

'GROWTH, JOBS & GOVERNANCE'

J&K Budget Session Begins With LG Address



- » J&K Economy Records 11% Growth in 2024-25: LG
- » Says Govt Focused on Jobs, Infrastructure and Social Welfare
- » 'Budget Session Key To Charting J&K's Future'

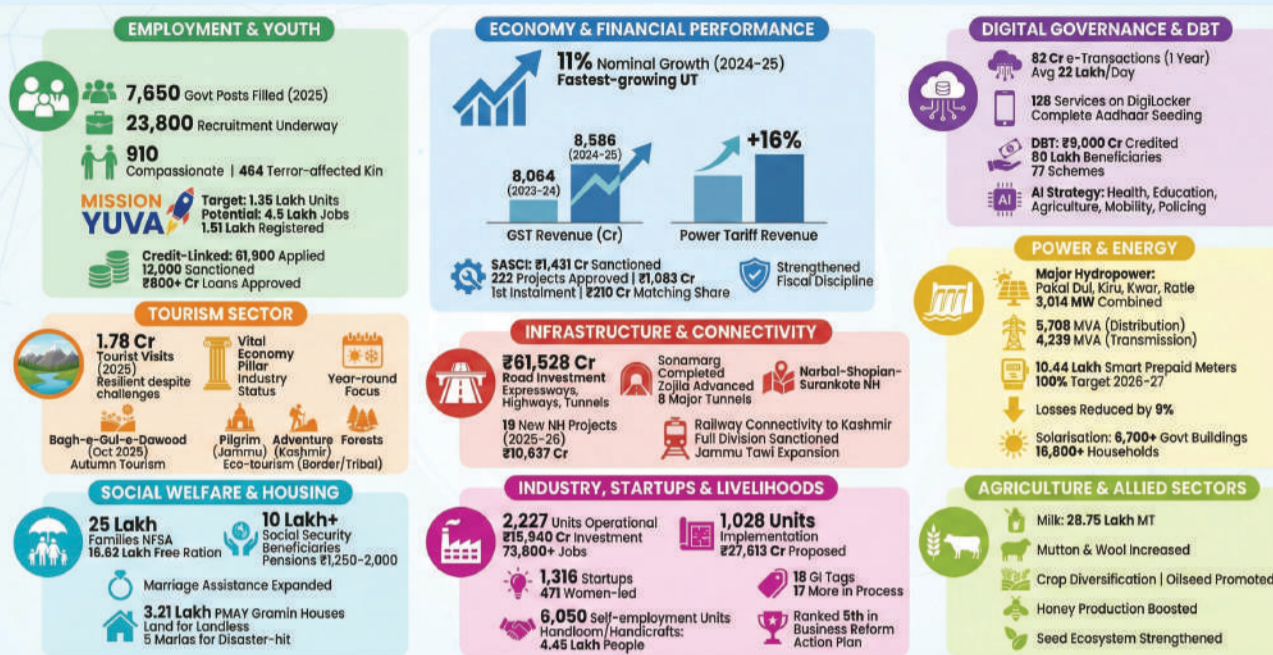
Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly began on Monday with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha describing the session as a significant opportunity to reflect on the Union Territory's collective

journey, review achievements and chart a clear roadmap for the future, with emphasis on growth, jobs and governance.

Addressing the House at the start of the 27-day-long session, spread over three months with double sittings, the LG said the transition to popular governance after several years has reinforced public faith in democratic institutions and restored participatory governance in Jammu and Kashmir.

"This session holds special significance as it offers an opportunity to reflect on our collective journey, review our achievements and chart a clear roadmap for the future. It reaffirms our shared commitment to fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha said, urging legislators to work in a spirit of cooperation and shared [| More on P6](#)



Power Losses Reduced, Revenue Up 16%: LG

'Over 10 Lakh Smart Prepaid Meters Installed'

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said major hydropower projects including Pakal Dul, Kiru, Kwar and Rattle, with a combined capacity of 3,014 MW, are under execution. He said 5,708 MVA capacity has been added to the distribution sector and 4,239 MVA to the transmission sector over the last five years.

Installation of smart prepaid meters is underway in mission mode, with 10.44 lakh meters already installed and full coverage targeted by 2026-27. Power losses have reduced by nine percent, while revenue realisation has increased by 16 percent, he added. Solarisation of government [| More on P6](#)

'1.78 Crore Tourist Visits in 2025 Despite Challenges'

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that tourism continues to be a vital pillar of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, with the Union Territory recording 1.78 crore tourist visits in 2025 despite security-related incidents and natural calamities. "Despite challenges

arising from security-related incidents and natural calamities, the Union Territory recorded 1.78 crore tourist visits in 2025," Sinha said while addressing members of the Legislative Assembly on the inaugural day of the Budget session beginning Monday.

The lieutenant governor referenced security incidents and natural calamities, [| More on P6](#)

Over 7,600 Govt Posts Filled In 2025: LG Says Recruitment For 23,800 Underway KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Manoj Sinha said the government remains focused on tackling unemployment, bridging infrastructure gaps and expanding social welfare measures with renewed energy and determination.

"The government during its first year in office has sought to combine development with dignity, growth with social justice, and progress with peace. Guided by the vision of inclusive governance, it remains committed to addressing the challenges of unemployment, infrastructure gaps, and social welfare with renewed energy and determination," he said.

Sinha said the government has adopted a humane and compassionate approach in dealing with issues concerning common citizens, including employees, daily wagers, contractual workers and marginalised sections, adding decisions affecting them have been examined with empathy and corrective steps initiated wherever [| More on P6](#)

Nearly Half Of Kashmir Youth In Distress: Para

Slams Vision Document Over 'Mental Health' Omission

Observer News Service

Srinagar: People's Democratic Party leader Waheed Para on Sunday raised concerns over what he described as the government's lack of empathy towards Kashmir's growing mental health crisis, questioning the absence of psychosocial healing in the recently released Jammu and Kashmir vision document.

In a post on social media platform X, Para said "Kashmir bleeds in silence" and cited mental health data indicating that 45 percent of youth in Kashmir are suffering from deep mental distress. According to the figures shared, 41 percent are affected by depression, 26 percent by anxiety disorders, and one in five individuals shows symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. He further stated that adults in the region endure [| More on P6](#)

CM To Present Budget On Feb 6, Assembly To Sit In 3 Phases

27-Day Session Spread Over 3 Months With Double Sittings

Observer News Service

Jammu: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will present the Jammu and Kashmir budget for the financial year 2026-27 in the Legislative Assembly on February 6, as the 27-day Budget session of the House began on Monday.

The session, spread over a three-month period with double sittings, commenced with an address by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who described the Budget session as an important opportunity to reflect on the Union Territory's journey and review achievements.



This will be the second budget of the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference government after it assumed office on October 16, 2024, marking the end of nearly six years of central rule in the Union Territory.

According to the schedule, the Budget session [| More on P6](#)

Assembly Adjourned

Press Trust Of India

The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly was adjourned for the day on Monday

after obituary references to two veteran leaders who passed away recently. The Budget session of the Assembly commenced with an address by [| More on P6](#)

Alliance Strains Visible At NC-Cong Joint Meet

Agencies

Srinagar: The differences between ruling alliance partners, the National Conference (NC) and the Congress, came out in the open during a joint meeting of the alliance to chalk out a strategy to counter the opposition during the budget session, which began on Monday.

The meeting, called at Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Jammu residence, turned literally into a verbal duel between the alliance partners. In a move aimed at sending out a message to its alliance partner that all is not well, the Congress decided to send only its chief whip Nizamuddin Bhat. Another five of its MLAs, including PCC president Tariq Hamid Karra and senior leader Ghulam Ahmad Mir, chose not to participate in the meeting. Sources said that Bhat told NC leaders during the

meeting-attended by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, all NC MLAs, and their non-Congress allies-that the party is not comfortable with the post-poll working arrangement.

He reportedly told NC leaders that they were not serious about the statehood demand.

Bhat also pointed out that there was no coordination between the allies in the Rajya Sabha polls as well as over Centre-related strategy of the government.

Bhat's remarks angered NC leaders, who told him that they have to maintain better Centre-State relations to run the State. "Politics and government are two different things. We have to ensure that Centre-State relations are better for running the State (UT)," Bhat was reportedly told by the Chief Minister. Omar told Bhat that NC had conceded the [| More on P6](#)

JKBOSE Declares Class 11 Results, 83% Qualify

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) Monday announced annual regular results of 11th standard with at least 83 percent qualifying the exams.

JKBOSE officials said that 83 percent of students qualify the exams.

The board official also said that the pass percentage of girls is 86 percent and 81 percent among the male students. BOSE said that a total of 81,573 candidates were enrolled for the exams out of which 67,932 successfully qualified it.

In the exams, a total of 37,997 students have registered distinctions, 25,694 secured first divisions, 4216 bagged second division and 25 candidates registered third division.

BOSE further said that in the examination, 608 students couldn't qualify the exams while 13,032 have been asked to reappear in the exams.

Pertinently, BOSE had announced syllabus relaxation of 15 percent for 10th, 11th and 12th standard examination. Director Academics of [| More on P6](#)

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Lancet Report Outlines Roadmap For Citizen-Centred Universal Healthcare Coverage In India

Press Trust Of India

A new Lancet Commission report outlines a path for a rights-based, citizen-centred health system for India involving innovative financing, regulation and community engagement that delivers accessible, equitable and high-quality care. Aligning with the country's broader vision of 'Viksit Bharat', a developed and inclusive nation by 2047, the reforms described in the report promote community participation, transparency and equity -- key principles of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) -- aimed at ensuring high-quality, affordable care for all.

An international team of authors, including those from the US' Harvard Medical School and the Population Foundation of India, a Delhi-based NGO, emphasise the urgent need to strengthen India's public healthcare by integrating services across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, increasing government investments, and harnessing digital technologies.

Author Poonam Muttreja, executive director, Population Foundation of India, said, "Recognising people as partners rather than merely patients is essential to bringing the public into public health. Health



systems become more responsive, equitable, and compassionate when citizens participate in the planning, delivery, and accountability of services."

Healthcare reforms driven by decentralisation, multi-stakeholder collaboration and continuous learning are required to cater to India's vast diversity, the team said.

Improvements to the country's health system must go beyond technical fixes, which requires a strong political will and leadership to ensure accountability, it added.

Established in December 2020, the Lancet Commission on a citizen-centred health system for India identifies reforms needed to realise the vision.

A diverse range of expertise and existing and new research were drawn upon for arriving at recommendations, the team said. "Our clarion call is for an integrated, citizen-centred health-care delivery system that is publicly financed and publicly provided as the primary vehicle for UHC, while shaping the private sector to leverage its strengths," the authors wrote.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir,
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MECHANICAL & HOSPITAL DIVISION SKIMS/ JVC,
HQ: SKIMS Soura**
Tel: 0194-2402617 Ext: 2159 email: - mech-hospitalskims@jk.gov.in

Advertisement Notice – for Inviting Expression of Interest (EOI)

SKIMS Soura Srinagar invites Expression of Interest (EOI) through Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Division SKIMS/JVC Soura, Srinagar from eligible and experienced firms / Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) / HVAC consultants / system integrators for delivering a technical presentation/seminar on the subject detailed below.

