

2 More Indian LPG Ships Cross Hormuz Safely



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, Mar 14: Two Indian ships carrying LPG from the Gulf countries crossed the Strait of Hormuz early on Saturday morning, raising the number of Indian vessels safely passing through the war-hit, narrow shipping lane to three.

The remaining 22 ships on the west side of the strait are on standby as the Indian government engages with governments in the region for ensuring their safe passage.

LPG carriers Shivalik and Nanda Devi are now headed to Mundra and Kandla ports in Gujarat, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary in Ministry of Shipping, told a media briefing.

The vessels are carrying 92,700 tonnes of LPG, he said adding Shivalik is likely to reach Mundra on March 16 and Nanda Devi is likely to dock at Kandla

the next day.

Besides the safe passage being an important milestone for Indian diplomacy, the cargo they are carrying is considered critical as shipping constraints had impacted cooking gas LPG supplies.

India imports 60 per cent of its LPG needs, with 85-90 per cent of this being sourced from Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE who use the Strait of Hormuz as transit for shipping oil and gas to users. The strait has been effectively closed since the first week of March.

The two ships were among the 24 stranded on the west side of the strait since the war broke out in the region.

Besides, four others were stranded on the east side. One of them, an India-flagged oil tanker, Jag Prakash, carrying gasoline from Oman to Africa, crossed the war-hit strait on Friday.

Sinha said of | **More on P6**



A farmer walks through blooming almond trees in Pulwama, Kashmir. KO Photo by Abid Bhat

Wangchuk's Detention Revoked, Set Free After 6 Months

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was released from Jodhpur Central Jail on Saturday afternoon, nearly six months after his detention under the National Security Act (NSA), hours after the Centre revoked the order to facilitate dialogue in



Ladakh. The 59-year-old activist had been detained on September 26 last year | **More on P6**

As Eid Nears, Release Youth Held In Protests: CM

Welcoming the revocation of the National Security Act (NSA) against Ladakh activist Sonam Wangchuk, Jammu | **More on P6**

SIT Formed To Probe Assassination Bid On Dr Farooq

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Police have constituted a seven-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the recent assassination attempt on National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah in Jammu.

According to details, the SIT has been formed under

the supervision of the Deputy Inspector General of the Jammu-Samba-Kathua (JSK) Range and includes officers of various ranks, including a Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP).

An official order states that the team has been tasked with carrying out a comprehensive investigation into the incident and submitting its findings at the earliest. | **More on P6**

J&K Now Leads Trout Production Among India's Cold-Water States: LG

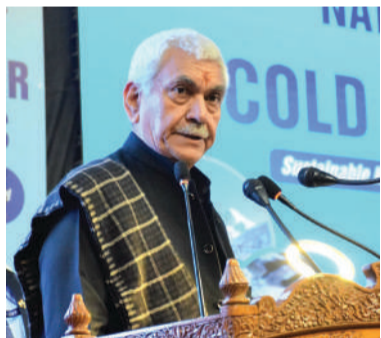
Addresses National Conference On Cold Water Fisheries At Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as the leading trout producer among India's cold-water states, highlighting a significant rise in fish production and infrastructure development in the sector over recent years.

Addressing the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries organised by the Department of Fisheries, Government of India in Srinagar, the Lieutenant Governor said the administration has undertaken focused initiatives to strengthen fisheries and support fish farmers across the Union Territory.

"Our strategic initiatives have



positioned J&K as the leader in trout production across all cold-water states. Under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), launched in 2022, Rs 233 crore was allocated for | **More on P6**

'Anantnag To Get Rs 100 Cr Aqua Park'

KO Web Desk

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh on Saturday announced a Rs 100 crore Integrated Aqua Park Project in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district aimed at strengthening aquaculture infrastructure and generating employment in the region. The announcement was made | **More on P6**

Natural Fish Stocks Must Remain Protected: CM

Observer News Service

Omar Abdullah on Saturday stressed the need to adopt improved scientific techniques, modern infrastructure and value addition to enhance cold-water fisheries production in Jammu

and Kashmir while ensuring environmental sustainability and livelihood security for fish farmers. Addressing a day-long National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre, the Chief Minister said that | **More on P6**

Only 1-2% Corruption Complaints Lead To FIRs: ACB Director

Says Most Trap Cases Involve Lower-rank Officials Due To Cash Transactions

Agencies

Srinagar: Only about 1-2 percent of corruption complaints received by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) eventually lead to the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) after detailed verification, Director Shakti Kumar Pathak said.

