The airport questions faded, and I thought of why I was really here in Malaysia: my Bachelor's degree. But slowly, I began to see that this trip had a different purpose, one that mattered even more.

At university, I found myself in classrooms crowded with students from Sudan, Nepal, Indonesia, Nigeria, and beyond. They knew Kashmir through Bollywood, flickering news clips, and fragments of stories passed down in incomplete narratives.

A Sudanese friend said, "We've seen Kashmir in movies! It has snow, right?"

Another called out, "Theek ho bhai?" in Hindi, expecting recognition, camaraderie.

I smiled. "That's not my native language," I said.

Eyes turned toward me, curiosity sparked, and soon, I was at the center of a small circle, students leaning in, listening to my explanations of a land they had imagined but barely known. I taught them Koshur, the sounds of my valley, the syllables that held centuries of love,

grief, and grit.

"Wande," I said, "for winter."  
"Yemberzal," I said, pointing to the narcissus that bloomed in my memory.

"Moaj," I said, tenderly, for mother.

For six months, I wore Koshur like a medal. Each time students tried to pronounce it, "Kashoor," with a stumble and an eagerness, I felt a small victory, a reclamation of a world that had almost slipped through our fingers.

And yet, pride carried its shadow. I remembered kindergarten in Kashmir, being scolded for speaking my language, being told to adopt Urdu and English. Our tongue had been a danger, our songs subversive, and our very identity a defiance. We had survived, and yet we had compromised.

A language is a vessel. Koshur holds our poetry, lamentation, and love. Habba Khatoon, the peasant girl who became queen and mystic poet, sang her sorrows in Koshur, weaving the landscape of our valley into her verses.

Rasul Mir, the romantic rhymester of Kashmir, breathed Persian elegance into Koshur, lifting every heart that heard him. Without Koshur, their words are translations. Beautiful, but hollowed of the music and ache that only the original voice contains.

I thought of Rasul Mir's lines: "After showing a glimpse, why hide your face from me? / My heart is about to burst—where shall I see you again?"

Our language is memory, evidence, and resilience. It cannot be stolen.

In Malaysia, I saw a world where languages survived as shields, as banners of identity. Students clung to theirs with pride, correcting mispronunciations, teaching the uninitiated, passing their worlds into new hands.

I became the voice of a valley, the messenger of a tongue under threat, showing that a language can survive if it is spoken, sung, and cherished.

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head," Nelson Mandela once said. "If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart."

Speaking Koshur is speaking to the heart of Kashmir. To lose it is to lose the heart itself. I fear not for myself, but for the children who may come after me. The ones who may never hear the words that once carried the weight of snow, love, and longing.

We have endured violence and silence. We have risen from ruins countless times. But the slow erosion of our language is a loss without return. Words hold worlds. Koshur holds ours.

That day at Kuala Lumpur, as I taught my classmates how to say moaj and wande, I realized that I carried my heart just like Agha Shahid Ali had at an airport far away.

Dangerous, but in its own way, armed with memory, and the ache of an unforgotten homeland.

— Subail Manzoor, 24, from Srinagar, Kashmir, is an MBA student and national-level football and MMA athlete.



**THAT DAY AT KUALA LUMPUR, AS I TAUGHT MY CLASSMATES HOW TO SAY MOAJ AND WANDE, I realized that I carried my heart just like Agha Shahid Ali had at an airport far away. Dangerous, but in its own way, armed with memory, and the ache of an unforgotten homeland.**

## When Mothers Leave

A mother's love in Kashmir stays with you, in winters, courtyards, kitchens, and prayers.



Mohammad Ilyas Bhat

With sorrow in my heart and memories in my mind, I came to offer funeral prayers for my best friend's mother.

On that cold day, the air felt heavy with loss. It was the departure of yet another selfless caretaker, a woman who lived through her children's hopes and happiness, always putting them first.

People shared stories of her generosity, her care for family and neighbours, and the small gestures that made her home feel like a soulful refuge.

She was a mother to anyone who stepped through her door.

During long stretches of uncertainty, when the streets were silent and the world felt unsettled, we would spend hours there, finding comfort in her presence.

Her words, her silent care, and the simple ways she nurtured those around her created a sense of comfort that is hard to put into words.

I remembered the winters, when Srinagar's cold cut through the city, and she would make sure our kangri pots glowed, filling them without being asked, so we could sit together without shivering.

She prepared food with thought and love, always anticipating what someone might need. She never announced her care and never asked for thanks, but her kindness left a mark on everyone she touched.

One moment, memory, stays with me.

We were waiting outside for a wedding function when she called me from a window, careful not to draw attention.

When I went in, she looked at me and whispered, "May Allah save you from the evil eye."

That simple prayer has stayed with me for years, a protection no worldly shield could ever provide.

As I listened to people recall her life, I could not help but remember my own mother, whom I lost more than a decade ago.

I saw her again, sitting in our old city home, with her busy hands, soft voice, and caring eyes. During tough and troubling times, she lived with simplicity, devoting entirely to her

family, and never speaking of the sacrifices she silently made for us.

She always guided and fed us, and in her presence the house felt alive with warmth and security.

Every gesture, from tending to the smallest need to offering her whispered prayers, carried a depth that I could feel even years later.

Women like them leave no monuments of stone, but their legacy is written in the lives they touch, in the lessons they pass on, and in the love they show without ever naming it.

Their care molds generations, and it flows into the world silently, profoundly, and endlessly.

People sometimes speak of the decline of motherhood, frayed family bonds, and a world moving too fast for tenderness. I see it differently.

The instinct to care, protect and sacrifice remains sacred. Circumstances may change, roles may evolve, expressions may differ, but a mother's heart stays intact.

Every mother gives what she can because she is, above all, a mother.

As the prayers ended and people began to leave, I stayed for a while.

I offered my prayers first for my best friend's mother, for the soul who had given so much to all of us. Then I offered my second prayer for my own mother, who gave me life, who taught me my roots, my love for this soil, and the meaning of being a son of this land.

In that reflective moment, standing in the fading winter light, I realized the depth of a mother's influence, the way her care and prayers remain long after she is gone, and the silent force of her love that continues to guide us.

Mothers may leave this world, but their presence remains in an act of kindness we give, a lesson we carry, and a prayer we offer.