Name of Work
Expression of Interest for Technical Presentation on Replacement/Conversion of Existing Hot Water Generator (HWG) Based HVAC System with/to Heat Pump Based HVAC System at SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar

Purpose of EOI
The EOI is invited solely for the purpose of technical assessment, feasibility evaluation, and information gathering to understand the technical, operational, and financial implications of Replacement/Conversion of the existing HWG based HVAC system with/to Heat Pump based HVAC system.
This EOI does not constitute a tender, and participation shall not give rise to any claim for future work.
Scope of Technical Presentation
The presentation shall broadly include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Technical feasibility and methodology for Replacement/Conversion from HWG based HVAC system with/to Heat Pump based HVAC system.
2. Energy efficiency assessment and expected performance improvement.
3. Capital cost versus operational cost (CAPEX-OPEX) and lifecycle cost analysis.
4. System design considerations and integration with existing HVAC infrastructure.
5. Case studies of similar installations, preferably in hospitals or large institutional buildings.
6. Operation, maintenance, reliability, and redundancy aspects.
7. Environmental benefits and reduction in carbon footprint.

Eligibility Criteria

EOI shall be submitted by firms who:
• Have substantial experience in design, consultancy, supply, installation, or operation of Heat Pump based HVAC systems
• Have executed similar works in hospitals, institutional buildings, or large commercial establishments
• Possess adequate technical capability to conduct a detailed technical seminar for engineering professionals

Submission of EOI

Interested firms shall submit their EOI comprising:

- Brief company profile
- Details of relevant experience and similar completed works
- Outline of the proposed technical presentation

The EOI may be submitted within the stipulated time.

Venue of Presentation

The technical presentation, if shortlisted, shall be conducted at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, Srinagar.

General Conditions

1. This EOI is non-binding and is issued only for technical exploration.
2. Submission of EOI shall not create any obligation on Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Division SKIMS/JVC Soura, Srinagar/ SKIMS to issue any tender or award any work.
3. SKIMS/ Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Division SKIMS/JVC Soura, Srinagar reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs, wholly or partly, without assigning any reason thereof.
4. The date and time of presentation shall be intimated separately to the shortlisted firms only.
5. The EOI shall be addressed to Director Skims, Soura/ Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Division SKIMS/JVC Soura & submitted on the following official e-mails
i. Director@skims.ac.in
ii. mech-hospitalskims@jk.gov.in
6. The EOI proposal must reach this office within 10 (Ten days) from the date of publication of this Notice in the news Papers.

No.MHD/SKIMS/JVC/ 7697-7704
DIPK-NB-3129/25
Dated: 02. 02.2026

Sd/
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical and Hospital Division
SKIMS/JVC

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that I intend to change the name on the electricity bill bearing Consumer ID No. 0212010004321 from Gh. Mohd Dar S/o Mohd Subhan Dar to Ghulam Hassan Dar S/o Ghulam Mohammad Dar, R/o Qazipora, Delina, Baramulla. If any person has any objection in this regard, he/she may file the same before the concerned office within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained.

Ghulam Hassan Dar S/o Ghulam Mohammad Dar R/o Qazipora, Delina, Baramulla jvd

NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Shayesta Farooq to (new name) Shaista Farooq. In future I will be known as Shaista Farooq. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office Srinagar, within & 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Birth Certificate of son the name is entered as MOHAMMAD HUZAIFAH and fathers name AJAZ AHMAD DAR while his actual name is MOHAMMAD HUZAIFAH DAR and fathers name is AJAZ AHMAD DAR. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BUDGAM with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
AJAZ AHMAD DAR
F/o MOHAMMAD HUZAIFAH DAR
R/o SHOLIPORA BUDGAM
CELL. 7006738172 mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that we 1. SAHIL AHMAD BHAT S/O NOOR MOHD 2. GOUSIA JAN W/O SAHIL AHMAD BHAT Prop. of Sahil infratech, holder of BEE class contractor issued by Superintendent Engineer PWD, BEE to (A) change class. Also add firm name as SAHIL INFRA TECH. If any body having any objection regarding the same they may submit their objection written to the Chief Engineer Civil investigation wing JKPCD, Bemina Srinagar within a period of 7 days from the date of this notice. No objection will be entertained after that.
1. SAHIL AHMAD BHAT S/O NOOR MOHD
2. GOUSIA JAN W/O SAHIL AHMAD BHAT.
R/O ZANA KADAL SRINAGAR mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card of my son bearing No 487684397280 the name is entered as MOHAMMAD IRFAN BHAT while his actual name is IRFAN FAYAZ. 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.
IRFAN FAYAZ S/O FAYAZ AHMAD BHAT
R/O SHOLIPORA BUDGAM mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card of my son bearing No 701350548450 the name is entered as MOHAMMAD LATEEF BHAT while his actual name is LATIEF FAYAZ. 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.
FAYAZ AHMAD
F/O LATIEF FAYAZ
R/O SHOLIPORA BUDGAM fko

NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC THE JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

CERTIFICATES-KD, NEW CAMPUS BEMINA SRINAGAR
ATTENTION PLEASE

The candidate whose photograph is published in the notice is claimed to have lost his qualification certificate of with the following particulars..

1. Roll No:- 836509
2. Class:- 10th
3. Year & Session :- Annual-OCT-NOV. 1988
4. Registration No:- 23989-HW-IX-86
5. Name: MASOODA JHAN
6. Fathers Name: GH. MOHI-UL-DIN
7. Mothers Name: FAZI
8. Date of Birth: 12-10-1972.
9. Residence:- BANIGAM - SHALIMAR- SRINAGAR

Now the candidate has applied for the DUPLICATE QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE. before the same is processed and provided to the candidate, any person having any objection in this regard may please file the same before the secretary BOSE or undersigned with in 7 days from the date of issue of this notice.

Besides, the above lost QUALIFICATION CERTIFICATE bearing S. No. 107279 be traeted as CANCELLED.

Sd/=
Assitant Secretary
Certificates - KD
mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

My particulars have been wrongly written in my passport bearing no K6920418 as Quart Ul Ain Father Name Nisar Hussain R/o Babapora Nagan Beerwa Distt Budgam DOB 9-10-2005 while my correct particulars are Quart Ul Ain D/o Nisar Ahmad Bhat D/O 08-08-2007 R/o Magam Beerwa Distt Budgam. Now I have applied for the correction of the same. If anyone has any objection regarding the above corrections, he/she may submit the same to the Passport Office, Srinagar, within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.
Quart Ul Ain
D/o Nisar Ahmad Bhat
D/O : 08-08-2007 bmg
R/o Magam Beerwa Distt Budgam

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..

PUBLIC NOTICE

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Toiba Bilal D.o.B 15/08/2020 and Mohammad Tahir Tantray D.o.B 07/03/2023 S/D/o Bilal Ahmad Tantray R/o Mamoosa occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.
Sd
Naib Tehsildar Pattan FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Dr. Kunzang Dolma, hereby inform the general public that my BDS First Year Mark Sheet, issued by Kashmir University under Sr. No. 134, Roll No. 537, for the Session September-October 2011, and issued on 22-02-2012, has been lost. The said mark sheet is hereby declared lost and invalid. If found by anyone, the same may please be returned to the undersigned. This notice is issued for general information. fko

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 Showket Ahmad Mir S/O Mohd Hayat Mir R/o Sagipora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of wards Namely Mehak Jan 06-06-2013 Sahil Showket 05-05-2012 Saqib Showket 05-04-2009 Showket Ahmad Mir 16-04-1985 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

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 Farooq ahmad Reshi Gh hassan Reshi R/o yemberzalwari, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of Son Namely Muzamil Farooq who was Born on 15-07-2013 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

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that in my Driving Licence bearing No. AROB 202300010101, my name has been erroneously recorded as FAYAZ AHMAD, whereas my correct name is FAYAZ AHMED. I intend to get the said entry corrected in the records of the concerned authority. If any person has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same in writing to the Office of the ARTO, Sopore within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the said period, no objection shall be entertained.

Name: Fayaz Ahmed
S/o: Abdul Latif Mir
R/o: Sultan Daki, Uri,
District Baramulla,
J&K - 193123 ab

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Ashia, W/o Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, R/o Killora Malikgund, Shopian, hereby notify the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded as Asha Bano on my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 792189256951. My correct name is Ashia, as per my International Passport. I have applied for correction of the said name in my Aadhaar record. If anyone has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same to the concerned authority within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. Thereafter, no objection shall be entertained.
Deponent
Ashia
W/o Ghulam Mohammad Bhat
R/o Killora Malikgund, Shopian

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 Mohammed Akbar Dar S/O Abdul Ahad Dar R/O Bohripora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of Son Namely Waseem Ahmad Dar who was Born on 10-03-1992 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

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 Mohd Ashraf mir S/O Gh nabi mir R/o nowpora tujar, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of Son Namely Shoaib Ashraf mir who was Born on 04-01-2015 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

I hereby inform the general public that I have applied for issuance of a D-Class Contractor Card. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same in writing to the concerned office within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. After the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.
Farooq Ahmad Sheikh
C/O Ab Jabbar Sheikh R/oChek Jammal Mir, Palhallan
Phone number.9103309401 fko

Subject.Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name & Style of M/s.HIMALAYAN GOLD ADVENTURE" situated at Rajbagh srinagar 190008

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I Sumaira W/o Mohammad Younis Mir R/o Motiyar Rainawari srinagar intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed travel unit under the name and style "M/s. HIMALAYAN GOLD ADVENTURE" situated at Rajbagh srinagar 190008 Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate, Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department), Bank statement (minimum balance 1000), site plan, Affidavit, Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting), Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection, if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID:-ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley.No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained fko

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ مجھے اپنے نیکلی اینڈسٹریز کے ذریعہ نمبر 0206050004681 جو کہ میرے والد کے نام پر یعنی اسماء اللہ میر کے نام پر ہے۔ اس کو میرے نام یعنی عبدالعزیز میر کے نام پر کر دانا منظور ہے۔ جس بارے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر ایک ٹیکسٹ یا ٹیلیفون پر ذی ذی بیڈ گام کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ یہ عہد کرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
عبدالعزیز میر ولد اسماء اللہ میر
ساکر شولی پورہ بڈ گام۔
فون 7006506443 مگر۔

Div Com Reviews IWAI's Envisaged Project of Water Transport in Jhelum

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, along with Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa chaired a meeting to review the removal of bottlenecks for water transport of the Inland Waterways Authority of India's (IWAI) envisaged project of River Jhelum.

The meeting was participated in by Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla and Ganderbal; RTO Kashmir; Chief Engineers KPDC & PWD; engineers from I&FC and PWD departments; and the IWAI Coordinator.

At the outset, the IWAI Coordinator gave a detailed presentation on the bottlenecks of the project and highlighted the required interventions.

Addressing the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner directed IWAI to take possession of land at two identified locations and to conduct a joint inspection to identify

land for the third location.

It was informed that out of eight proposed locations, four have already been taken over by IWAI.

Regarding issues related to HT and LT power lines, the Divisional Commissioner instructed IWAI to share a detailed list of site-specific issues with the Chief Engineer, KPDC, for preparation of removal estimates.

Similarly, the PWD was directed to assess removal of cofferdams under bridges and to facilitate necessary clearances.

The Divisional Commissioner also appointed RTO Kashmir as the nodal officer to ensure close coordination and effective communication among all concerned departments.

While directing for joint inspection of agencies for assessing site interventions, he emphasized that a consolidated report outlining all required interventions be compiled and submitted within one week.



Fishing with hope and patience, a man uses multiple rods on the quiet waters of Dal Lake. KO Photo Abid Bhat

SILK KASH-Quarterly Journal 2026 Unveiled

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg along with Director Sericulture J&K, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat today unveiled the Quarterly Journal 2026 of the Sericulture Development Department, J&K in the presence of senior officers & officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the Div Com highlighted that the Sericulture sector being a viable component of the region's economy, provides livelihood to a sizable population across the Union Territory of J&K.

He lauded the department's efforts in adopting a multipronged approach to disseminate awareness about various schemes, facilities, and activities aimed at harnessing the full potential of the sector.