Speaking in an interview podcast, Pathak said the bureau receives a large number of complaints related to development works, administrative issues and alleged irregularities in government departments, but only a small fraction of them meet the legal threshold required for criminal investigation.

"Only about one to two per cent of complaints



ultimately result in FIR registration after verification," he said.

Rising Complaints Reflect Public Trust

The ACB Director said the increasing number of complaints should be seen as a positive sign, indicating that citizens are beginning to trust anti-corruption

institutions.

"Normally people approach us when they feel the situation has crossed the line. The increase in complaints actually shows that people believe action will be taken," he said.

He added that tackling corruption cannot be the responsibility of investigative agencies alone and requires active cooperation from the public.

"Corruption cannot be the responsibility of one agency alone. It is the duty of the public as well. Until people decide that they do not want to be involved in corruption, the problem will continue," he said.

Strict Verification Before Action

Pathak said the bureau follows a strict multi-layer verification process before initiating trap operations or registering cases to ensure complaints are genuine and not motivated.

He said a separate team conducts secret verification of both the complainant and the accused official before proceeding further.

"We verify the entire record of the complainant as well as the person against whom the complaint is made. Only when we are satisfied that the demand is genuine do we proceed with a trap," he said.

According to him, the team conducting the verification is different from the team | **More on P6**

MIRCHI WISHING EVERYONE **Ramzan Mubarak**

NOOR-E-RAMADAN

Co-Presented By **ARSH AUTO** Brought To You By **NORTH END**

Service to Smile

WHOEVER FASTS THE MONTH OF RAMADAN DUE TO FAITH AND SEEKING REWARD, HIS PREVIOUS SINS WILL BE FORGIVEN.

Powered By

Outdoor Partner

Food Partner

Print Partner



To place an advertisement
CALL +91-194 2502327

Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)
No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Public Works (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA**
Email: rb-awantipora@jk.gov.in

NO: T-1/EEA/11393-98 Dated: 14/03/2026

Corrigendum Notice

Subject:
1. Upgradation of Hari-Dadoo Road from main road Haripari Gam to Gujar Basti via Hapt Dankard including Amlar Hari Road.

Reference: -
1. This office e-NIT No. 203/EEA/RNB of 2025-26/11353-63 Dated 12-03-2026.

A. Please read N= Number of years prescribed for completion of the work in question as **3 years** instead of **1.5 years** in case of available bid capacity in SBD/NIT.
B. Please read Defective Liability Period as **5 years** from actual date of completion instead of **3 years** in SBD/NIT.
C. Please read intended completion date for the whole work as **3 years** instead of **1.5 years** in SBD/NIT.

All other terms & Conditions shall remain same as per above mentioned SBD/NIT.

Sd/-
Technical officer
DIPK-11853/25
dated: 14-03-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
**General Administration Department
Civil Secretariat, J&K**

Subject: Verification of Character & Antecedents.

NOTICE

Through the medium of this notice, Mr. Bilal Ahmad Parry S/o Sh. Mohamad Ashraf Parry and B/o Late Sh. Irfan Ahmad Parry (Ex-Cleaner Jal Shakti Department) R/o Hail Jageer Kreeri Pattan, District Baramulla is hereby informed to submit his e-mail ID, Phone Number and other relevant details in the Cabinet Section, General Administration Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu/Srinagar, in person, within a period of twenty one (21) days positively, for the purpose of filling up of e-verification roll to obtain his Character & Antecedents Report from the Criminal Investigation Department, J&K, failing which, he shall forfeit his right to appointment under SRO-43 of 1994.

(Signature) (Urvil Singh) JKAS
Under Secretary to the Government

No.: GAD-SRO/19/2026-09 (7726764)
DIPK-11912/25
Dated: 14.03.2026

Public Notice

I have passed/appeared in Secondary School Examination (Class- 10th) under Roll No. 251230 Session: Oct-Nov Year 2003 through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed against my name nad parentage as Wasim Ur Rahman S/o Ab Rahman Ganai instead of Wasim Ur Rehman S/O aB Rahman Ganale Now, I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education Sub Office Budgam, if any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Sub Office Magam within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained.