They are the heart of the family, the world finds meaning in them, and their love defines everything we are.

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



**IN THAT REFLECTIVE MOMENT, STANDING IN THE FADING WINTER LIGHT, I realized the depth of a mother's influence, the way her care and prayers remain long after she is gone, and the silent force of her love that continues to guide us.**

## Football, Cricket Super Leagues set for launch in Jammu

Observer News Service

Srinagar, Jan 28: Jammu, the City of Temples, is gearing up for a high-octane sporting season as the Department of Youth Services and Sports (YSS), in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council (JKSC), prepares to roll out two marquee events – the YSS-JKSC Football Premier League and the YSS-JKSC Cricket League – promising double the thrill, double the crowds, and a renewed buzz around grassroots sport in the winter capital.

Set across two iconic venues, the leagues will bring together the roar of football fans at the Synthetic Turf Football Ground, Parade, and the unmistakable sound of the willow at the M A Stadium, as Jammu readies itself for weeks of competitive action.

“The YSS-JKSC Cricket and Football Premier League Tournaments 2025-26 are a much-needed initiative to significantly contribute towards the revival of Jammu’s professional cricket and football tournaments,” a spokesperson of the J&K Sports Council

said. The YSS-JKSC Football Premier League, slated for the Synthetic Turf at Parade, marks the return of the beautiful game to the heart of the city.

With the turf primed and floodlights waiting, the league is expected to showcase sharp tackles, long-range screamers, and an atmosphere that only football in Jammu can generate.

According to the JKSC spokesperson, organising committees and additional sub-committees comprising former national and

international players, referees, umpires, coaches, club owners, and JKSC officials have been constituted to ensure that the matches are conducted professionally.

Running parallel will be the YSS-JKSC Cricket League at the historic M A Stadium, signalling the comeback of big-league cricket at one of Jammu’s most cherished sporting venues.

As the pitch is curated and teams begin their preparations, anticipation is building over who will lift the cup when the league gets underway.

“The competition will consist of a total of 41 matches in football and 39 matches in cricket, with the final format and match composition to be framed after the finalisation of the participating teams,” the spokesperson said, adding that every match would be played strictly in accordance with FIFA and AIFF rules in football and ICC and BCCI regulations in cricket.

Emphasising the focus on local talent, the spokesperson said that, after scrutiny by the Technical and Registration Committees, only permanent resident players from the

Jammu Division would be permitted to participate in the tournaments.

“However, in cricket, there will be a cap of five out-stationed players per team. The objective is to give players from the Jammu Division ample opportunities to participate in a competitive competition,” he said.

The spokesperson said that the Mini Stadium Parade had been made available for football matches, while the M A Stadium would host the cricket league.

“To give the event more significance, grand opening and closing ceremonies will be arranged.

Matches will also be conducted under floodlights to attract maximum sports enthusiasts, and these matches will be telecast live on social media platforms,” he said.

To ensure high professional standards, AIFF-accredited referees and BCCI-certified umpires would officiate the matches, the spokesperson said, adding that the JKSC would provide match-day refreshments through its approved EMAs and would also arrange trophies, mementoes, medallions, branding, stationery, and medical facilities on the closing day of the tournaments.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Deepfakes Pose

terror camps were destroyed using indigenous resources. She said India has demonstrated that power can be exercised with responsibility and wisdom.

The President said the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty was part of India’s broader fight against terrorism and added that security forces have taken decisive action against Maoist violence. Referring to Mission Sudarshan Chakra, she said efforts are underway to further strengthen national security, noting that trust in Indian defence platforms has increased after Operation Sindoor.

Commitment to Social Justice

Murmu said her government remains committed to true social justice, with social security benefits now reaching nearly 95 crore citizens across the country.

She said 25 crore Indians have moved out of poverty over the past decade and that in the government’s third term, focused efforts are being made to further empower the poor. The President also said the government has taken firm steps to tackle corruption and scams, ensuring the proper and transparent use of public funds.

Economy, Growth and Reforms

Highlighting economic progress, Murmu said India’s economic foundation has grown significantly stronger over the past 11 years and that despite global challenges, the country continues to be the fastest-growing major economy.

She welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on a free trade agreement with the European Union, saying it would boost manufacturing and service sectors while creating new employment opportunities for the youth. She said government policies have helped keep inflation under control, leading to higher incomes, improved savings, and greater purchasing power for citizens.

Referring to reforms, the President said the government is moving on the path of the Reforms Express. She cited the next-generation GST reform, which ensured savings of Rs 1 lakh crore for citizens, and described the exemption of income up to Rs 12 lakh under the revamped Income Tax law as a historic decision benefiting poor and middle-class families.

Murmu also said labour laws have been consolidated into four codes to safeguard workers’ interests, ensure fair wages, and extend welfare benefits, particularly benefiting women and youth.

Health and Social Protection

The President said more than 11 crore free treatments have been provided under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, including 2.5 crore in the last year alone.

She said around one crore senior citizens have received Vay Vandana cards, with nearly eight lakh benefiting from free inpatient treatment. Murmu highlighted the role of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in providing healthcare closer to homes and said screening under the Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission has covered over 6.5 crore citizens.

She also noted that India has been declared trachoma-free by the World Health Organisation and said diseases such as Japanese Encephalitis have been effectively controlled in several regions.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

Murmu said India has achieved record progress in infrastructure development, including national highways, rural roads, and railways.

She said rail electrification is close to completion and praised the expansion of the Vande Bharat train network, including the introduction of the Vande Bharat Sleeper service. The President highlighted direct rail connectivity to Aizawl and cited landmark projects such as the Chenab Bridge and Pamban Bridge as symbols of India’s engineering strength.

Science, Space and Technology

Referring to space achievements, Murmu said Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla’s visit to the International Space Station marked the beginning of a historic journey. She said India is moving towards building its own space station through the Gaganyaan mission.

The President said semiconductor manufacturing has gained momentum, with several units sanctioned, and that India is taking concrete steps towards nano-chip production. She added that dependence on other countries for critical minerals is being reduced through mission-mode efforts.