The Div Com further commended the initiative of publishing the quarterly journal for the first time. He emphasized that silkworm rearing is a cost-effective activity with high returns and stressed the need for an aggressive publicity campaign to educate people about its benefits by utilizing every available medium.

He congratulated the Director Sericulture J&K for the successful publication of the journal and expressed hope that this initiative will significantly contribute to improving the economic conditions of people in the region.

Addressing the gathering, the Director stated that the quarterly journal, being launched for the first time will henceforth be a regular feature.

Three Held for Gambling in City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Police have arrested three persons for allegedly indulging in gambling activities in the Habba Kadal area of Srinagar, officials said on Monday.

A police official said that a team from Police Station Shaheed Gunj conducted a raid late Sunday night and apprehended the accused while they were engaged in gambling.

The arrested persons were identified as Amir

Aslam Sheikh of Pathan Mohalla, Hazratbal; Umar Zahoor Bhat of Chesti Kocha, Sona Masjid, Habba Kadal; and Amir Rashid Bhat of Pathan Mohalla, Hazratbal.

During the operation, police recovered playing cards and cash amounting to about Rs 7,000 from their possession.

A case under Section 13 of the Gambling Act has been registered at Police Station Shaheed Gunj and further investigation is underway, he added.

Fast-Track Court Convicts Man in Minor Girl Sexual Assault Case

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police have secured a 14-year conviction in a case registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, marking a significant outcome in a case involving the kidnapping and sexual assault of a minor girl.

The conviction pertains to FIR No. 24/2021 registered at Police Station M R Gunj, Srinagar, under Sections 363 and 376 of the IPC read with Section 4 of the POCSO Act. The case relates to the abduction and sexual assault of a 17-year-old girl, which was reported on April 11, 2021.

Officials said that following the registration of the case, the police acted swiftly

The police acted swiftly and carried out a comprehensive investigation. The victim was safely recovered, statements of witnesses were recorded, and all required medical and forensic examinations were conducted strictly in accordance with legal procedures.

and carried out a comprehensive investigation. The victim was safely recovered,

statements of witnesses were recorded, and all required medical and forensic examinations were conducted strictly in accordance with legal procedures.

After completion of the investigation, a charge sheet was filed before the Fast Track Court designated for POCSO cases in Srinagar. Following a detailed trial, the court found the accused guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

On December 30, 2025, the court sentenced the accused to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of 15,000.

According to KNT, Police officials said the conviction reflects the importance of timely investigation, evidence-based prosecution, and coordinated legal action in cases involving crimes against minors.

Special-Needs Students of Abhinandan Home Deliver 100% Result

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Students of Abhinandan Home, Solina Srinagar, run under the Department of Social Welfare, Kashmir, have delivered an encouraging performance in the Class 11 Annual Examination 2025, proving once again that physical or intellectual challenges are no barrier to academic excellence when given the right support.

As per KNO, all appearing students, classified as CWNS (Children With Special Needs), passed the examination, with a large number securing distinctions and first divisions, reflecting the sustained efforts of both students and teachers at the institution.

Principal Mudasar Ahmad attributed the success to collective dedication and perseverance. "These results are a reflection of

the tireless hard work put in by our students and teachers. Despite challenges, our children showed determination, discipline and confidence. We are proud of each one of them," he said.

He said 17 students appeared in the examination, and among them, 14 secured distinction. The result, the Principal said, was 100 per cent.

Those who secured distinction include Muntaha Muneer - 449, Sahil Mehraj - 435, Sadiya Parveez - 430, Subee Ashraf - 416, Nayilah Jaan - 415, Mehak Jaan - 410, Sheikh Adnan Mehraj 409, Mohammad Sameer - 394, Abdul Wajid Sheikh - 391, Salim Khan - 386, Ahsanullah - 384, Suhaib Amin - 380, Simran Shafi (375), Ateeb Bashir - 374, Usman Bashir - 366, Ulfat Jaan - 351 and Mehvish Khazir - 338.

While celebrating their success, students raised a collective demand for better educational infrastructure for the specially-abled persons.

GHSS Zadibal Logs 94 Percent Result in Class 11th Board Exams

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a resounding affirmation of academic rigor and institutional excellence, the Government Girls Higher Secondary School Zadibal has recorded a commendable 94 percent pass percentage in the Class 11th board examinations.

This achievement of GHSS Zadibal reflects the profound commitment of students, faculty and the broader school community to fostering holistic educational outcomes.

According to the statement issued Kashmir Observer, a total of 396 students appeared for the examination across the Humanities, Science and Commerce streams, with 373 students successfully qualifying the exams.

This robust performance underscores the efficacy of the school's comprehensive preparation strategies, including targeted remedial classes, peer mentoring and technology-integrated learning modules tailored to diverse learner needs.

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HIGHWAY STATUS
Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
Mughal Road - (Closed)
Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)

PRAYERS	
FAJR	6: 03
ZUHR	12:44
ASR	4: 22
Magrib	6:04
ISHA	7: 26

HIJRI CALENDAR
14- Shaban
1447

This Day In History

- 1377- Mass execution of population (between 2,500 and 5,000) of Cesena, Italy, by Breton troops of Giovanni Acuto under the command of Robert, Cardinal of Geneva, acting as the legate of Pope Gregory XI
- 1451- Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror inherits the throne of the Ottoman Empire
- 1488 - Bartolomeu Dias discovers Mosselbaai (Angra dos Vaqueros)
- 1509 - The Battle of Diu, naval battle at port of Diu, India between Portugal and the Ottoman Empire, establishes Portuguese trading control
- 1783 - Spain recognizes US independence
- 1807 - A British military force, under Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Auchmuty captures the city of Montevideo in the Battle of Montevideo, then part of the Spanish Empire now capital of Uruguay (Napoleonic Wars)
- 1815 - World's first commercial cheese factory established, in Switzerland.
- 1830 - The sovereignty of Greece confirmed in a London Protocol
- 1834 - Wake Forest University is established in North Carolina
- 1860 - Thomas Clemson takes office as 1st US superintendent of agriculture
- 1865 - Hampton Roads Peace Conference, Lincoln & Stephens reach an impasse
- 1867 - Prince Mutsuhito, 14, becomes Emperor Meiji of Japan (1867-1912)
- 1870 - US state of Iowa ratifies the 15th Amendment of the United States Constitution allowing suffrage for all races & colour
- 1876 - Albert Spalding with \$800 starts sporting goods co, manufacturing 1st official baseball,
- 1915 - Turkish & German army reach Suez Canal
- 1924 - Switzerland claims the inaugural Olympic bobsleigh gold medal at the Chamonix Games, ahead of Great Britain and Belgium
- 1928 - Paleontologist Davidson Black reports his findings on the ancient human fossils found at Zhoukoudian, China in the journal Nature and declares them to be a new species he names "Sinanthropus pekinensis"; (now known "Homo erectus")
- 1944 - World War II: United States troops capture the Marshall Islands.
- 1945 - Almost 1,000 Flying Fortresses drop 3,000 tons of bombs on Berlin
- 1962 - US President John F. Kennedy bans all trade with Cuba except for food & drugs
- 1965 - Orbiting Solar Observatory 2 launches into Earth orbit (552/636 km)
- 1971 - OPEC mandates "total embargo" against any company that rejects 55 percent tax rate

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL AND HOSPITALS DIVISION SRINAGAR
(Tele-fax No: 019-2496089, e-mail id: xenmhcdk@yahoo.in)

Subject :- AMC of 5.0 MVA Automatic Voltage Regulator AVR installed at Govt. Superspeciality Hospital Srinagar

Ref : This office NIT No: M&HDS/TS /2025-26/129/e-tendering Dated: 03.01.2026.

EXTENSION

In view of No response, the critical dates of above subject work tendered vide above referred e-NIT are extended as follows: -

S.No	Description	Date and Time
1.	Last Date of Bid Submission	07.02.2026 (13:00 hrs.)
2.	Date of Bid Opening	07.02.2026 (15:00 hrs.)

All other Terms and Conditions of the NIT shall remain the same.

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

No: M&HDS/TS/8356-59 DIPK-10549/25 Dated:02.02.2026

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (MECHANICAL), PW(R&B), CENTRAL KASHMIR ENGINEERING COMPLEX (PMGSY BUILDING), RAJBAGH SRINAGAR KASHMIR-190008

DATE CORRIGENDUM

Subject:- Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of HVAC System at New High Court Rakh-i-Gund Aksha Bemina.

Reference:- eNIT No:- R&B/MDCK/NIT/26 of 2025-26. Dated:- 28.01.2026 .

Due to typographical error on jk-tenders portal, kindly read bid opening date as 02-03-2026 (12:00 hrs) instead of 28-02-2026 (at 18:00 hrs) which is already mentioned in tender document. Rest, all other terms and conditions of the said e-NIT (with annexures) shall remain same.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Mechanical
Division Central Kashmir

DIPK-10542/25
dated: 02-02-2026

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KO VIEW

Relatives as Content

Family life in Kashmir has moved into the open. It now plays out on phone screens through short videos, comedy reels, and quick sketches shared every day.

Relatives who once shared rooms, meals, and worries now appear online as familiar comic figures. The advising aunt, the curious uncle, the all-knowing elder, the cousin with endless opinions show up again and again.

These characters collect views and likes within hours. People laugh, forward the clip, and scroll ahead. The thinking usually comes later, if it comes at all.

Making fun of relatives has become a popular way to express everyday frustration. Humour feels easy, safe, and current. Many see these clips as harmless fun.

Still, the trend reveals something deeper about how social life in Kashmir is changing. When jokes circle the same people again and again, humour slowly turns into a comment on growing distance within families.

Relatives once stood at the heart of Kashmiri homes. Large joint families filled houses where four or five families lived together. These homes worked like informal schools. Children learned manners by watching elders. Adults learned cooperation through daily living. Guidance came through example rather than lectures.

When weddings, illness, money trouble, or grief arrived, solutions came from within the home. The household worked as a small version of society, preparing people for public life through private experience.

This system also eased the lives of working mothers. Childcare stayed within the family. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, and older cousins took part in nurturing new life. Trust grew naturally because care came from known hands.

Elderly parents lived among people who understood their habits and needs without long explanations. Homes felt crowded and noisy, though loneliness rarely found space.

Over the past two decades, life shifted direction. Smaller houses, changing work patterns, education outside the valley, and constant digital exposure redefined daily living.

Nuclear families became common, privacy gained importance, and personal choices gained room. Many welcomed the freedom to decide without constant attention.

Along with this change, the presence of relatives began to feel heavy for some. Advice started to sound intrusive, concern felt controlling, and emotional closeness created tension rather than comfort.

Social media offered an outlet for this discomfort. Comedy made criticism easier to digest. And jokes replaced confrontation.

Creators quickly learned that family content drew instant attention. Relatives turned into material overnight. Private habits became scripts. And everyday disagreements found a public stage.

What once stayed inside homes now travelled far beyond them.

Care inside households changed as well. Domestic help began filling roles once handled by family members. This shift happened fast and without much preparation.

Recent crimes involving domestic workers shocked many families and reopened dialogue about trust and safety. Schools and housing societies now speak about security with greater seriousness.

These worries connect closely to the decline of shared family living, where strangers rarely entered private spaces.

Joint families had their own pressures. Personal space remained limited. Young couples struggled to set boundaries. Women often carried heavy expectations along with household work. Men balanced responsibility and ambition inside crowded homes.

These realities explain why smaller families appealed to those seeking freedom and independence.

The current online culture, though, risks reducing a complex transition to a simple joke.

Constant ridicule erases memory. Children raised on these clips may grow up seeing relatives as burdens rather than support. Repeated laughter can slowly create distance, and distance can lead to isolation.

Kashmir does not need to choose between tradition and modern life. Both can exist together.

Privacy helps families function better, and independence allows growth.