Name: Wasim Ur Rehman
Father's name: Ab Rahman Ganai
Mother's Name: Misra Beigam
DOB: 01-02-1989
Residence: Badran
Mobile no: 7006298869 **bmjg**


Public Notice

My name has been wrongly written in my JK Bank account details as Maryama Shabir whiel my correct name as per adhaar card is Miryama Shabir. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Branch Manger JK Branch Singhpora within seven dasy. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Miryama Shabir **bmjg**
D/o Shabir Ahmad

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER
MISSION VATSALYA, PULWAMA**
Department of Social Welfare
Washbug, Pulwama-192301 Ph. No.: 01933-240666 Email: dcpo.mvpulwama@jk.gov.in

Subject: Request for wide circulation of Photograph and details through Print, Electronic Media and other platforms for identification of an unidentified deaf and dumb child.



PRESS RELEASE

An unidentified deaf and non-verbal child is presently residing at Jivanmay Vishwas Sanstha, a Child Care Institution (CCI) located at Lawda, District Kurukshetra, Haryana. As per the information received, the child was found in an abandoned condition near the Taxi Stand at Ismailabad. Despite efforts made by the local police and concerned authorities to ascertain the identity of the child and trace his parents or guardians, no information regarding the child's identity or family has been obtained so far.

District Child Protection Officer
Mission Vatsalya, Pulwama

No.: DCPO/MV/PuL/2026/127-130
DIPK-11851/25
Date: 14-03-2026

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
SUB TRANSMISSION DIVISION-II, RAJBAGH, SRINAGAR**
Short-Term Tender Notice
eNIT No STD-II / 71 of 2025-26 Dated 14-03-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, e-Tender (In Two Cover System) is hereby invited from class-DEE Civil contractors/registered firms enlisted with PWD/CPWD/MES/Railways/DGS&D and Inspection Agency for "33KV Yard Metaling of Receiving Stations Rawalpora, Rangreth, Baghimettab and Peerbagh" in under UT capex 2025-26.

SNO	Description of Work	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Estimated Cost (In Lacs)	Last date of submission of e-bid
01	33KV Yard Metaling of Receiving Stations Rawalpora, Rangret, Baghimettab and Peerbagh	5140.00	Rs 2.57 Lacs	24-03-2026; 4:30pm

- Bidders are advised to study the Bidding Document carefully. Submission of e-Bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications by the bidder.
- The tender document is available on website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view or download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid on line up to date as per the details mentioned in the table below:

A	Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document	The standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://jktenders.gov.in from 14-03-2026; 4:30pm
B	Sale of Bid Document (Start)	14-03-2026; 4:30pm
C	Sale of Bid Document (End)	24-03-2026; 4:30pm
D	e-Bid submission (start) date and time (submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	14-03-2026; 4:30pm
E	e-Bid submission (End) date and time (submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	24-03-2026; 4:30pm
F	Online commercial and technical e-bid opening date and time	25-03-2026; 2:30pm
G	Online financial e-bid opening date & time (only of the technically qualified bidders)	Will be communicated to the technically qualified bidders
H	Venue of opening of technical & financial e-bids	The office of Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar
I	Cost of e-bid document	Rs 200.00 (Rupees Two Hundred Only)
J	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit	Rs 5140.00 (Rupees Five Thousand One Hundred and Forty Only)

- The bidders need to submit the proof/Cost of e-Bid document as stated above through e-Challan/Treasury Receipt pledged to Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar to be credited to M.H-0801-Power payable at Srinagar. The scanned copy of the e-Challan/Treasury Receipt must be enclosed along with the e-Bids.
- All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of EMD in the form of CDR / FDR only, pledged to the Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar. No Interest would be payable on Earnest Money deposited with the Department.
 - Hard Copy of e-bid (complete) shall have to be submitted to the office of the Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar only from the bidder who is declared L1 after opening of financial bids.
 - The date and time of opening of financial bids shall be notified on web site <http://jktenders.gov.in>. This is conveyed to the qualified bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address.