AI, Innovation and Education

Murmu warned that deepfake content, misinformation, and fake news pose serious threats to democracy, social harmony, and public trust. She urged lawmakers to deliberate seriously on the misuse of artificial intelligence.

She said early exposure to science, technology, and innovation through initiatives such as the Atal Innovation Mission and tinkering labs is preparing students for future challenges and promoting a culture of research and development.

Sports and National Pride

The President said India has secured the hosting rights for the 2030 Commonwealth Games due to its confidence and preparedness. She praised reforms in sports governance and congratulated India’s women cricketers and blind women’s cricket team for their World Cup victories.

Culture, Heritage and Identity

Murmu said remembering the contributions of ancestors inspires future generations and strengthens national unity. She referred to commemorations of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom,

Birsa Munda’s birth anniversary, and events linked to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Bhupen Hazarika.

She said India is preserving its cultural heritage through initiatives such as the Gyan Bharatam Mission, digitisation of manuscripts, and the establishment of tribal museums. She also noted UNESCO’s recognition of Diwali as an intangible cultural heritage.

Opposition Protests

The President’s reference to the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), which promises 125 days of work and aims to curb corruption and leakages, triggered protests from Opposition members demanding a rollback of the law replacing MGNREGA.

Murmu briefly paused her address amid slogans from Opposition benches, while treasury members expressed support for the initiative.

Call for Unity

Concluding her address, Murmu said India stands at a crucial stage in its journey towards the future and that decisions taken today will shape the nation in the years to come.

She urged Members of Parliament to rise above differences and work collectively towards the shared goal of a developed, self-reliant, and united India.

### HC Upholds Fee

where the proposed fee structure shocks the conscience of the Committee.

Significantly, the Court struck down Section 20A(2) of the Act to the extent it permitted appointment of a retired Financial Commissioner or senior government officer as Chairperson of the FFRC. The Court held that, in line with Supreme Court directions, the Committee must be headed only by a retired High Court Judge nominated by the Chief Justice.

Regarding the challenge laid by aggrieved schools to the order of the FFRC dated 6 October 2022, which provides for a hike of transport fee only by 14%, the Bench left it for FFRC to decide.

“The FFRC, in its reply affidavit, has clearly stated that it is already seized of the matter and that a decision on the grievance of the petitioners (schools) with regard to fixation of transport fee shall be taken after taking the Transport Department on board and providing adequate opportunity of hearing to all stakeholders,” the court said, adding, “In view of the aforesaid statement made by the FFRC in its counter affidavit, there is hardly any need to go into this question...”

Suffice it to say that providing transport facilities to students is not a mandatory requirement for the establishment of a private educational institution, the court said. “Neither recognition nor affiliation of an institution is linked to the requirement of providing transport by private institutions to their students,” the court said, adding, “Transportation is an additional facility provided by schools for the convenience of students and their parents/guardians. It is always optional for students either to avail of school transport or to reach the school on their own.”

In the absence of any mandatory requirement to use school transport, the court opined that transport charges levied by private schools from students who avail the facility should not ordinarily form part of the fee charged by private schools from their students.

“Before parting, we wish to implore the Government of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to give a fresh look to the Fee Fixation Regulations, 2022 so as to bring them in tune with the observations made in this judgment,” the court said, adding, “It would be highly appreciated if proper parameters and adequate guidelines are laid down to ensure that a uniform yardstick is applied by the FFRC to determine the school fee of private schools, undue profiteering is put on a bridle, and at the same time genuine private schools, particularly those established by uneducated youth in rural areas, are not stifled by undue and uncalled-for interference on the pretext of fee determination.”

It is high time, the court said, to hold and clarify that the jurisdiction of all authorities of the State/UT with respect to matters which squarely fall within the jurisdiction of the FFRC is completely excluded.

“Complaints of overcharging of school fee, including transport fee, etc., should be left to be taken cognizance of by the FFRC, and this is the mandate of law as well,” the court added.

### HC Strikes Down

Fee Fixation and Regulation Committee (FFRC), cannot be sustained in law and is liable to be struck down from the statute book.

While upholding the overall validity of Sections 20A to 20J introduced through S.O. 3466(E) of 2020, the Division Bench of Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Sanjay Parihar ruled that the leadership of the FFRC must strictly conform to the law laid down by the Supreme Court in Islamic Academy of Education and Modern School cases.

The Court observed that the Supreme Court had unequivocally mandated that such fee regulatory committees must be headed only by a retired Judge of the High Court nominated by the Chief Justice, given the quasi-judicial nature of the functions performed by the FFRC.

Rejecting the State’s attempt to extend eligibility to retired Financial Commissioners or senior bureaucrats, the Court held that the Supreme Court’s directions could neither be “tweaked nor twisted” to justify such appointments.

Consequently, Section 20A(2), to that extent, was ordered to be removed from the statute book.

“This direction could not have been tweaked, much less twisted, to carve out a role for a retired person who has held the office of Financial Commissioner or above in the Union Territory,” the Bench said, adding, “Sub-section (2) of Section 20A is admittedly not in consonance with the judgment passed by the Supreme Court and, therefore, cannot be allowed to remain on the statute book.”

During the hearing, counsel for the Union Territory administration conceded that the impugned provision was not in consonance with Supreme Court jurisprudence. The Court directed that Section 20A(2) be suitably substituted to provide that the FFRC shall be headed by a Chairperson who has been a Judge of the High Court, to be nominated by the Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

### Dry Weather Till

the forecast, authorities have issued advisories urging travellers and transporters to confirm road and highway conditions from concerned traffic departments before undertaking journeys. Farmers have been advised to suspend farm operations, while the general public has been cautioned against visiting snowbound and avalanche-prone higher reaches.

The Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory Disaster Management Authority has issued a high-level avalanche warning for areas above 2,000 metres in Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Kupwara over the next 24 hours.

Residents and visitors have been asked to strictly follow official advisories and avoid risky areas. Authorities said weather conditions could affect transport and daily activities, particularly in higher-altitude regions. In case of emergencies, people have been advised to dial 112.

Meanwhile, the night temperature plunged several degrees below the freezing point at most places in Kashmir on Tuesday. Srinagar, however, recorded warmer-than-expected night temperature -- 0.1 degrees Celsius -- a notch above the season’s normal. Srinagar city and Baramulla town (at 0.4 degrees Celsius) were the only places in Kashmir where the night temperature settled above the freezing point.