At the same time, complete withdrawal weakens emotional ties. Elderly parents face solitude. Children lose shared care. Homes miss the warmth of many voices. Emotional health suffers when families close in on themselves.

Large joint families may no longer fit today's world. Their values still matter.

Shared responsibility, regular connection, and mutual respect can survive even when families live apart.

Relatives can remain part of private life without taking control. Support can exist without constant oversight. Boundaries can live alongside belonging.

The trend of roasting relatives holds up a mirror to Kashmir. It reflects freedom, frustration, humour, and loss all at once.

How society responds to that reflection will shape the future of its homes.

Keeping the spirit of family alive, while adjusting to new ways of living, may decide how strong Kashmiri families remain in the years ahead.

Kashmir's Budget Reality

Analysis of the latest Union Budget makes clear that Jammu and Kashmir still leans on Delhi to fund most of its expenses.

Irshad Mushtaq

The 2026 Union Budget keeps public services and projects moving in Jammu and Kashmir, while highlighting a long-standing imbalance between spending and local income.

The Budget for 2026-27 allocates 43,290 crore to the region, deciding how easily the government can run schools, hospitals, offices and public projects through the year.

Most of this, about 42,650 crore, comes as central assistance to bridge the gap between planned spending and locally raised revenue. A smaller share is earmarked for disaster relief and other special needs.

The scale of this support becomes clear alongside the 2025-26 full Jammu and Kashmir Budget.

Total planned spending reaches 1,06,641 crore, while local income from taxes and other sources amounts to only 31,905 crore.

The remaining funds come through transfers from Delhi, estimated at 58,600 crore, and fresh borrowing, which pushes the fiscal deficit to roughly 16,107 crore.

Put simply, every 100 the government spends rests on local earnings of about 30, with the balance coming from central funds and loans.

Looking closer at income, local tax collections, including GST, excise and stamp duty, bring in around 20,900 crore, while non-tax revenue from power bills, fees and services adds nearly 11,000 crore.

Together, local income reaches roughly 31,900 crore, leaving Delhi as the single largest source of funding.

Spending patterns show how tightly the system runs.

Excluding debt repayment, total expenditure is 1,06,641 crore, with 79,800 crore going toward day-to-day operations like salaries, pensions, power subsidy, medicines and school meals. Capital expenditure, which covers roads, tunnels, schools, power projects and irrigation, accounts for about 26,800 crore.

Within revenue spending, salaries consume about 26 percent of receipts, pensions about 17 percent, and interest on past borrowing about 12 percent.

These three alone absorb over half of the government's income before any money reaches new development.

This pattern reflects a long-term trend rather than a new problem.

Jammu and Kashmir has relied heavily on central support for decades. Some years, more than half, and at times nearly 80 percent, of total revenue came from Delhi's tax share and grants.

Between 2005-06 and 2018-19, the region received about 10.5 percent of all central grants for Indian states, despite accounting for roughly 1 percent of the national population.

Today, about 65 percent of revenue still comes from the Centre, with 35 percent generated locally.

The structure of the local economy explains much of this dependence.

Apples, tourism, handicrafts, small trade and public jobs employ large numbers of people but produce limited taxable surplus compared with industrial hubs in other states.

Public costs remain high as well. Mountain terrain, long winters, border areas and scattered settlements make building and maintaining roads, schools and basic services more expensive.

Over time, regular funds from Delhi determined how budget shortfalls were handled.

Gaps became expected, and extra money often followed to close them. Some spending produced visible improvements, while delays, leakages and unfinished projects limited the income that stronger follow-through could have created.

This history explains why the 2026 Budget points to continuity rather than change.

Delhi's contribution continues to support salaries, pensions, hospitals, schools and large projects like

KASHMIR BUDGET 2026



FROM DELHI
₹43,290 crore

HOW IT HELPS

- Fills J&K budget gap
- Pays salaries & pensions
- Builds roads, power, tunnels

J.K BUDGET GAP

Spend: ₹1,06,641 cr

Earn: ₹31,905 cr

Gap covered by Delhi + borrowing

WHO PAYS EACH ₹100?



KASHMIRI MUST

Earn more legally

Cut waste

Grow tourism & MSMEs



The 2026 Budget demonstrates Delhi funding much of Kashmir's present. The deeper test lies in building a future where most public spending rests on income earned at home. That shift, rather than the size of any single cheque, will mark true financial strength.

highways, tunnels, power lines and irrigation. Priority sectors, like tourism, horticulture, handicrafts and small enterprises, remain supported through both direct schemes and indirect measures, since they form the backbone of the regional economy.

The numbers tell a deeper story: a significant part of the Budget still relies on income earned outside the region.

Closing this gap over time rests on a few clear choices. The government must earn more through legal growth of the formal economy, spending must deliver tangible results, and public money must go into assets that generate income in the future.

Income growth works best when rules stay simple for small earners. Easier registration, digital payments and clear compliance paths can bring more tourism operators, traders and service providers into the tax system.

Better collection of power bills, property charges, parking fees and other user payments can lift revenue if done carefully. Technology can help detect large leakages, rather than putting pressure on small shops or taxi operators.

Spending choices matter just as much.

Support for families with limited means must remain central, while higher charges for those who can afford to pay help balance fairness with revenue.

Cleaner pension lists, tighter staffing control and wider use of online systems can slow the constant rise in salary and pension bills.

Programs that produce little year after year can be phased out in favour of efforts that generate jobs and income.

Long-term strength comes from investment that pays back.

Tourism benefits from cleaner lakefronts, winter-sports facilities, sanitation, parking and rope-ways, paired with modest user charges and stronger compliance by hotels and homestays.

Horticulture gains from cold storage, pack houses and processing units that keep value within the region. Handicrafts expand through design support, branding and online marketing.

Small industry and IT services grow through shared workspaces, reliable broadband and stable power. Energy projects and transport links generate lasting returns when completed fully with clear billing and tolls.

Today, about 35 percent of Jammu and Kashmir's revenue comes from within the region, while 65 percent comes from Delhi. A realistic goal over the next 10 to 15 years is to lift the local share to at least half.

Each Budget cycle should then show more firms and workers operating formally, major projects completed and earning, and a fiscal gap that slowly shrinks.

The 2026 Budget demonstrates Delhi funding much of Kashmir's present.

The deeper test lies in building a future where most public spending rests on income earned at home.

That shift, rather than the size of any single cheque, will mark true financial strength.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Letter to Editor

Kashmiri Children Need Thumb-Free Thrills After Dinner

Winter evenings in Kashmir used to begin the moment the last grain of rice disappeared from the plate.

We carried cups of kehwa to the carpet, formed a loose ring around the kangri, and waited for grandfather. He never asked if we were ready. He simply said, "The fox had already crossed the frozen canal when the wolf spotted him," and the room fell into a single pulse of attention.

Cousins stopped poking each other, aunts halted their chatter, and even the snow seemed to lean against the window to listen.

Stories arrived as living guests: Rantas combing her hair on the Pari Mahal ridge, Jin grumbling inside the walnut trunk, the Dal Lake mirror cracking into houseboats, the baker whose stolen sugar turned to salt before the dough even rose.

We swallowed every detail and spat

them back the next morning on the school bus, arguing over the colour of the fairy's scarf or the number of pearls the mermaid wore.

Bedtime was the premium show. We brushed our teeth with charcoal, burrowed under the razai, and listened to grandmother crack walnuts while releasing the princess who spoke to snowflakes.

When the tale ended, our eyes stayed open, so she added a second part: the princess lost her voice to a king who collected voices the way other kings collect coins.

The household ran on voices. Three brothers lived there with their wives, seven children, two grandparents, and an uncle who never married, all under the same pine roof.

Phones did not exist, television arrived only on special days, and the radio mostly spoke news.

To know why Pampore's saffron

fields glow at dawn, you turned to the oldest person in the room. The explanation came as a story, teaching you to share your last piece of bread.

Fast-forward to a recent snowy night. The room looked familiar, but the circle was gone. My nephew ate with his plate on one knee and a phone on the other, his eyes fixed on a cartoon wolf. Grandfather cleared his throat and began, "The real wolf waited on the ridge above Tangmarg." The boy did not hear him. The phone speaker drowned out every other sound. Outside, snow kept falling, silent and unread.

The shift was subtle: a colour TV, and a smartphone in a five-year-old's palm. Parents discovered peace with a single swipe. Elders became babysitters. Stories still exist, but imagination has become a spectator sport.

But the raw material remains. Snow still falls. Nights still stretch longer than

power cuts. Every elder still carries a hard drive of foxes, jinns, saffron princesses, and salt-stealing bakers. All we need is to switch off the router and ask, "Did you ever hear what happened to the boat that folded itself into paper?"

Voices will layer over voices, and the room will recover its old warmth.

Stories demand nothing but a closed screen and an open mouth. Kashmir still owns the longest winter nights.

Let us rent them back to the spoken word.

Thumb the red button, open your mouth, and the snow will start listening again.

Sincerely,

Farhad Ahmad Pir
pirfarhad123@gmail.com

Where Have Kashmir's Morning Birds Gone?

Courtyards, rooftops, and market lanes are strangely still. The sparrow's retreat marks a subtle but visible change in Kashmir's everyday ecology.

Ruvaid Wani

THE MORNING CHORUS MAY YET RETURN, IF WE RESTORE HABITATS, REDUCE CHEMICALS, and create inviting spaces for these small birds. Sparrows are threads of Kashmir itself, part of the soundscape, culture, and ecology that make this valley alive. Their return would mean that the familiar melody has come home.

I still remember the mornings in Srinagar's old city, when the air rang with the soft chatter of sparrows.

I would see them hopping over courtyard walls, threading between laundry lines, and picking at scattered grains near doorsteps.

Those tiny brown birds, *Passer domesticus*, once so ordinary that we hardly noticed them, are now almost gone.

Even in Anantnag's lively markets, their presence has become exceptional.

Local reports confirm sightings are rare, and the absence is felt like an emptiness in daily life.

The decline of sparrows is not confined to Kashmir. Around the world, their numbers are dropping sharply.

In Europe, populations have fallen by more than 60 percent. Research from Cornell Lab of Ornithology shows similar trends in North America, where even common flocks shrink under modern farming practices.

India mirrors these declines. Surveys by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research note losses of 80 percent in Andhra Pradesh, 70 to 80 percent along coastal regions, and around 20 percent in states such as Kerala and Rajasthan.

Causes range from habitat loss and food shortages to electromagnetic radiation from power lines affecting reproduction and chemical toxins from unleaded fuels weakening nestlings.

Kashmir's bird decline has its own unique dimensions. Ornithologists here report 80

percent drops in Doda and Kupwara, and nearly 90 percent in Jammu over recent decades.

Parvaiz Yousuf, who catalogued 677 bird species across the valley, traces part of the loss to changing architecture.

Traditional mud walls and thatched roofs offered eaves and tiny crevices perfect for nesting. Concrete buildings with sealed edges leave no such spaces.

Field surveys in Kupwara, including Hajaj Market and Girls Higher Secondary Road, found an average of just 5.33 sparrows per site, the



lowest in areas that once hosted thriving flocks.

Several pressures keep sparrows away from Kashmir's streets and courtyards.

Urban expansion has replaced thorny shrubs like beri, keekar, jand, and vann with unbroken concrete and paved paths.

Sprays of pesticides and herbicides wipe out the insects that chicks once depended on, while exotic crops and imported trees provide almost no food.

Cell towers now loom over rooftops, exposing eggs and fledglings

to unseen radiation. Invasive mynas take over the few remaining nesting sites, and water is scarce across paved neighbourhoods.

Modern homes leave no hidden corners or ledges for flocks that once thrived in every alley and courtyard.