The financial bids shall be opened accordingly online on the same web site at the office of the Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar.
- The e-Bids will be electronically opened in the presence of bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the identified venue on indicated date and time mentioned in the above table or any subsequent day to the convenience of the Tender Opening Committee. An authority letter of bidder representative will be required to be produced.
- The Department reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids/ the e- Bid process without assigning any reason thereof. The decision of department will be final and binding.
- In the event of date specified for e-Bids opening being a holiday/closed day for department's office then the due date for opening of e-Bids shall be the following working day at the same time and place.
- All the required documents excluding Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded by the e-Bidder electronically in the PDF format, whereas Price Schedule/BOQ should be up loaded electronically in the same BOQ sheet provided with the SBD.
- To participate in e-bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' class III(b) As per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding.
- Hard Copy of requisite documents shall be required to be submitted only by the Lowest Tenderer along with original CDR and e-Challan/Treasury Receipt instantly after opening of e-NIT pledged to Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar.
- The Name of the Work/Job along with e-NIT reference should be superscripted in bold letters on the envelope and the Name/Firm should be clearly written on the cover.

The name of the bidder and e-NIT no. shall be clearly written on the cover. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. Any other information regarding e-tendering process can be had from the office of the Executive Engineer, STD-II, Rajbagh, Srinagar.

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

**DIPK-NB-3603/25
DATED: 14-03-2026**

No: STD-II/12032-34/Ts Dated: 14-03-2026

**Office Of The Assistant Regional
Transport Officer Budgam**

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420130019973 issued in favour of MUZAFAR AHMMAD DAR Parentage GULAM QADIR DAR Whereas an application has been received by one MUZAFAR AHMMAD DAR Parentage GULAM QADIR DAR wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as MUZAFFAR AHMAD DAR Parentage GH QADIR DAR Which needs to be changed as MUZAFAR AHMAD DAR Parentage GULAM QADIR DAR. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

MCB

**Office Of The Assistant Regional
Transport Officer Budgam**

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420130021386 issued in favour of IRSHAD TALEE Parentage BASHIR AHMAD TALEE Whereas an application has been received by one IRSHAD TALEE Parentage BASHIR AHMAD TALEE wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as IRSHAD AHMAD TEELI Parnetage BASHIR AHMAD TELI Which needs to be changed as IRSHAD TALEE Parentage BASHIR AHMAD TALEE.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

MCB

**Office Of The Assistant Regional
Transport Officer Budgam**

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420160029924 issued in favour of BARKAT ALI KHAN Parentage SAFDAR ALI KHAN Whereas an application has been received by one BARKAT ALI KHAN Parentage SAFDAR ALI KHAN wherein he claimed that the Fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as SHABIR AHMAD KHAN Which needs to be changed as SAFDAR ALI KHAN.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

MCB

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Jamsheeda Begum, resident of Puthpora Glura, Langate, Kupwara, hereby declare that my name has been wrongly printed as "Zumsheeda Bano" in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 8580 7192 3036. My correct name is "Jamsheeda Begum." Therefore, "Zumsheeda Bano" and "Jamsheeda Begum" refer to the same person. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the JK bank kulangam within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Jamsheeda Begum **fko**

OFFICE OF THE NAIB-TEHSILDAR PATTAN
Subject: Issuance of Registration Order in respect of Delayed Birth

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Registrar of Births, EO MC Pattan, has submitted a case file pertaining to the birth of Khushboo Jan, D/o Bashir Ahmad Dar, R/o Dak Chowki Pattan, with verified Date of Birth 20/06/2009, which reportedly occurred at home. In this connection, if anybody has any objection regarding the issuance of the said birth certificate, he/she may contact this office within 04 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Naib Tehsildar
Pattan **fko**

NOTICE

I want to change name in the electricity connection bearing Consumer No. 7525 from Mohammad Ishaq Ganai S/o Mohammad Syeed Ganai to Anjum Rathore W/o: Mohammad Ishaq Ganai. If any body has any objection he/she may contact with concerned authority within 7 days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohammad Ishaq Ganai
R/o: Astan Mohalla Dara Harwan Srinagar
Cell No. 9796548881

Public Notice

I have passed/appeared in Secondary School Examination (Class-10th) under Roll No. 108013042 Session through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed against my name as Usmaan Ganale S/o Firdous Ganale instead of Usmaan Ganale S/O Firdous Ahmad Ganale Now, I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education Sub Office Budgam, if any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Sub Office Baramull within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained.