Gulmarg and Sonamarg were the coldest places in the valley, both recording a low of minus 9.8 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam recorded a low of minus 6.4 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature in Qazigund settled at minus 4.3 degrees, while Kokernag recorded a low of minus 2.6 degrees and Kupwara minus 0.7 degrees Celsius.

### Avalanche Warning

2,000 metres in Bandipora, Ganderbal, and Kupwara over the next 24 hours.

Residents and visitors have been advised to avoid avalanche-prone areas and strictly follow official advisories. In case of emergencies, people have been asked to dial 112.

The Meteorological Department has also cautioned that prevailing weather conditions could impact transport and daily activities, particularly in higher-altitude regions, and urged the public to exercise caution.

Meanwhile, Ganderbal Police said an avalanche occurred late Tuesday night at around 10.15 pm near the New Truck Yard area of Sonamarg.

In a statement, police said the impact was minimal and no loss of life or property was reported. A police team, along with the State Disaster Response Force, rushed to the area to assess the situation.

Authorities said the situation is being closely monitored and precautionary measures have been put in place to ensure public safety. Police have advised the general public, tourists, and transporters to strictly avoid visiting or halting in avalanche-prone areas.

Officials warned that avalanche risk remains very high and unnecessary movement in vulnerable zones could pose serious danger. People have been urged to follow official advisories, cooperate with local authorities, and prioritise safety while travelling along the Sonamarg axis and adjoining areas.

### Jammu-Srinagar NH

#### Reopens

inclement weather. Most parts of Kashmir received snowfall on Tuesday, which led to the suspension of traffic on the highway and flight operations at the Srinagar airport.

Fresh snowfall across Kashmir on Tuesday led to the closure of the Jammu-Srinagar national highway and the cancellation of all flights at Srinagar airport, leaving hundreds of tourists stranded in the valley.

Flight operations also resumed at the airport on Wednesday morning.

### J&K Sets Up District

implementation of Supreme Court guidelines, conducting periodic inspections across educational institutions, and examining and addressing complaints related to mental health protection and suicide prevention among students within the district.

The order authorises the committees to

monitor compliance in schools and other educational institutions and to ensure that safeguards related to student mental wellbeing are effectively enforced on the ground.

While the move has been welcomed as a formal step towards addressing growing concerns over student stress, mental health and suicides, education stakeholders have stressed that effective implementation will be key. They said mere constitution of committees will not suffice unless inspections, grievance redressal and follow up action are carried out in a transparent and time bound manner.

The order has been issued by the Commissioner Secretary to the Government, General Administration Department, and copies have been circulated to all concerned departments, including School Education and Social Welfare. (KNT)

### Maharashtra Deputy CM

aircraft took off from Mumbai at around 8.10 am and disappeared from radar minutes before the crash. Eyewitnesses said the aircraft appeared unstable before hitting the ground and bursting into flames.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has ordered a probe into the incident, while aviation authorities said preliminary details suggest the aircraft was attempting to land under visual meteorological conditions.

The Maharashtra government declared three days of state mourning till January 30, during which the national flag will be flown at half-mast and official entertainment programmes will remain suspended.

A senior leader of the Nationalist Congress Party, Pawar was among the most influential political figures in Maharashtra and played a key role in the state’s coalition politics. He is survived by his wife Sunetra Pawar, a Rajya Sabha member, and two sons.

Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar visited Baramati and the hospital where the body was taken, while his daughter and Baramati MP Supriya Sule was seen inconsolable.

A source close to the family of Ajit Pawar said his last rites are likely to be performed at the Vidya Pratishthan ground at Baramati later in the day.

An official statement said Baramati is an uncontrolled airfield and traffic information is provided by the instructors/pilot from the flying training organisations at Baramati.

“As per the statement of the person manning the ATC following are the sequence of events: On 28th January 2026 the aircraft VI-SSK first came in contact with Baramati at 0818 IST. The aircraft’s next call was at 30 NM inbound to Baramati and they were released by Pune approach. They were advised to descend in Visual Meteorological conditions at pilot’s discretion.

“The crew enquired about the winds and visibility and they were informed that the winds were calm and visibility was around 3000 mts,” the statement said.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah led tributes to Ajit Pawar, expressing shock and grief over his untimely death.

In a post on X, Murmu said Pawar would be remembered for his contribution to Maharashtra’s development, particularly in the cooperative sector.

Modi described Pawar as a grassroots leader with a deep connect with the people and said his death in the plane crash was “very shocking and untimely”. Shah termed the loss personal, calling Pawar’s demise a major blow to public life.

Amit Shah, in his condolence message, said Ajit Pawar’s demise is a personal loss not only for the NDA family but also for him.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the death was “unbelievable”, adding that he had lost a close colleague and friend. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the tragedy had left the state in mourning and assured a thorough probe into the accident.

### 'A Widely Respected

that I learnt about the untimely demise of Shri Ajit Pawar Ji. He was a widely respected leader committed to the well-being of the people and served Maharashtra with distinction,” Sinha said in a post on X, extending condolences to Pawar’s family and admirers.

Pawar, 66, was among five people killed when the private aircraft carrying them crashed on Wednesday morning while en route from Mumbai to Baramati, where he was scheduled to address rallies ahead of the February 5 zilla parishad elections.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also mourned Pawar’s death, describing him as an able administrator and a consummate political organiser whose loss would be deeply felt.

Recalling his long association with the Nationalist Congress Party leader, Omar said he had known Pawar since his college days in Mumbai, when he stayed with Sharad Pawar and his family.

“Shocked to hear about the untimely demise of Ajit Pawar Saab. Ajit da was an able administrator and a consummate political organiser whose loss will be greatly felt,” Omar said in a post on X.

He said he joined his father, National Conference president Feroz Abdullah, in extending condolences to Sharad Pawar, Baramati MP Supriya Sule, and the bereaved family.

The aircraft reportedly attempted an emergency landing at Baramati Airfield before crashing.

### J&K Fire Services

to the data, the operational cadres remain the worst affected. Of the 1,619 sanctioned posts of firemen and firemen drivers, only 804 are occupied, while 815 posts -- more than half -- are vacant, raising concerns over the department’s emergency response capabilities.