Experts in Kashmir stress that small birds need as much attention as the region's larger wildlife.

State departments often focus on leopards and other big mammals, while sparrows and passerines go largely unnoticed.

Some local efforts, however, are sparking hope.

In Udhampur, Amrit Suryavanshi set up 150 nests as part of a "Save Birds Mission," taking inspiration from Mumbai programs that use simple earthen pots and wooden boxes to welcome sparrows back into neighbourhoods.

Bird lovers in the valley are urging simple but powerful steps: planting native trees, cutting down on chemicals, and supporting research to track sparrow recovery.

They say bringing these birds back will depend on reclaiming spaces for them. Nest boxes on ledges, small thickets preserved in backyards, and organic farming practices can make streets and courtyards inviting again.

Every returning sparrow signals more than a morning song. They are living markers of biodiversity, reflecting how healthy the valley's ecosystems remain.

Seeing one hop across a rooftop today feels remarkable, a vivid reminder that human life and wildlife can share the same narrow lanes and crowded markets.

The morning chorus may yet return, if we restore habitats, reduce chemicals, and create inviting spaces for these small birds.

Sparrows are threads of Kashmir itself, part of the soundscape, culture, and ecology that make this valley alive.

Their return would mean that the familiar melody has come home.

— The author is a freelance journalist from Anantnag reporting on ecology and culture.

Gulmarg Glory

Two golds and two silvers at the National Icestock Championship mark a milestone in Faheem Masood Shah's career and a turning point for winter sports in Kashmir.

Shaheen Ahangar

Faheem Masood Shah stood on the ice in Gulmarg this January, two gold medals and two silvers in hand, a warm smile on his face as snow fell around him.

Every shot he made at the 12th Senior National Icestock Championship bore the mark of years spent training on uneven rinks with limited resources.

Around him, teammates cheered, but his eyes were on the young athletes still on the rink, guiding their hands, adjusting their grips, showing them how it feels to hit the mark.

At 32, Faheem is India's leading name in IcestockSport.

He has represented the country in nearly 200 international matches across three continents. Medals from Europe, Asia, and the Middle East fill his collection.

But he speaks more about inspiring young players in Gulmarg than about his own victories. "They need to know this is possible," he says, showing a clip of a boy landing a perfect shot. "They need to see it."

His story begins in Batamaloo, Srinagar, racing homemade sleds and playing football on icy streets. Sports were always calling, but so was learning.

He earned degrees in Computer Engineering and Data Science, with a tech career waiting. The ice had other plans.

In 2014, during a snow rugby match, Faheem tried IcestockSport for the first time. Manfred Schafer, then head of the International Federation of IcestockSport, handed him a stick and asked him to aim. His first shot landed perfectly. "I didn't know the rules, but I knew how it felt," he recalls.

That moment changed everything. Training followed nonstop, as



AFTER HIS GULMARG GOLD THIS JANUARY, THE BATAMALOO BOY is now preparing for the European Championships and Olympic qualification while pushing for better rinks and coaching in Kashmir.

he practiced on rough ice, with borrowed gear and minimal coaching.

In 2015, he claimed gold in Team Game and silver in Individual Target at a local Gulmarg event. By 2018, he led India to ninth place at the World Championship in Austria, the nation's first major finish on the international stage.

A year later, a bronze at the China Cup made India Asia's top Team Game team. Germany in 2020 brought India its strongest global results yet.

Domestically, Faheem has set the standard at every national championship.

Rugby honed his reflexes, while his training in technology sharpened his strategy.

On the ice, his focus turns every move into a precise, calculated action. Coaches and teammates describe him as

someone who lifts the team, guiding younger players while holding himself to the highest standards.

Winter sports in Kashmir have many obstacles. Rinks are rare, gear is limited, and travel costs are high. Still, Faheem competes, wins, and guides young players.

After taking gold in Team Game and silver in Long Distance, Faheem stayed behind to help children with their shots. "This is yours if you are ready to work for it," he told one boy.

After his Gulmarg glory this January, the Batamaloo boy is now preparing for the European Championships and Olympic qualification while pushing for better rinks and coaching in Kashmir.

— The author is a Srinagar-based scribe.

Uri's Young Voices

A first-person report from Uri on the spaces changing how adolescence is lived.

Irfan Jaffer

I reached Bijhama with a clear sense of how growing up usually unfolds here.

In these villages of Uri, adolescence often passes between home, school, and daily duties, with little room for open dialogue.

Young people grow into adulthood carrying questions about emotions, health, and their future, while daily life offers few spaces meant for their voices.

Silence has shaped this stage of life for years, even when concerns have always been present.

The Adolescent Learning Programme has begun to change this experience in visible and deeply human ways.

Walking into one of the learning centres, I saw adolescents sitting together in ease, speaking openly, listening closely, and sharing stories from their own lives.

The space felt welcoming and grounded, built on trust rather than authority.

These centres feel like places where adolescents can arrive without fear and speak with honesty.

Living in remote rural areas brings challenges that touch every part of adolescence. Social isolation remains common. Exposure to new ideas remains limited. Responsibilities arrive early, while discussions around mental health, emotional well-being, personal safety, and hygiene often stay unspoken.

The programme tackles this challenge by giving adolescents spaces where they can talk openly about life, health, and feelings with each other.

Life skills sessions focus on communication, decision making, and problem solving through examples drawn from everyday village life.

Mental health discussions help young people understand emotions and stress

as lived experiences, while building confidence in seeking guidance.

Health and hygiene sessions support better understanding of bodies and daily practices, while gently addressing long held beliefs that affect well-being.

Many adolescents described these centres as the first places where speaking freely felt natural. Young people who once stayed silent now share opinions and concerns with growing clarity.

A sense of belonging has grown within these spaces, easing fear and social distance.



STORIES OF DEVELOPMENT OFTEN PASS OVER ADOLESCENT VOICES IN BIJHAMA. The Adolescent Learning Programme places those voices at the centre of change.

with greater understanding. This change stands on the work of the Human Welfare Voluntary Organization, whose role has shaped the programme from the start.

By establishing four Adolescent Learning Centres in Bijhama, the organisation committed to long term support for young people. Their work involved close engagement with families, parents, and community leaders, building trust step by step.

As understanding grew, the centres came to be seen as shared spaces that support the wider community alongside adolescents.

The impact already shows in daily interactions.

Adolescents speak with stronger confidence, commu-

nicate more clearly, and show better awareness of health and hygiene practices.

Families talk about visible changes in behaviour and attitude, recognising the value of spaces created specifically for young people.

Stories of development often pass over adolescent voices in Bijhama. The Adolescent Learning Programme places those voices at the centre of change.

When adolescents receive knowledge that speaks to their lives and guidance driven by care, growth follows naturally.

Through the work of the Human Welfare Voluntary Organization and the four learning centres now active in the area, young people here are learning to speak, learn, and imagine futures defined by support and understanding.

— The author has done M.A. Gender Studies and is working in Human Welfare Voluntary Organization as Community Lead.

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Iran President Orders Resumption Of Talks With US

Agencies

Tehran: Iran's president has directed officials to reopen negotiations with Washington over Tehran's nuclear program, signaling a potential diplomatic thaw after months of escalating military threats and regional tension.

President Masoud Pezeshkian has ordered the resumption of talks with the United States over the country's nuclear programme, according to Iranian state-linked media, in what appears to be the clearest sign yet that both sides are preparing to reengage diplomatically.

"President Pezeshkian has ordered the opening of talks with the United States," Iran's Fars news agency reported Monday, citing an unnamed government source. The outlet said discussions would focus on the nuclear issue but did not specify when negotiations might begin. The report was later carried by Press TV, Iran's international English-language broadcaster.

According to some reports, the Iranian and American delegations were expected to meet for talks within the next few days.

As in the previous rounds, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US President Donald Trump's senior envoy Steve Witkoff will lead the potential talks. Deputy foreign ministers Majid Takht-Ravanchi and Kazem Gharibabadi will accompany the top Iranian diplomat.

According to some sources, following Araghchi's trip to Turkey on Friday and Ankara's efforts to host Tehran-Washington



talks, negotiations might be held in Turkey, potentially involving Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

In addition to Turkey, Qatar and Egypt have also made diplomatic efforts to host the talks, as part of efforts to prevent the United States from launching a new act of aggression against Iran.

Iranian officials said Tehran was finalising a framework for negotiations, with messages being exchanged between the two countries through regional intermediaries. A foreign ministry spokesman said multiple elements of the diplomatic process had already been addressed.

"Several points have been addressed, and we are examining and finalising the details of each stage of the diplomatic process, which we hope to conclude in the coming days," he said, without elaborating on the substance of the discussions.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi struck an optimistic

tone on Sunday, saying he was "confident that we can achieve a deal" with Washington, despite deep mistrust between the two sides.

In an interview with CNN International, Abbas Araghchi said he is not concerned about war but about miscalculations driven by misinformation and outside efforts to push Washington into conflict.

Araghchi said Iran has lost trust in the US as a negotiating partner but that regional countries are acting as intermediaries to pass messages and help rebuild confidence.

"Unfortunately, we have lost our trust in the United States as a negotiating partner," he said. "We need to overcome this mistrust."

Araghchi described the current exchanges as "fruitful" and said they could prepare the ground for substantive talks.

He stressed that the focus should be on the "substance" rather than the format

of negotiations, downplaying whether contacts are direct or indirect.

Referring to US President Donald Trump's stated goal of preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, Araghchi said Tehran agrees with that objective.

"So I see the possibility of another talk if the US negotiation team follows what President Trump said," he said. "To come to a fair and equitable deal to ensure that there are no nuclear weapons."

"Of course, in return, we expect sanction lifting," he added. Araghchi dismissed expanding talks to include Iran's ballistic missile program or regional allied groups, saying negotiators should not pursue "impossible things."

On the prospect of war with the US, he said a conflict would be "a disaster for everybody". Because US military bases are spread across the region, he said, fighting would inevitably draw in multiple countries.

Araghchi said Iran had drawn lessons from its previous conflict with Israel and had tested its missile capabilities in real combat, improving its understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

"And I think we are now very well prepared. But again, being prepared doesn't mean that we want war," he said. "We want to prevent a war."

The renewed diplomatic push comes amid heightened regional tensions and increased US military deployments, raising the stakes for talks that both sides say could determine whether confrontation or compromise defines the next phase of US-Iran relations.

Wangchuk Tried To Instigate Gen Z For Protests: Centre To SC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Centre and the Union Territory of Ladakh administration told the Supreme Court on Monday that jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk tried to instigate Gen Z for protests like in Nepal and Bangladesh.

A bench of Justices Arvind Kumar and P V Varale was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that Wangchuk even referred to 'Arab Springs' like agitation which has led to the overthrow of multiple governments in countries of the Arab world.

"He carefully crafted his speech to instigate Gen Z and asked for agitations like in Nepal and Bangladesh and used speeches of Mahatma Gandhi to cover the real intention," Mehta said.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by Gitanjali J Angmo, the wife of jailed climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, against his detention under the stringent National Security Act (NSA).

The NSA empowers the Centre and states to detain individuals to prevent them from acting in a manner "prejudicial to the defence of India". The maximum detention period is 12 months, though it can be revoked earlier.

Mehta said Wangchuk referred to the central government as "them" and separated people of Ladakh as "us" and called for "plebiscite" and "referendum", the calls which were made once in Jammu and Kashmir.

"There is no them or us but we are all Indians. Ladakh is a place which shares borders with two countries -- China and Pakistan... The area is very

fragile.

"The speeches made by him have to be taken into account in totality. He was misleading young people and carefully using the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi to cover it. Gandhi ji never instigated people against their own government," Mehta said, adding that Ladakh is important for the supply chain for the security forces guarding the borders.