Name: Usmaan Ganale
Father's name: Firdous Ahmad Ganale
R/o : Newlight Sopore
Mobile no: 7006320042 **IRD**

OFFICE OF THE NAIB-TEHSILDAR PATTAN
Subject: Issuance of Registration Order in respect of Delayed Birth

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, the Registrar Births & Deaths, MC Pattan has submitted a case file regarding the registration of delayed birth of Mahnoor Zehra, D/o Mehnaz Ahmad Laway, R/o Sultanpora, Tehsil Pattan, with the reported date of birth as 20-07-2021, stated to have occurred at Government Sub-District Hospital Pattan, Kashmir. Now therefore, through this public notice, any person having any objection regarding the issuance of the said birth certificate may submit their objection to this office within 04 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which, no objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Sd/-
Naib-Tehsildar
Pattan **fko**

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is here by notified that my name & parentage has been incorrectly mentioned on my Aadhaar card as SYED BILAL AHMAD HAMDINA S/O SYED MOHAMMAD SHARIEF bearing aadhar no 7553 5081 1010 while my correct name & parentage is BILAL AHMAD S/O. SYED MOHAMMAD SHARIEF R/O KREERI as per service record /school record which needs to be corrected if anybody having any objection in this regard he /she may file his /her objection in the office concerned Aadhaar authority of India within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....**BILAL AHMAD**
S/O ...**SYED MOHAMMAD SHARIEF**
R/O **KREERI** **fko**

Public Notice

I have changed my name from (Old Name) Mohd Yaqoob Khan S/o Gh Nabi Khan to (New Name) Mohammad Yaqoob Khan S/o Ghulam Nabi Khan. In future i will be known as (New Name) Mohammad Yaqoob Khan S/o Ghulam Nabi Khan. If anybody is having any objection he/ she may contact passport office, Srinag... **INF**

DC Reviews Arrangements for Shab-e-Qadr, Eid, Novroz & Navratri

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In order to review the arrangements for the upcoming auspicious religious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr, Eid-ul-Fitr and Novroz, Navratri in the District, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo chaired a meeting here on Saturday at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, Superintendent of Police, Zaheer Ahmad, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad and senior Officers of Revenue, Food safety, PDD, SMC, PHE, Health Services, FCS&CA, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Fire & Emergency Services and other concerned Officers attended the meeting.

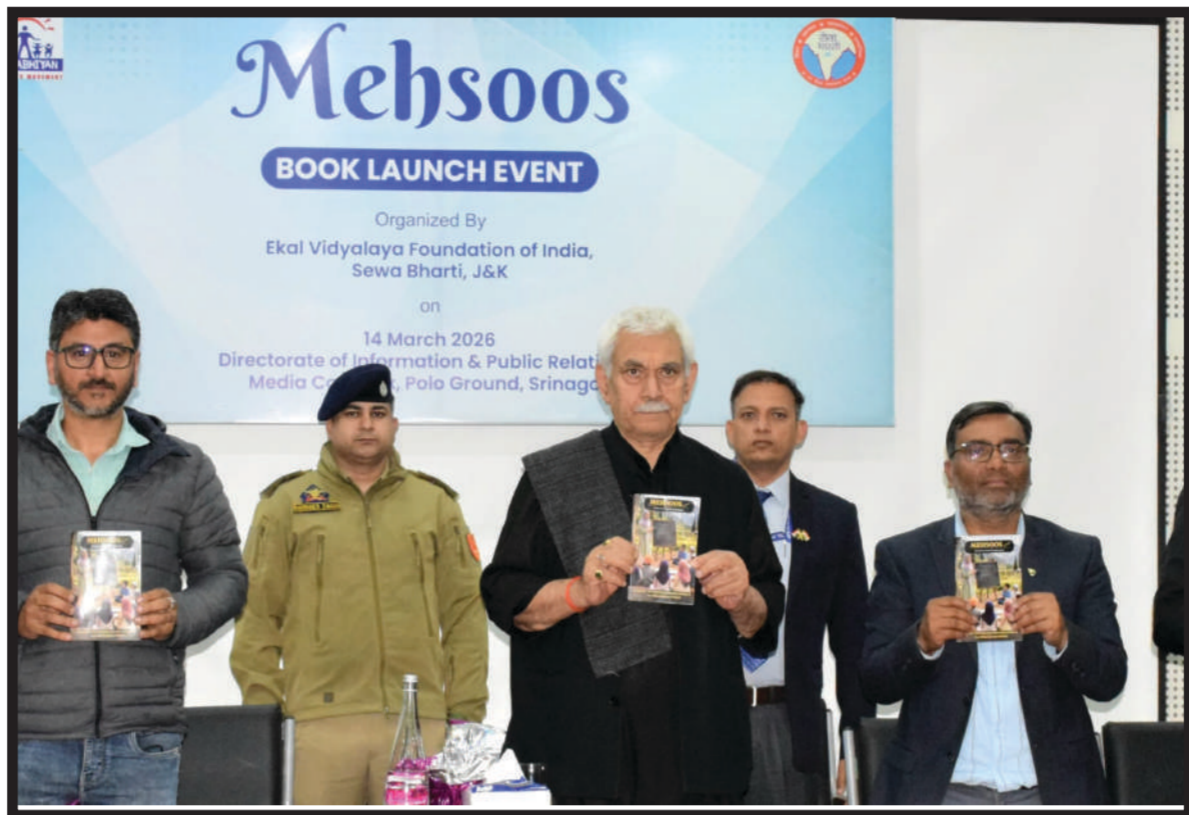
The meeting focused on ensuring coordinated preparations and arrangements ahead of the major religious events expected during these occasions.