Senior and supervisory ranks are also facing acute shortages with both posts of joint directors, all six posts of deputy directors, and eight assistant directors out of the 16 sanctioned posts are vacant. The department is also without a prosecution officer, while all 12 telephone operator posts, five radio mechanics, and three RTM operators remain unfilled, it said.

Other vacant posts include 23 divisional fire officers, 44 station officers, 32 leading firemen, 72 firemen and one administrative officer, the data said.

The second highest number of vacancies has been reported among drivers (314) besides sub officers (90). Several essential support positions, including medical and accounting staff, also remain vacant.

On December 15, 2025, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha dismissed 103 employees in the department after they were found to have been illegally appointed through a manipulated recruitment process five years ago.

The action followed the findings of an inquiry committee and subsequent investigation by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) into alleged irregularities in the 2020 recruitment of firemen and drivers in the department.

In response to another query, the department said 3,490 major and 48,869 minor fire incidents took place across Jammu and Kashmir between 2015 and 2025.

Jammu accounted for the highest number of 637 major fire incidents, followed by Srinagar (581), Budgam (482), Ganderbal (468), Ramban (310), Baramulla (212), Kupwara (127), Anantnag (123), Bandipora (111), Kulgam (99), Pulwama (93), Kathua (75), Shopian (36), Doda (30), Samba (32), Kishtwar (24), Rajouri (18), Udhampur (14), Reasi (11) and Poonch (7).

Jammu also witnessed the highest number of 12,276 minor fire incidents in the last decade, followed by Srinagar (5,119), Baramulla (4,493), Kupwara (3,849), Anantnag (3,319), Samba (2,856), Pulwama (2,431), Kathua (2,358), Budgam (1,881), Kulgam (1,555), Shopian (1,282), Udhampur (1,240), Rajouri (1,234), Doda (1,181), Poonch (950), Reasi (870), Ramban (629), Bandipora (600), Kishtwar (583) and Ganderbal (163), the data showed.

The RTI activist said the department is crucial for fire and emergency services across the Union Territory and must be strengthened to ensure coverage in remote and far-flung areas, many of which remain cut off during winter.

Highlighting their operational importance, he said the fire and emergency services played a key role in Operation Sindoor in May last year, responding effectively to emergencies amid cross-border shelling.

Strengthening the department, he said, is essential for improving response times, enhancing readiness and providing vital services to high-risk communities across Jammu and Kashmir.

### J&K Sees Major

which provides accidental insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh at a nominal premium of Rs 20 per year, 5,42,675 additional individuals were enrolled.

“This pushed the total number of subscribers from 23,56,858 in March 2025 to 29,12,830 in December 2025. Pulwama district recorded the highest coverage, followed by Samba and Jammu,” they added.

Similarly, under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), providing life insurance cover of rupees 2 lakh on an annual premium of rupees 436, the total number of subscribers rose from 9,66,887 in March 2025 to 11,87,547 by December 2025, registering an addition of 2,20,660 new beneficiaries. “Baramulla achieved the best results, followed by Jammu and Ganderbal,” officials said.

Under the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), which offers a fixed monthly pension after 60 years of age to citizens aged 18–40 years not covered under any other pension scheme, 40,582 new subscribers were enrolled, taking the total from 2,48,020 to 2,88,602 in the same period.

“Jammu district topped the list, followed by Samba and Pulwama,” they said.

Officials said that the Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Praman) campaign also recorded remarkable progress, with digital certifications rising from 4,000 to 1,11,511 during 2025–26. Of the 2.49 lakh pensioners in J&K, 2.37 lakh have completed life certification, and 1.16 lakh (49%) opted for digital submission.

“Rajouri, Kulgam and Udhampur were identified as the best-performing districts under this campaign,” they added.

The Chief Minister also appreciated the coordinated efforts of Deputy Commissioners, banking institutions and field-level functionaries for ensuring that benefits reach people in a seamless and transparent manner.

Officials said the top three performing districts under each scheme have been awarded Certificates of Appreciation by the Chief Minister for their outstanding work.(KNO)

# Snow Draws Tourists, Gulmarg Reaches Full Capacity

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Fresh snowfall has sent occupancy rates soaring at Kashmir's top winter destinations, with Gulmarg hotels jammed at 100 percent while Sonamarg reaches 70 percent, as tourists from across India and beyond swarm the snow-blanketed valley.

Declaring "no place like Valley snow", exhilarated visitors hailed destinations as unmatched, even surpassing international spots.

Gujarat skier Khusboo, a regular visitor, speaking to KNO said she has tried skiing in many destinations, but prefers Gulmarg over other places. "It's truly heaven on earth," she said.

Similarly, a group of Punjab residents, concluding a six-day skiing adventure in Gulmarg urged natives to visit and witness the snow-covered mountains.

"There's no match to Gulmarg," they declared.

"It has been an unexpected joy and happiness. We enjoyed skiing and Gondola rides. The people here are awesome, and



the weather has no comparison," first-timer Sania Mirza beamed. CEO Gulmarg Development

Authority (GDA) Tariq Hussain, said they have invited adventure seekers to experience winter

thrills. He confirmed hotels at 100 percent occupancy post-snowfall.

"Visit Gulmarg and feel the thrill of winter adventure activities. Gulmarg belongs to every tourist for whom it is the first choice for skiing and other snow activities," he said.

Stressing safety, the CEO advised visitors to ensure cooperation with authorities and use only the specified ski tracks for skiing.

Meanwhile, Sonamarg saw a similar post-snowfall surge, with hotels at over 70% occupancy. From January 1 to 27, the destination welcomed 87,693 visitors, with 77,200 domestic tourists, 1,225 foreigners and 9,268 locals.

Tourist flow picked up pace amid the white carpet; however, the unscheduled power cuts have surfaced. The stakeholders have urged the administration to ensure uninterrupted facilities to enhance tourist comfort.

On Tuesday night, a minor avalanche occurred with minimal impact and no loss of life, according to officials.

Police reiterated warnings for the public and tourists to strictly avoid avalanche-prone areas.