He contended that the district magistrate had to pass the order for his preventive detention after going through the relevant materials placed before him and the videos of his speech.

"It took four hours for the order of preventive detention to get executed as after the district magistrate passed the order, a DIG rank officer went to him and explained everything and showed him videos of his speeches. Grounds of detention was explained to him," Mehta informed the bench.

Countering the argument of Wangchuk's wife made through senior advocate Kapil Sibal, Mehta said that the district magistrate has not relied upon any "borrowed material" for passing the detention order.

"This argument of 'borrowed material' itself suffers from inherent fallacy as the district magistrate does not need to go to each and every place where he made the speech and hear it firsthand. Some officials who heard the speech and made videos of it placed before the district magistrate and based on such relevant materials, an order was passed," the solicitor general contended.

The arguments remained inconclusive and would continue on Tuesday.

On January 29, Wangchuk, who is under detention in the Jodhpur Central Jail, denied allegations that he made a statement to overthrow the government like the 'Arab Spring', emphasising that he has the democratic right to criticise and protest.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal submitted that police have relied on "borrowed material" and selective videos to mislead the detaining authority.

Angmo claims the detention is illegal and an arbitrary exercise violating his fundamental rights.

Wangchuk was detained under the NSA on September 26 last year, two days after violent protests demanding statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh left four people dead and 90 injured in the Union Territory.

The government accused him of inciting the violence. According to the amended plea, the detention order is founded upon "stale FIRs, vague imputations and speculative assertions, lacks any live or proximate connection to the purported grounds of detention and is thus, devoid of any legal or factual justification".

"Such arbitrary exercise of preventive powers amounts to gross abuse of authority, striking at the core of constitutional liberties and due process, rendering the detention order liable to be vitiated by this court," it alleged.

The plea said it is wholly "preposterous" that Wangchuk would suddenly be targeted after more than three decades of being recognised at the state, national and international levels for his contributions to grassroots education, innovation and environmental conservation in Ladakh and across India.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Budget Session

responsibility.

Economic Growth and Fiscal Performance
Highlighting economic performance, the Lieutenant Governor said Jammu and Kashmir recorded an annual nominal growth rate of around 11 percent in 2024-25, reflecting positive outcomes of sustained policy reforms, enhanced infrastructure development and proactive investment facilitation.

He said the Union Territory has emerged as one of the fastest-growing UTs in the country, with GST revenue collections increasing from Rs 8,064 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 8,586 crore in 2024-25. He added that power tariff revenue registered a growth of 16 percent during the same period.

Sinha said the government remains committed to consolidating this growth trajectory through strengthened fiscal discipline and creation of diversified and sustainable employment opportunities, with particular emphasis on youth and women.

Sinha said the Special Assistance to States for Capital Infusion (SASCI), which provides interest-free loans for capital investments, has been extended to J&K from the current financial year.

He said Rs 1,431 crore has been sanctioned under SASCI for 222 projects, along with Rs 210 crore as matching share for 12 centrally-sponsored schemes.

"The first instalment of Rs 1,083 crore, accounting for 66 per cent of the sanctioned amount, has already been received," he said.

'82 Crore Digital Transactions In A Year'

Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir recorded 82 crore digital transactions in the past year, reflecting significant progress in digital governance and citizen-centric service delivery.

He said over 1,500 public services have been made available online, with 391 services integrated with the auto-appeal system to ensure time-bound delivery. As many as 128 services have also been linked with DigiLocker, enabling easier access to official documents.

Sinha said complete Aadhaar seeding of welfare beneficiaries has enabled seamless Direct Benefit Transfer, adding that around Rs 9,000 crore has been credited directly to the accounts of nearly 80 lakh beneficiaries through 77 DBT-based schemes during the current financial year.

He added that the government is formulating a comprehensive Artificial Intelligence strategy to enhance efficiency and innovation across sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, mobility and law enforcement.

'Free Ration Provided To Over 16 Lakh Households'

On social welfare, Sinha said ration support under the National Food Security Act is being provided to 25 lakh families, while 16.62 lakh households are receiving free ration under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

He said financial assistance is being extended to over 10 lakh beneficiaries under social security schemes, with enhanced monthly pensions ranging from Rs 1,250 to Rs 2,000 depending on age categories. Eligibility conditions under the Marriage Assistance Scheme have also been rationalised to expand coverage.

Highlighting housing and rehabilitation, the LG said 3.21 lakh houses have been constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin, with land being provided to landless beneficiaries. Families who lost residential land due to

natural calamities are being provided five marlas of land, he added.

Agriculture and Allied Sectors

On agriculture and allied sectors, Sinha said milk production has reached 28.75 lakh metric tonnes, while mutton and wool production have recorded significant growth.

He said crop diversification, strengthening of the seed ecosystem, expansion of oilseed cultivation and honey production have boosted farmers' incomes.

Power Losses

buildings and households under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana is progressing, with over 6,700 government buildings and more than 16,800 households already solarised.

'19 New National Highway Projects Sanctioned'

The LG described railway connectivity to Kashmir as a historic milestone, saying it has opened new avenues for trade, tourism and economic growth. He said a full-fledged railway division has been sanctioned for Jammu and Kashmir, and expansion and modernisation of the Jammu Tawi railway station is underway.

On infrastructure, the LG said the road sector has witnessed unprecedented investment of Rs 61,528 crore, covering expressways, national highways, ring roads and tunnels.

He said the Sonamarg Tunnel has been completed, while eight other tunnels, including the strategic Zojila Tunnel, are at advanced stages of completion. The Narbal-Shopian-Surankote road has been declared a National Highway to strengthen all-weather connectivity across the Pir Panjal region. He added that 19 new National Highway projects worth Rs 10,637 crore have been sanctioned for 2025-26.

'1.78 Crore Tourist

including the Pahalgam attack, Operation Sindoore, and last year's floods.

Sinha noted that tourism has been accorded industry status to attract investment and generate employment in the region. He highlighted the opening of the first-ever Chrysanthemum Garden, Bagh-e-Gul-e Dawood, for tourists in October 2025, which aims to promote Kashmir as a year-round destination.

"With more than 50 vibrant varieties, the garden is a strategic cornerstone in our mission to transition Kashmir into a year-round destination. Just as the tulip garden defines our spring, Bagh-e-Gul-e Dawood is set to become the definitive icon of autumn and will attract tourists during the lean season," he said.

Sinha further shared that the government has undertaken confidence-building measures, improved tourist facilitation and strengthened coordination with stakeholders to boost the sector. "Special focus has been laid on reviving pilgrim tourism in Jammu, adventure tourism in Kashmir and eco-tourism in tribal and border areas to ensure balanced regional growth," he added.

He noted that the government is planning to launch a significant project for the sustainable development of emerging tourist destinations through public and private sector investments to expand the tourism footprint across the Union Territory.

Over 7,600

required.

He said employment generation and youth empowerment remain central to the government's development vision, noting that 7,650 government posts were filled in 2025 through transparent and merit-based recruitment, while the recruitment process for 23,800 additional posts is underway. He added that 910 compassionate appointments were made, including 464 to the next of kin of terror-affected families.

Highlighting Mission YUVA, the LG said the initiative aims to establish 1.35 lakh entrepreneurial units and generate employment opportunities for 4.5 lakh youth. He said more than 1.51 lakh youth have registered under the programme, with over 61,900 applying under credit-linked schemes and more than 12,000 cases sanctioned, involving loans exceeding Rs 800 crore.

Industry, Startups and Livelihoods
On industrial growth, the LG said 2,227 industrial units with investments worth Rs 15,940 crore have commenced production since 2020, generating employment for over 73,800 people. Another 1,028 units with proposed investments of Rs 27,613 crore are under implementation.

He said 1,316 startups, including 471 women-led enterprises, have been registered under the Startup India initiative, while 6,050 self-employment units have been established under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme. Jammu and Kashmir has secured the fifth rank nationally under the Business Reform Action Plan, he added.

The LG said the handloom and handicrafts sector continues to provide livelihood to nearly 4.45 lakh people, with 18 handicraft products receiving Geographical Indication tagging and 17 more under registration.

Nearly Half Of

an average of 7.7 traumatic experiences.

Para pointed to patient loads at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) Srinagar, which receives between 300 and 400 patients daily. He noted that the institute recorded 2.03 lakh outpatient department cases in 2024 alone.

"Yet today's J&K vision document shows zero empathy," Para wrote, arguing that governance in the region continues to prioritise law and order over humanitarian concerns.

He said Jammu and Kashmir should not be viewed solely through a security framework and described the situation as a humanitarian crisis that requires urgent attention to healing and reconciliation. Para urged the government to redirect its governance focus and address mental health as a core policy priority, tagging Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in his post.

The remarks come amid Para's move to introduce a private member Bill in the upcoming Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly. The Pulwama legislator has submitted a notice seeking to table the "Jammu and Kashmir Reconciliation, Trauma Healing and Dignity Bill, 2026."

According to the notice submitted to the Assembly Secretariat, the proposed legislation aims to establish a statutory framework for trauma healing, psychosocial rehabilitation, and restorative dialogue through existing public health institutions, in alignment with the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

The Bill states that decades of violence,

armed conflict, terrorism, and political instability have resulted in widespread psychological trauma, displacement, grief, and erosion of social trust in Jammu and Kashmir. While noting that incidents of violence have declined since 2019, it argues that humane and forward-looking measures are necessary to consolidate peace.

CM To Present

will conclude on April 4 and will be held in three phases, with the first phase before the commencement of Ramzan and the remaining sittings after Eid-ul-Fitr in March and April. Ramzan is expected to begin on February 18 or 19, subject to moon sighting.

February will have 18 working days of Assembly business, during which the chief minister will also table the Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for the financial year 2025-26 on February 6. March and April will have five and four working days, respectively.

Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather appealed to members to ensure smooth conduct of proceedings, stating that all necessary preparations have been completed and that the House will function with double sittings.

Opposition parties, including the BJP, PDP and Congress, are expected to raise issues related to poll promises and implementation of last year's budget commitments. The session is also likely to witness sharp exchanges over issues such as regularisation of daily wagers, demolition drives and allegations of discrimination. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will present the Jammu and Kashmir budget for the financial year 2026-27 in the Legislative Assembly on February 6, as the 27-day Budget session of the House began on Monday.

The session, spread over a three-month period with double sittings, commenced with an address by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who described the Budget session as an important opportunity to reflect on the Union Territory's journey and review achievements.

This will be the second budget of the Omar Abdullah-led National Conference government after it assumed office on October 16, 2024, marking the end of nearly six years of central rule in the Union Territory.

According to the schedule, the Budget session will conclude on April 4 and will be held in three phases, with the first phase before the commencement of Ramzan and the remaining sittings after Eid-ul-Fitr in March and April. Ramzan is expected to begin on February 18 or 19, subject to moon sighting.

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Assembly Adjourned

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, followed by an obituary reference by the Speaker on the demise of former MLA Ghulam Mohammad Khan (82) of Baramulla and former MLC Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad Lone (100) of Budgam.

Rather paid rich tributes to the two leaders, who died in November and December last year. The members then observed a two-minute silence before the House was adjourned for the day.

Departing from past practice, only Rather spoke on the obituary reference.

He said the Business Advisory Committee had decided to adopt the parliamentary procedure on obituary references, implementing a suggestion made by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the last session.

"In Parliament, when a former Member of Parliament passes away, only the Speaker presents the obituary reference and no other member participates in the discussion. However, if a sitting member passes away, the entire House is given time to speak and the House is adjourned. This is the established parliamentary practice," he said.

Speaker Announces Panel Of Chairmen
Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today named three legislators as Panel of Chairmen for the Budget Session of Legislative Assembly commenced today.

He nominated MLA Eidgah Mubarak Gul, MLA Samba Surjeet Singh Slathia and MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat.