During the meeting,

the Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to ensure meticulous planning and close coordination so that people face no inconvenience on these auspicious occasions. He stressed that adequate arrangements must be put in place for traffic regulation, parking management, sanitation, street lighting, drinking water & power supply and medical facilities, especially around major Masjids, Shrines, Temples and other congregation places where large gatherings are expected.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed assessment of the arrangements being made by all line Departments on the auspicious occasions of upcoming Shab-e-Qadr, Eid-ul-Fitr, Navroz, Navratri including availability of essential supplies and services, sanitation measures, traffic and parking management.

The DC directed the Officers of all the line Departments to ensure that all necessary arrangements are put in place well in advance so that devotees do not face any difficulty during the observance of the holy occasions.



A Prosperous J&K Must Be Built on Social Harmony: LG

Releases Book in Srinagar, lists five resolutions For J&K's Progress

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday called upon the people to introspect and contribute to social progress.

"Ask yourself: What am I doing for my community? What legacy am I building for the people? What inheritance do I wish to leave for future generations? The answers within you will reshape our tomorrow," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the release event of the book "Mehsoos-Stories of social transformation" at DIPR Auditorium, Media Complex, Srinagar. The book highlights inspiring grassroots stories of selfless service and transformative social initiatives undertaken by volunteers of Sewa Bharti J&K and Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India.

"This book is inspiring chronicles for the people. I want these tales of Sewa Bharti's sacrifices, Ekal Vidyalaya's dedication, volunteers' commitment, and the transformation in our communities to reach beyond J&K and ignite countless volunteers across India," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that Jammu Kashmir brims with boundless promise to shape a radiant future. He said that the UT of J&K has natural abundance, dynamic youth, and citizens driven by service.

"Great futures are not forged by fate, but by resolve and collective endeavour. A prosperous Jammu Kashmir will be defined not by economic metrics alone, but by a quality of life every citizen cherishes," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised on five resolutions- Social Harmony, Family Awakening, Environmental Stewardship, Civic Duty and Self-Reliance - to transform Jammu Kashmir as an exemplary, leading Union Territory.

"First resolution is social harmony and I urge all citizens to unite with patience and courage, fostering mutual respect across communities to bridge generations, cultures, faiths, and ideas.

Second, families must root themselves in core values, emerging aware and empowered to shape the next generation's destiny.

Third resolution is environmental stewardship. Jammu Kashmir, earth's paradise, is nature's unique gift-its rivers, mountains, and forests remind us we are custodians of irreplaceable heritage. Sustainable development is true foresight; let us collectively safeguard this legacy for posterity.

Fourth resolution is civic duty. Citizens must evolve the system into one of shared participation. A robust democracy thrives where people are active, informed, and accountable.