## Sopore Streets Waterlogged Post-Snowfall

**SRINAGAR:** Streets across Sopore town in north Kashmir's Baramulla district remained waterlogged following recent snowfall, turning busy areas into virtual ponds and disrupting normal life, even as the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) has assured relief measures.

According to KNO, the areas near Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Main Chowk, Degree College and other key streets are waterlogged. The residents demand a permanent drainage system to curb recurring submergence during rains or snowmelt. ADC Sopore, S A Raina acknowledged the issue, saying that dewatering operations were immediately initiated with two pumps pressed into service. "The leftover water will be fully dewatered by tomorrow," he assured.

On snow clearance, the ADC informed that all Priority 1 and 2 roads were cleared on the first day itself, while upper reaches like Rampora, Rajpora and Marbal were addressed today. Electricity restoration in Sopore and Rafiabad was completed yesterday.

He urged residents to exercise judicious use of electricity and water amid ongoing challenges.

Meanwhile, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sopore Municipal Council revealed that over 60% of the drainage project works have been completed.

Locals, however, urged the administration to expedite efforts. They questioned why main streets flood repeatedly. (Observer News Service)

## Obesity Main Reason Behind Rising Fatal Diseases: Doctors

**SRINAGAR:** Body weight is no longer just a cosmetic concern, but it is becoming a major driver of multiple life-threatening diseases affecting large numbers of people.

The World Health Organization (WHO), in a recent report, has estimated that obesity is strongly associated with over 250 diseases, making it one of the most serious health challenges of this century.

Speaking to KNO, Dr Suhail Ahmad Mir from Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK) said that obesity is not just about weight, but it is about the way excess fat disrupts normal metabolism and organ function.

"It increases inflammation and insulin resistance, which are key mechanisms behind chronic diseases," he said.

He said that excess body fat interferes with the body's ability to respond to insulin - the hormone that controls blood sugar - which leads to insulin resistance and eventually to type 2 diabetes. Doctors said that people with obesity can have up to six times higher risk of developing diabetes compared to those of a healthy weight.

Dr Shabir Ahmad, another doctor, said that obesity raises the risk of blood cancers, increases bad cholesterol, and promotes chronic inflammation, all of which are key risk factors for heart attacks and stroke.

"Some studies have shown that obesity increases the risk of several cancers, including breast, colon, and pancreatic, as excess fat tissue produces hormones and growth factors that can stimulate cancer cell growth," he said, adding that obesity is linked to conditions such as fatty liver disease, sleep apnea, osteoporosis, and reproductive problems. (Observer News Service)

## Kulgam Man Suffocates to Death

**SRINAGAR:** A 32-year-old man died of suspected suffocation after sleeping in his car with the heater on while waiting outside District Hospital Kulgam, where his wife was admitted, officials said. An official told KNO that the man, a resident of Kulgam, had parked his car near the hospital and slept inside it during the night to stay warm.

He said the man's ailing wife was admitted to the hospital and the continuous use of the heater inside the closed car reportedly caused suffocation.

He was later found unconscious inside the car and taken to the hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. His body was then sent for medico-legal formalities.

The deceased was identified as Mashooq Ahmad Mir (32), son of Mohammad Yousuf Mir, a resident of Kulgam area of Kulgam. Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident. (Observer News Service)

## JCC Seeks Review of Suspension Orders Against Engineers

**SRINAGAR:** The Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of Engineers, an amalgam of the J&K Civil Engineers Graduates Association (JKCEGA) and the J&K Mechanical Engineers Graduates Association (JKMEGA), has urged the government to review the recent suspension orders of several engineers in the Public Works (R&B) and Mechanical departments.

The body said most of the officers had acted within their jurisdiction and that such actions were creating a "demoralising atmosphere" among engineers working tirelessly to maintain essential services in harsh winter conditions.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of Engineers—an amalgam of the J&K Civil Engineers Graduates Association (JKCEGA) and the J&K Mechanical Engineers Graduates Association (JKMEGA)—has expressed its serious concern, surprise, and displeasure over the recent recommendations for suspension of Engineers of the Public Works (R&B) and Mechanical, Department issued vide Order No. PW-HRMI/3/2026-13 dated 27.01.2026. (Observer News Service)

## CS Reviews Yatra Preparedness

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired the 15th High-Level Committee (HLC) meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) and impressed upon all line departments and stakeholders to ensure that comprehensive arrangements for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026 are put in place well ahead of its commencement.

Besides the DG Police the meeting was attended by the Administrative Secretaries of all the Departments, Senior officers from the civil administration, police, and other concerned departments. Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through video conferencing.

Emphasising advance planning and timely execution, the Chief Secretary directed departments including Tourism, PWD, PDD, Jal Shakti, RDD, H&UDD, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, BRO, Telecommunication and others to complete all tendering, procurement and contract-related processes within the coming month. He stressed that early finalisation of works is critical to ensure seamless arrangements before the onset of the yatra.

Highlighting safety as the top priority, the Chief Secretary instructed the Divisional Administrations and Deputy Commissioners of Anantnag and Ganderbal to identify and mark all disaster-prone and vulnerable areas along both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes. He categorically directed that no utilities, including tents and temporary structures, be installed in such high-risk zones.



The Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) was asked to coordinate closely with district administrations to frame and implement robust Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) to ensure the safety of pilgrims. He also called for an assessment and augmentation of holding capacities at camps and transit points both within and outside the yatra area.

The Chief Secretary asked the Deputy Commissioners to facilitate all service providers and ensure that facilities created at every location are adequate, appropriate and sufficient for pilgrims as well as service personnel. He urged inter-departmental coordination and optimal utilisation of the available work window so that all infrastructure and services are fully ready well before the scheduled

yatra dates.

Dulloo reviewed the specific roles and responsibilities assigned to each department and district administration, and took note of the budgetary requirements for execution of various works and procurements. He laid special emphasis on the Power Development Department for timely maintenance of HT/LT power lines and on the Jal Shakti Department for completing the requisite works along the yatra routes.

Traffic management also came under detailed discussion, with the Chief Secretary directing preparation of comprehensive traffic plans to avoid congestion and ensure smooth movement of pilgrims and locals alike. The Police Department was asked to ensure deployment of adequate manpower to facilitate a safe, secure and hassle-free yatra.