The Panel of Chairmen will preside over the House proceedings in absence of the Speaker.

Alliance Strains

lone Rajya Sabha seat to Congress in 2015. According to sources, NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah reminded him that NC had offered all seats in the 2024 Assembly polls to Congress in Jammu but it failed to win any.

The relations between NC and Congress turned bitter last year after the former refused to offer the latter a "safe" seat in Rajya Sabha. The Congress refused to contest the unsafe seat offered to it by NC. Repeated attempts to seek comments of Bhat turned futile as he didn't respond to repeated calls from this reporter. (KNO)

JKBOSE Declares

BOSE in a notification said that the decision was taken upon the recommendations received from the DSEK and DSEJ and pleas received from other stakeholders regarding reduction in syllabus due to delayed commencement of academic session this year coupled with disruptions in academic calendar due to heat wave, torrential rains, cloudbursts and floods.

"As approved by the competent authority, it is notified that the prospective eligible students appearing in class 10th, 11th and 12th in the ensuing annual regular, 2025 examination in Kashmir Division and winter zone areas of Jammu Division including UT of Ladakh, shall attempt 85 percent marks which will correspond to 100 percent marks, availing thus 15 percent relaxation in syllabus," reads the notification.

Pertinently, on January-14, JKBOSE declared results of both 10th and 12th standard on the same day with at least 84 percent qualifying the exam of 12th standard and 85 percent in 10th standard respectively.

Nation's True Identity Emerges from Thinking, Conduct of its Citizens: LG Sinha

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The true measure of a developed society and a developed nation goes far beyond infrastructure, modern technology, or economic growth alone, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday, emphasising that genuine progress is reflected in the strength of people's character, the firmness of social values, and the unity that binds the social fabric together.

He said that the nation's true identity emerges from the thinking, conduct, and mutual trust of its citizens and it is the youth who create this wealth of thought and conduct.

"At the heart of a developed nation stands youth power. Young people constitute the most energetic, creative, and transformative force of any country. Youth are the drivers of change," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He was addressing the NCC cadets of NCC Directorate, Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh, who returned from New Delhi after attending the Republic Day Camp.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the contribution of National Cadets Corps (NCC) in nurturing youth, promoting self-less service and building a developed society and the nation.

He stated that the NCC has inspired generations of youth with



the understanding that national interest stands above personal gain, and that working together for society's welfare represents true leadership.

"Since 1948, the NCC has provided the country's youth with a platform where young people from diverse backgrounds unite with a shared purpose. Through camps, training, cultural programs, and social campaigns, the NCC has brought values like discipline, leadership, teamwork, and service into the lives of millions of young people. The NCC has inspired generations of youth with the understanding that national interest stands above personal gain, and that working together for society's welfare represents true leadership," the Lieutenant

Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that only when young people choose duty over convenience and prioritize society's welfare over their own interests can a developed society and nation truly take shape.

"When honesty, hard work, and the spirit of service become integral to young people's lives in society, development ceases to remain confined to statistics; it becomes connected to life values," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the NCC cadets to focus on self-development.

"Your self-development connects directly to the country's progress. When NCC cadets and young people in society advance

toward excellence in any field with newfound confidence, they not only secure their own future but also contribute to the nation's progress," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that the NCC cadets in Jammu Kashmir bear the significant responsibility of strengthening brotherhood.

"I want cadets of the Jammu Kashmir Ladakh NCC Directorate to eliminate walls of region, language, caste, and religion through their collective work.

The development is not limited to "I" but is truly connected to "we." In giving concrete form to this collective spirit, no other organization in India has contributed more than the NCC.

I want you to create feelings of respect and trust in every district's social fabric through national and international exposure, shared experiences, and common goals. Always remember that mutual brotherhood develops through cooperation, sensitivity, and collective responsibility. All NCC cadets must together create an atmosphere where unity is practiced daily and diversity is transformed into society's strength," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that, for contributing to different sectors of developed India, we need leadership founded

on ethics and social responsibility. He said, whether in IT, industry, education, armed forces, or culture, work must be done with accountability in all fields.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the Jammu Kashmir Ladakh NCC Directorate for incorporating drone technology into training, in line with today's global changes. "I am fully confident that such initiatives will become not merely the nation's future but its present strength," he further said.

The Lieutenant Governor also felicitated the Cadets with the Certificates of Excellence for their significant contributions to the success of the contingent. He complimented the Cadets and NCC officers for their excellent performance on Kartavya Path and at various other competitions. The Cadets also shared their experience at the Republic Day camp.

A total of 128 cadets of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh NCC Directorate had participated in this year's Republic Day celebration.

SUO Arundeeep Kour of 3 J&K Battalion NCC, Baramulla, was conferred with the prestigious Raksha Mantri Padak for her outstanding leadership and service during Op SINDOOR, while Lieutenant Rukana Kousar was honoured with the Chief of Army Staff Commendation for her dedication and devotion to duty.

Legislators Meet Javed Rana to Discuss Key Developmental Issues

JAMMU: Several legislators, including Qaiser Jamshed Lone, Ghulam Mohiuddin, Hasnain Masoodi, Peerzada Feroz Ahmad, R. S. Pathania and Showkat Ganai, called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, at the Civil Secretariat, here.

The meeting witnessed wide-ranging deliberations on critical developmental concerns, including augmentation of water supply schemes and timely execution of flood protection works across Jammu & Kashmir.

Matters relating to tribal welfare and forest management also featured prominently during the discussions.

The Minister appreciated the constructive inputs shared by the legislators and emphasized the importance of their active oversight in their respective constituencies. He underscored that continued supervision and cooperation from public representatives is vital to ensure effective implementation of welfare measures and developmental projects.

Rana reaffirmed the Omar Abdullah-led Government's commitment to address public needs with efficiency and transparency, while urging legislators to remain proactive in monitoring progress for the larger benefit of the people.

Shab-e-Barat to Be Observed with Religious Fervour at Jama Masjid

SRINAGAR: On the auspicious occasion of Shab-e-Barat, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has extended his heartfelt greetings to the Muslim Ummah, especially the people of Jammu & Kashmir. He stated that this blessed night is a moment for deep introspection, sincere repentance (Tawba), seeking forgiveness (Istighfar), and renewing one's spiritual bond with Almighty Allah. He urged people to dedicate this sacred night to prayers for peace, guidance, and well-being for all.

Meanwhile, Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar has informed that the sacred occasion will be observed with full devotion and traditional reverence at Jama Masjid Srinagar on the night of 15th Sha'ban 1447 AH, corresponding to Tuesday, 3rd February 2026, InshaAllah. After Maghrib prayers at 7:30 PM, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq will deliver a sermon highlighting the significance and virtues of Shab-e-Barat, which will be followed by a collective session of Tawba and Istighfar. The Isha prayer will be offered at 9:00 PM, InshaAllah.

BJP to Play Proactive Opposition Role in Assembly: Vikram Randhawa

JAMMU: Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Vikram Randhawa on Monday said that the establishment of a National Law University is not a contentious issue and can be set up in Jammu, while also leaving scope for a similar institution in Kashmir if the government shows intent.

Speaking to reporters ahead of the start of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly session, Randhawa said the issue should not be politicised and must be viewed in a broader developmental perspective. He said that if the government is serious about strengthening legal education infrastructure, it has the capacity to establish institutions in both regions.

"The National Law University is not an issue at all. It can be set up in Jammu and if the government is interested, it can also be set up in Kashmir," Randhawa said while responding to questions from the media.

The BJP MLA also asserted that his party would play a constructive role during the Assembly proceedings. He said the BJP would act as a positive and proactive opposition, raising public issues and holding the government accountable while ensuring smooth conduct of legislative business.

Randhawa said that opposition does not mean disruption and stressed that meaningful debate and issue-based interventions would remain the party's priority during the session.

According to KNT, the Assembly session is expected to witness discussions on key administrative, developmental, and political matters concerning Jammu and Kashmir, with opposition parties outlining their stance on governance and policy decisions. (Observer News Service)

Road Accident in Ganderbal Leaves Two Injured

SRINAGAR: Two persons were injured after a canter truck plunged into a deep gorge and struck a house near Ganivan Gund area of Ganderbal district on Monday late evening, officials said.

Officials told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that a canter truck bearing registration number JK05L-3499 was on its way to Srinagar from Kargi when the driver lost control, causing the vehicle to veer off the road and plunge into a gorge before hitting a nearby house.

Soon after the incident, teams of police and SOG rushed to the spot and launched a rescue operation. The injured occupants were evacuated from the vehicle and taken to the Primary Health Centre Ganivan for medical assistance.

However, locals alleged that the PHC was found locked at the time of the emergency. Due to the closure of the health facility, the injured were subsequently shifted in a local vehicle to Sub District Hospital Kangan for treatment.

Locals raised serious concerns over the functioning of PHC Ganivan, stating that the facility lacks adequate staff and infrastructure and routinely remains closed after 4 pm. They alleged that the health centre has become virtually useless, particularly during emergencies.

According to KNT, officials said the condition of the injured persons is being monitored at SDH Kangan. Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident. (Observer News Service)

Elderly Man Dies After Tree Falls on Him in Bandipora

BANDIPORA: An elderly man died after sustaining critical injuries when a tree fell on him at his residence in Bandipora district of north Kashmir, officials said.

According to hospital sources, the injured person was brought to SMHS Hospital Srinagar by his family members after being referred from District Hospital Bandipora. However, doctors at SMHS Hospital declared him brought dead.

As per the statement of the attendants, the incident occurred at the victim's residence during the cutting of trees, when a tree accidentally fell on him, causing grievous injuries.

The deceased has been identified as Abdul Rashid Khan, son of late Khani Zamaan Khan, resident of Shug Baba Sumal area of Bandipora. He was around 70 years of age.

According to KNT, officials said necessary medico-legal formalities were completed at the hospital. (Observer News Service)

Speaker Assures Adequate Time for All Members

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather on Monday sought members' support for the success of the Budget session, saying while democracy allows room for differences of opinion, all members must respect one another and avoid unnecessary confrontation.

He also assured members that they would be given adequate time during the 27-day-long Budget session, which will have two daily sittings in its first half till February 19.

Rather urged members to use the session to highlight and seek redressal of public issues from their respective constituencies.

"This House represents the hopes, aspirations and trust of the people who have chosen us and sent us here. Serving those people is not only a privilege but also a profound responsibility," the Speaker said

shortly after tabling the Lieutenant Governor's address in the House.

Describing the session as extremely valuable, Rather said there is undoubtedly room for differences of opinion in a democracy.

"However, these differences should be expressed in a dignified manner. We must respect one another and avoid getting entangled in unnecessary confrontations. We must remember that whatever we do here is being watched by the people outside...we must act with great caution. Even a small mistake will be noticed by those who have sent us here," the speaker said.

As the first part of the session concludes on February 19, the maximum budget-related work should be completed by then, he said, adding the Budget session will have two sittings, in accordance with the rules, which state that the House can sit until 5 pm.

Assuring sufficient opportunity to the members to speak in the House, he said while it may not be possible to accommodate everyone fully, but an attempt will be made to accommodate as many members as possible, because this is the one opportunity when you present the issues of your constituencies before the government and seek solutions.

"You will be given sufficient opportunity; how you utilise this time is up to you. But I want to say one thing clearly: people want solutions to their problems; they do not want disruptions. Disruptions are unacceptable in any form. Unfortunately, disruptions and interruptions sometimes occur, and people are not happy about it," he said.

Referring to himself, he said he has been a lawmaker since 1977 without any break and that noise and disorder cannot satisfy your constituents.