Fifth resolution is Self-Reliance. We must focus on building capacity to meet needs while empowering others. Let us grow economically robust, stewarding resources for enduring progress," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said that these five resolutions are not mere ideas, but our collective mandate to ensure robust socio-economic growth.

More on - kashmirobservers.net

Minister Sharma Reviews Facilities at Mughal Gardens

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, IT, Science and Technology Satish Sharma visited several prominent tourist locations in and around Srinagar, including the famous Mughal Gardens where he interacted with the tourists from different parts of the country and abroad.

During the visit, the Minister held interaction with the visitors, enquiring about their travel experiences and the facilities available at the tourist destinations. He welcomed them to Jammu and Kashmir and expressed satisfaction over the increasing tourist influx

to the Valley.

Satish Sharma said that the growing number of tourists visiting Kashmir reflects the renewed confidence of travellers in the region and highlights the immense tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir. He maintained that the government is making sustained efforts to further strengthen tourism infrastructure and ensure that visitors have a safe, comfortable and memorable experience during their stay.

The Minister also reviewed the facilities available at the Mughal Gardens and other tourist spots and stressed the need for maintaining cleanliness, proper transport connectivity and improved visitor services.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +9194841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)

HIJRI CALENDAR
25- Ramazan
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 19
ZUHR	12: 40
ASR	4: 56
Magrib	6: 41
ISHA	8: 01

This Day In History

- 221- Liu Bei, a Chinese warlord and member of the Han royal house, declares himself Emperor of Shu-Han, claiming legitimate succession to the Han Dynasty
- 351- Constantius II elevates his cousin Gallus to Caesar, and puts him in charge of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire.
- 493- Theodorich the Great, King of the Ostrogoths, murders King Odoacer of Italy with his sword at a banquet in Ravenna
- 933- Battle of Riade: German King Henry I beats Magyars
- 1311- Battle of Halmyros: The Catalan Company defeats Walter V of Brienne to take control of the Duchy of Athens, a Crusader state in Greece.
- 1493- Christopher Columbus returns to Spain after his first voyage to the New World
- 1526- French Dauphin Francis and his brother Henry exchanged as hostages for their father Francis I, beginning of four years of captivity in Spain under the Treaty of Madrid

Government of U.T. of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BANDIPORA

Email: cmcbandipora@gmail.com Ph. No: 01957-225512

Subject: Auction of Adda Entry /Terminal Tax of Municipal Council Bandipora for the year 2026-27 (w.e.f 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027)

E - AUCTION NOTICE
E - NIT No:- MC/Bpr/2025-26/42
Dated: 10/03/2026

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited from the interested persons/parties/firms/companies for the auction of Adda Entry/ Terminal Tax of Municipal Council Bandipora for the year 2026-27 (w.e.f 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027). The Minimum reserved bid is fixed as Rs. 82,25,000/- (Rupees Eighty-Two Lac Twenty-Five Thousand only). The Tax Schedule of the vehicles is as under and the successful highest bidder is bound to recover Entry Fee/ Terminal Tax as per the same schedule.

Terms and conditions:

- The aspiring/ interested bidder must be bonafide person/party with sound financial background holding PAN and Income Tax returns and should submit bids in two covers. The first cover should contain the following documents as qualifying criteria.
 - Audited balance sheet duly authenticated by a Chartered Accountant for the last three years with minimum turnover of Rs. 30.00 Lacs in any one year.
 - Income Tax returns of the last two years.
 - Copy of PAN Card.
 - Latest GST Clearance Certificate.
 - An Affidavit duly registered before the Court /Public Notary certifying that there is nothing outstanding on account of the Adda Entry Fee/ Terminal Tax of any Municipal Body of Urban Local Bodies Kashmir.
 - The second cover should contain financial bid duly offered in a neat and clean manner recorded in both words and figures.
 - While opening the bids the Auction Committee will in the first step open the cover of qualifying criteria bid. Once the qualifying criteria cover is found upto level then the financial bid will be opened.
- The contract of collection of Adda Entry Fee / Terminal Tax shall be for the (12 Months only) commencing from the date of handing over of possession of Tool Posts.
- The minimum reserve bid of above auction period has been fixed Rs. 82,25000/- (Rs. Eighty-Two-Lac-Twenty-Five-Thousand only).
- The intending bidder shall be bound to accompany Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) for an amount of Rs.1,65,000/- (Rupees One Lac Sixty Five Thousand only) from any Nationalized/ Scheduled Bank pledged to Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Bandipora without which no bid document can be issued.
- After finalization of auction proceedings, the highest bidder shall have to deposit 10% of the total bid as Bid Acceptance Token on spot and 90% of the balance bid amount shall have to be deposited by the successful bidder in two instalments.
 - 65% before taking over the possession
 - 25% within (3) months after taking over possession for which an irrevocable Bank guarantee from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank be submitted within one month after taking over the possession of entry posts.