## Northern Railway Adds Coaches to Kashmir Train

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** In a swift response to widespread disruptions in road and air connectivity caused by severe weather and heavy snowfall, the Northern Railway's Jammu Division on Wednesday operationalized a special reserved train service between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar, augmenting its capacity with two additional AC coaches to accommodate stranded passengers.

Official sources confirmed to KNS that special train numbers 04629 and 04630 were deployed on the route, considering the significant influx of tourists to the Kashmir Valley. "To ensure a comfortable journey for the large number of passengers and to clear the waiting list, two extra AC coaches were added to the train formation. This provided 144 additional berths," a senior railway officer said.

The move, hailed as a "positive step" by passengers, ensured that those on waitlisted tickets secured confirmed seats, offering critical relief during the travel crisis induced by the inclement conditions.

Detailing the operations, officials stated that Train 04629 departed from Katra at its scheduled time of 10:30 AM, carrying over 800 passengers. Its counterpart, Train 04630, left Srinagar at 3:00 PM with



over 850 passengers on board.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (Jammu) Uchit Singhal, speaking to news agency Kashmir News Service (KNS), highlighted the impact of the initiative. "The special trains run on January 27 and 28 provided much-needed relief as other modes of transport were hit. More than 3000 passengers traveled over these two days and have expressed their gratitude," he said.

Significantly, Singhal stated that the occupancy of these special services exceeded 100 percent. "The revenue generation saw an increase due to the addition of the extra coaches. This train not only provided comfort but also operated at full capacity on this historic route, generating record earnings in this challenging situation," he added.

He further emphasized that such proactive measures by the railways would bolster confidence among travelers and tourists, potentially contributing to a rise in tourist footfall to Jammu and Kashmir in the future.

## Drones, Early Warnings To Strengthen J&K Disaster Response

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday outlined a technology-driven approach to strengthen disaster response across the Union Territory, with a focus on RFID-based pilgrim management, drone-assisted logistics, and enhanced early warning systems.

Chairing a review meeting of the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo stressed the need for anticipatory action, seamless inter-agency coordination, and time-bound implementation of the proposed measures.

The roadmap includes RFID-based registration and monitoring of pilgrims, particularly during the Machail Mata Yatra, shrine-specific mock exercises including at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, and the use of drones for delivery of essential supplies and medicines to cut-off areas during emergencies.

The Chief Secretary also called for strengthening early warning systems through localized weather forecasting, deployment



of Automatic Weather Stations and Doppler radars in high-risk areas, and improved last-mile dissemination of alerts through digital platforms such as the SACHET App.

District and Sub-Divisional Emergency Operation Centres are to be made fully functional with redundant communication systems, especially in remote and border areas. The administration also plans regular pre-monsoon preparedness drills and annual state-level mock exercises to enhance readiness.

Officials said the shift towards technology-enabled disaster management follows lessons learnt from recent floods, cloudbursts and flash floods across the Union Territory.

## Parking Curbs Announced Ahead of Assembly Session

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Ahead of the fifth session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, the government has issued an advisory regulating the entry and parking of vehicles in and around the Civil Secretariat in Jammu.

According to a circular issued by the General Administration Department (GAD), private vehicles of employees—including police personnel deployed on security duty—will not be permitted inside the Civil Secretariat.

Private vehicles of Civil Secretariat employees will

instead be parked at the designated area at the under-construction Assembly Complex on a first-come, first-served basis. Escort vehicles and media vehicles will not be allowed to park in these designated zones.

All officers and officials have been directed to cooperate with the Senior Superintendent of Police (Security), Civil Secretariat, to ensure smooth regulation of vehicle movement and parking. Administrative secretaries have also been asked to ensure strict compliance with the instructions by all employees during the Assembly session.

## Landslide Buries Dozens of Livestock in Kishtwar

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Dozens of livestock, including sheep and goats, were killed in a landslide in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar on Wednesday, officials said.

The landslide struck near the Hasti bridge when a group of shepherds were crossing the area along with their livestock, the officials said. They said several animals

were buried under the debris, but the accompanying shepherds escaped unhurt.

According to PTI, the exact number of livestock that perished in the incident will only be known once the rescue operation is complete, the officials said.

Most parts of Jammu and Kashmir experienced fresh snowfall in the higher reaches and rainfall in the plains over the past two days.

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed paying Guest/homes stay unit under the name & Style of M/s. THE SUMMER VILLE" situated at Gulshan Nagar Nowgam Srinagar

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# I-League Return Will Revive Football in Kashmir: Arshad

Philem Dipak Singh

**NEW DELHI:** Real Kashmir FC owner Arshad Shawl foresees football thriving once again in the Kashmir Valley, which was hit by a terror attack in April last year, with the I-League finally starting from February 21 after months of uncertainty.

The I-League clubs, including Real Kashmir, and the All India Football Federation (AIFF) officials on Wednesday announced that the second-tier event will be rechristened as Indian Football League from this season onwards.

"We will immediately start the camp. We've been having a full squad running in from September last because the I-League was supposed to start then. We've been paying salaries to the whole squad," Shawl told PTI after a press conference.

"Starting from pre-Diwali, Pujya holidays (Dussehra), now Kashmir is more or less normal,

tourists have also started coming once again. And with respect to football, it will thrive (in the valley) once again."

I-League, the country's second tier football competition, is starting after a crisis in Indian football after the AIFF and its previous commercial partner FSDL failed to renew the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) beyond December 8 last year.

Following the terror attack in Pahalgam in April last year, which killed 26 tourists, India launched Operation Sindoor, dismantling terrorist camps on Pakistan soil.

Asked if there is still difficulties in training and playing football in the Kashmir Valley, he said, "After May (when Operation Sindoor was launched) till now, nothing has happened. Initially, there were issues, tourists were not coming.

"But now we are having Winter Games (second leg of Khelo India Winter Games), we will



ARSHAD NIZAM SHAWL presenting club jersey to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah  
FILE PHOTO

have I-League matches there. The weather in Jammu and Kashmir will be fine. It will all be normal as far as football is concerned. Our boys are looking forward and the people there are waiting for football matches."

"One incident cannot really

push the place back."