Union Budget 2026 Offers Relief to Patients: Dr Dharminder Nagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Commenting on the Union Budget 2026, Dr Dharminder Nagar, Co-Chair, FICCI Health and Services and MD, Paras Health said that "The Union Budget brings reassurance for patients and families at a time when healthcare costs are rising and lifestyle-related illnesses are becoming more common, especially in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities where access to specialised care remains limited. The focus on strengthening the biopharma ecosystem is particularly timely, as conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders often require long-term and advanced treatment. By encouraging domestic manufacturing of biologics and biosimilars, the Budget supports better availability and affordability of these therapies, enabling hospitals to deliver advanced care closer to patients' homes."

"Building on this, the Budget proposes exemption



from basic customs duty on 17 lifesaving drugs and medicines, including key cancer therapies, and adds seven rare diseases for exemption on personal imports of drugs, medicines, and specialised foods. This move will provide tangible financial relief to families managing serious and chronic illnesses, especially in smaller cities where treatment often involves travel and additional expenses. By reducing the cost burden, patients can access care more consistently without compromising on quality," he said.

Dr. Dharminder Nagar further said, "In parallel, the plan to expand the allied

health workforce over the coming years will strengthen hospitals' ability to provide comprehensive care. Improved access to trained professionals across diagnostics, critical care, and mental health services will help ensure consistent quality of care and better patient outcomes.

The proposal to develop regional medical tourism hubs in partnership with the private sector reflects a long-term vision for equitable healthcare development beyond metro cities. This initiative not only raises care standards but also broadens access to quality and affordable treatment for both domestic and international patients.

Together, these measures mark a significant step toward a healthcare system that is more accessible, affordable, and responsive to patient needs across regions, while providing meaningful relief to those battling cancer and rare diseases," he said.

KU Felicitates Padma Shri Awardee Prof Shafi Shauq



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The University of Kashmir (KU) on Monday organised a felicitation ceremony to honour its former Professor and eminent Kashmiri litterateur, Prof Shafi Shauq, who was recently conferred the prestigious Padma Shri by the Government of India on the eve of the 77th Republic Day in recognition of his outstanding contribution to education and literature especially for preservation and promotion of Kashmiri language.

The ceremony, held at the Main University campus, witnessed the presence of senior University functionaries and faculty members who gathered to celebrate the illustrious academic and literary journey of Prof Shauq, an alumnus of the University and one of its most distinguished faculty members.

The Padma Shri, one of the highest civilian honours

of the country, acknowledges his decades-long dedication to education and literature including preservation, promotion and enrichment of the Kashmiri language.

Vice-Chancellor, KU Prof Nilofer Khan, while presiding over the felicitation ceremony, remarked that Prof Shauq had embodied the spirit of interdisciplinary education much before it found articulation in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. "Prof. Shauq has made a great contribution to the promotion and enrichment of the Kashmiri language and literature. His academic work and teaching reflected the multidisciplinary spirit that the NEP 2020 talks about today, much before it formally came into place," she observed.

Congratulating the awardee, the Vice-Chancellor said the University takes immense pride in having produced such stalwarts who have brought laurels not only to the institution

and Jammu & Kashmir but to the nation at large.

She added that the honour felt like recognition of the University itself and reflected the collective efforts bearing fruit, be it in NIRF rankings or the recent A++ grade awarded by NAAC.

Prof Khan further expressed the University's keen interest in engaging Prof Shauq in some capacity as a mentor to guide students and scholars, particularly in the School of Arts, Culture and Languages.

In his remarks Prof Shafi Shauq expressed deep gratitude to the University administration, describing the University of Kashmir as a family that has always nurtured and acknowledged his hard work and dedication. "I never worked with the expectation of awards or recognition; I wrote because I loved to write," he said, adding that his passion for literature had always been his greatest motivation.

NGT Orders Pollution Probe Into Manasbal Lake

Tribunal says agencies must check water quality, trace sewage and waste flows into the lake that supplies drinking water to thousands in central and north Kashmir.

Syed Sammar Mehdi

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal has ordered a detailed inquiry into pollution in Manasbal Lake, directing the Central Pollution Control Board and the Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee to assess the lake's water quality and identify the sources of contamination.

The tribunal asked both agencies to submit a status report and details of action taken at least one week before the next hearing.

The case was filed by environmental and RTI activist Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat, who has raised concerns about pollution and encroachment in Manasbal Lake, a notified wetland in Ganderbal district.

The matter was heard on January 30, 2026, by the NGT's principal bench headed by Justice Prakash Srivastava, the chairperson, along with expert member Dr Senthil Vel.

Appearing for the petitioner, advocates Rahul Chowdhary and Shreepuna Dasgupta told the tribunal that large amounts of sewage and solid waste were

being dumped into the lake and its surrounding wetland areas. They said the waste was entering mainly through the Lar canal and nearby villages, causing severe pollution.

The lawyers also pointed out what they called a serious irony. The Jal Shakti Department's public health engineering wing, they said, draws water from the same polluted lake and supplies it for drinking to nearly 30,000 people in parts of Ganderbal and Bandipora districts.

After reviewing the petition and hearing the arguments, the bench not only directed the PCB and the J&K pollution panel to investigate but also issued notices to several government authorities.

These include the Jammu and Kashmir government through its chief secretary, the additional chief secretary of the Jal Shakti Department, the deputy commissioner of Ganderbal, the mission director of Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin J&K, the chief executive officer of the Wullar Manasbal Development Authority, the executive engineer

of IFC Ganderbal, and multiple block development officers in Ganderbal district.

According to the tribunal, these officials are responsible for rural sanitation in areas around the Lar canal, which is alleged to be a major source of pollution flowing into the lake.

In its order, the bench said: "The Respondent No. 2, CPCB, and Respondent No. 3, J&K PCC, are directed to ascertain the status of water quality of the wetland in question and also find out the sources of discharge of pollutants in this wetland and submit the status and action taken report at least one week before the next date of hearing." It also asked the other respondents to file their replies by affidavit within the same time frame.

The case is scheduled to come up again on April 22, 2026.

Reacting to the order, Dr Bhat said pollution in Manasbal Lake was a public health concern. "This lake is a drinking water source for several schemes in Ganderbal and Bandipora. Around 30,000 people are affected," he said.



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Fake Crown Army Exposed in Persian Bot War

Agencies

BANGALORE: A French investigation has peeled back the curtain on a Persian-language social media boom that looks less like a grassroots uprising and more like a factory line, with billions of interactions traced to networks of suspected fake accounts.

If raw online volume were proof of popularity, Iran's political debate would be the loudest conversation on Earth. Researchers say the surprise is how much of that noise appears to come from coordinated digital operations rather than ordinary users.

The information war surrounding Iran appears to be thriving long after last year's 12-day war between Iran and the US-Israel alliance, just not necessarily with human participants. Analysts monitoring Persian-language platforms say campaigns run from outside Iran are flooding feeds with automated posts, likes and hashtags on an industrial scale.

French newspaper Le Figaro reported on January 31 that the online "war" surrounding Iran has never paused. In a report titled "Fake accounts, 'likes' and the Shah of Iran: Israel's shadow digital war against the Islamic Republic", the paper said that while mili-



tary confrontation with Iran may have slowed, the battle on social media has never stopped.

"Israel is closely monitoring developments in Iran as the Islamic government appears weakened, under internal pressure and facing the threat of a possible American intervention. In June, the Jewish state did not hesitate to strike Iranian targets before entering a phase of strategic reflection. On the military front, the tempo has slowed. But on social media, the war has never stopped."

According to figures cited in the report, 4,765 accounts on platform X collectively produced 843 million posts promoting exiled royal figure Reza Pahlavi. Another 11,421 accounts generated 1.7 billion likes tied to the same messaging, repeatedly pushing the hashtag "KingRezaPahlavi" into trending territory.

For a language spoken by a relatively small share of the world's population, the engagement figures raised immediate red flags among investigators.

Experts told the newspaper the method relies on brute-force repetition: identical messages deployed in synchronised bursts until algorithms interpret the activity as public enthusiasm. Researchers described it as visibility engineered through volume.

"This accumulation of signals alone is enough to place certain content at the top of feeds, regardless of genuine user engagement," analysts said — meaning popularity can be simulated long before it is earned.

Jeff Goldberg, founder of digital research group Social Forensics, said the scale points to organised coordination rather than spontaneous activism. "The scale and complexity of

manipulations observed in the Persian-speaking space indicate the involvement of a state actor," he said.

Social Forensics found many of the accounts posting more than 100 messages per day — a pace more consistent with automation than human advocacy. Another 8,830 accounts repeatedly changed usernames, a pattern commonly associated with influence operations. At least 3,361 linked accounts have since been suspended by the platform.

The newspaper also cited findings from Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto describing dormant fake profiles created years earlier and activated during spikes in regional tension. Synchronised posting schedules and anonymous identities suggested centralised planning rather than organic support.

One visible marker of the network is the crown emoji used across related accounts. Researchers describe it as textbook astroturfing, a manufactured show of mass backing. Social Forensics estimates that more than 95 per cent of crown-emoji accounts are fake.

Analysts say the investigation highlights how modern political influence can be inflated at scale and how quickly digital crowds can dissolve once examined closely.

SC: Election Process Can't Be Stalled Over Individual Grievance

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Supreme Court on Monday said that election process cannot be lightly interdicted or stalled at the behest of an individual grievance.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said in respect of individual grievances, the ultimate and exclusive remedy lies by way of an election petition.

The bench delivered its verdict on an appeal challenging a July 2025 interim order of the Uttarakhand High Court which had directed the returning officer to allot a symbol and permit a man to participate in the election to the office of zila panchayat member.

The top court said the right to contest or question an election being statutory in nature, must be strictly construed and exercised in accordance with the statute governing the field.

"The high court must, therefore, eschew the grant of liberal interim reliefs in favour of individuals and instead remain mindful of the overarching public interest in ensuring the smooth and uninterrupted conduct of elections across the state," the bench said.

"The election process cannot be lightly interdicted or stalled at the behest of an individual grievance," the bench said, while setting aside the high court's interim order.



It noted the Uttarakhand State Election Commission had issued a revised notification resuming the panchayat elections in 12 districts and the man submitted his nomination for election to the post of zila panchayat member from a constituency in Pithoragarh district.

His candidature was cancelled after objection was raised alleging failure on his part to make the requisite disclosures.

Later, the man moved the high court aggrieved by cancellation of his candidature.

A single judge of the high court dismissed the plea observing that in view of the election process having already been set in motion, the petition was not liable to be entertained at that stage.

The man then preferred an intra-court appeal and a division bench of the high court stayed the operation of the judgment rendered by the single judge.

The division bench also directed the returning officer to allot a symbol to the man and to permit him to participate in the election.

The appellant, who was declared elected unopposed to the office of zila panchayat member, then moved the apex court challenging the high court's order.

In its verdict, the apex court noted that the single judge had assigned reasons, including that Article 243-O of the Constitution contains an express bar, stipulating that no election to any panchayat shall be called in question except by way of an election petition, to be governed by law enacted by the legislature of the concerned state.

"In our considered view, the division bench transgressed the limits of its jurisdiction in interfering with the electoral process, in disregard of the settled position of law. The election jurisprudence in this country has undergone a significant evolution," the

top court said.

It said with a view to maintaining a delicate balance between decisions rendered by statutory authorities and judicial intervention by way of judicial review, a stage was reached where Parliament considered it appropriate to accord constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj institutions.

The bench said Uttarakhand had enacted the Uttarakhand Panchayati Raj Act, 2016, and consequently, the bar envisaged under Article 243-O of the Constitution stands attracted.

"By virtue of the express constitutional embargo contained in Article 243-O of the Constitution of India, the high court is precluded from exercising jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution where a law enacted by the State Legislature provides for the remedy of an election petition to redress grievances arising during the course of an election," it said.




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