RKFC is a storied club which made it to the I-League in 2018 under David Robertson, just two years after its inception, and Shawl said his team has players from different parts of India and played across the

country.

"We have the Kashmiri boys. We also feel about diversity. For us in Kashmir, it's not about Kashmir only. We play boys from across the country."

He, however, admitted that the truncated league will not

be an easy one for his club, and anticipates logistic difficulties and financial hardships.

"At Real Kashmir, we've been investing in the future of the boys. We've invested very hard. It's a place where we don't get too much of financial support.

"When we finished the league in April, we keep running towards sponsors. Like we had last year, I had Crax Chips as sponsor for my youth league. I had Livpure (water purifier) for the whole season (last year).

"Now, I don't have them. Now when the sponsors get to know that there's no league, no ISL, there's a negativity. We don't know whether we will have a commercial partner or a broadcaster partner."

Asked if he will get a sponsor in the next three weeks before the start of the I-League, he said, "I'll be very honest, for us to go and get a sponsor for the club, it's very, very difficult. But we are working very hard."

Regarding logistical issues his club might face, Shawl said, "After Operation Sindoor, the number of flights (to other destinations of the country) has reduced. So it might be difficult to travel the length and breadth of the country, say Goa or the northeast part of the country."

All the clubs (likely to be 10) will play in a single round robin league in home and away format. Some matches of a club will be at home and some away.

The 10 clubs are Diamond Harbour of West Bengal, Chanmari FC of Mizoram, Real Kashmir, Gokulam Kerala, Rajasthan United, Dempo SC of Goa, Namdhari FC, Shillong Lajong, Sreenidi Deccan and Aizawl FC.

The participation of Churchill Brothers of Goa is doubtful. How many clubs will ultimately participate will be known after February 2, which is the deadline for the clubs to pay their share of the total cost of running the 2025-26 season. (PTI)

## I-League Season to Start on Feb 21

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The I-League, the country's second-tier football competition, will be restructured and rechristened as Indian Football League (IFL), with the clubs becoming majority stakeholders in the venture from the upcoming season beginning February 21.

A decision to rechristen the I-League was taken during a meeting of the club representatives and All India Football Federation (AIFF) officials on Wednesday. It was later announced during a press conference here.

The AIFF's Executive Committee is yet to approve the decision though it is just a formality.

"We have decided in today's meeting that the I-League will be restructured and rechristened as Indian Football League. It is a landmark decision, though it will need the approval from the AIFF Executive Committee," said Shillong Lajong owner Larsing Ming at the press conference.

"We are making a fresh start of the league. The clubs themselves will majorly involve in running the

league just like it is done in other top leagues of the world like the English Premier League."

The announcement came in the backdrop of a crisis in Indian football after the AIFF and its previous commercial partner FSDL failed to renew the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) beyond December 8 last year.

The top-tier Indian Super League (ISL), organised by FSDL, and the I-League were paused only to restart after the intervention of the sports ministry.

The ISL is set to begin on February 14, a week before the I-League (Indian Football League).

The country's top-tier league was originally called National Football League (NFL) which ran from 1996 to 2007 when it was re-branded as I-League. The ISL started in 2014 and it became the top-tier league. The I-League became the country's second tier competition.

Diamond Harbour of West Bengal and Chanmari FC of Mizoram were promoted from the I-League 2024-25, making it an 11club affair for a truncated 2025-26 season.

There is a big question mark on

whether Goa's Churchill Brothers would compete this season or not. They were initially announced as last edition I-League champions and promoted to the ISL.

But the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) later ruled that Inter Kashi were the champions, and the Varanasi-based club was subsequently promoted to the ISL. Churchill had knocked the doors of the Delhi HC against the AIFF, and the case is still pending.

"We are not sure of one club but it is more or less certain that 10 clubs will take part this season. Eight clubs have 100 per cent agreed. The other two also more or less agreed just after we (eight clubs) took a collective decision this morning," Ming added.

The 10 clubs are Diamond Harbour, Chanmari FC, Real Kashmir, Gokulam Kerala, Rajasthan United, Dempo SC, Namdhari FC, Shillong Lajong, Sreenidi Deccan and Aizawl FC.

How many clubs will ultimately participate will be known after February 2, which is the deadline for the clubs to pay their share of the total cost of running the 2025-26 season.

The total cost of the league for 2025-26 has been pegged at Rs 3.25 crore, out of which the clubs will have to contribute 60 per cent or around Rs 2 crore, which means each club's share will be around Rs 20 lakh.

The AIFF's share is set to be 40 per cent (30% + 10%), as the commercial partner which is to contribute 30 per cent is unlikely to be roped in before the start of the league.

### Governing Council and Management Committee

The league will have Governing Council and Management Committee for the first time. The Governing Council will be a larger body which will be the final decision making body, while the Management Committee will be a smaller one to look after day-to-day affairs.

"The GC will have one representative each from all the participating clubs, plus three representatives from the AIFF, three from the commercial partners (when ever they come in) and two experts from outside," AIFF Deputy Secretary General M Satyanarayan said.

## Rohit Identifies Arshdeep, Hardik as Key to India's T20 Chances

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** T20 World Cup-winning captain Rohit Sharma reckons all-rounder Hardik Pandya and left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh will hold the key to India's prospects in the upcoming edition of the tournament.

Defending champions India will enter the T20 showpiece as one of the overwhelming favourites due to their massive depth and quality.

Rohit highlighted Arshdeep's effectiveness with the new ball and at the death.

"It is a big positive to have both Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh together because they always attack for wickets. Arshdeep's biggest strength is swinging the new ball and taking early wickets. He mainly bowls with the new ball and at the



death. Starting and finishing are the most important phases, and he is strong in both," Rohit told JioHotstar.

"With the new ball, he swings it to get left-handers caught in the slips and targets the pads of right-handers. He has also started taking the ball away from right-handers. These skills are key for a new-ball bowler. He always tries to take wickets, which is why he bowls the first over."

Rohit added, "In the 2024 T20 World Cup final against South Africa, he did a great job. I still remember he dismissed Quinton de Kock when he was set and batting well. In the 19th over, he gave away just two or three runs, which built pressure on the South Africans.

"That is his game, bowling with the new ball and at the death, and he will play a key role for India in the 2026 T20 World Cup."

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