However, the contractor has to deposit post-dated cheque for the 25% at the time of taking over possession from his own bank account which will be confirmed from the bank before its acceptance and later the cheque will be returned back after receiving of bank guarantee within one month of the said amount. The post-dated cheque from any other person cannot be accepted.
- In case the successful bidder fails to deposit the token amount of (10%), the CDR of the earnest money deposited by the aspirant shall be forfeited.
- The persons/parties against whom any outstanding amount exists on the records of this department on account of contracts of Adda Entry Fee/ Terminal Tax cannot participate in the bid. If any such person who participated in the bid and later on the outstanding surfaced before the department/ Municipality, his contract shall cease along with all deposits.
- The interested bidder shall have to present earnest money in the shape of Call Deposit Receipt.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to execute an agreement duly registered in the Court

of Law with the undersigned after receipt of the allotment and before taking over the possession of the collection posts for the contract.

- The successful bidder shall be bound to collect entry fee from the check posts of this Municipality viz 01.Papchan 02. Watpora 03. Mader 04. Ranger Khan &
- Onagam Road strictly as per previous rates which are re-casted in the last Para
- In the event of violation, noticed or reported the same shall invite legal course of action against contractor, including cancellation of the contract.
- The bids offered by the bidders shall be inclusive of all applicable taxes.
- The successful bidder shall have to provide/arrange manpower, furniture, toilet, stationery, electricity charges and drinking water & toolbars and also beautify the tool post at his own level and at his own expenses without claiming any compensation thereof from this institution.
- The interested bidder shall have the experience (at least one year) in the contract of Adda Entry Fee/ Terminal Tax (experience certificate be uploaded) which should be issued by any Municipal Council/Committee.
- The interested bidder shall upload his Character Certificate from the local Police Station.
- The contractor while offering the bids shall be responsible to visualize all conditions/ circumstances like Hartals, un-favourable circumstances, unrest, Pandemic etc. well in advance. Later on, no claim for relaxation/ relief in the contract shall be entertained at any stage.
- After expiry of the contract period the successful bidder shall handover the possession of entry fee collection posts to the Municipality in its original position without any damage.
- The authorized contractor is bound to engage well versed persons who are not involved in any kind of criminal activities for collection and must be with proper uniform during collection of Entry Fee/ Terminal Tax at the entry posts and the realization of the entry fee/ terminal tax shall be collected in a public friendly manners without causing any inconvenience to the public.
- The contractor is bound not to charge any entry fee from the VIPs/ Government Vehicle/ Vehicles of Security Forces.
- In-case of any dispute arising between the parties with respect of any of the conditions as laid down here in above or any ambiguity the same will be referred to the arbitrator (i.e) Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir and the decision of the Arbitrator shall be final and binding upon both the parties.
- The successful bidder shall be bound not to sublet contract to any other person/ parties/ firm,
- The contractor is bound to collect revenue with friendly attitude. In case of any confrontation by the driver the contractor shall not take law in his hands. However he will report to the Municipality for taking the cognizance.
- In the event of violation, noticed or reported the same shall invite legal course of action against contractor, including cancellation of the contract.
- The document fee of Rs. 2000/- is compulsory for the bidders who are interested for bidding of the above noted NIT/Auction notice.

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ) set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental website www.iktenders.gov.in, as per the schedule of dates given below:

1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	11/03/2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	11/03/2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	13/03/2026 from 10:00 AM
4	Bid submission End Date	18/03/2026 upto 3:00 PM
5	Date & Time of opening of Bids (Online)	23/03/2026 at 01:00 PM in the office of the Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Bandipora.
6	Submission of CDR.	The bidder shall be bound to accompany his bids offers with Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) of Rs. 1,65,000/- (Rupees One Lac Sixty Five Thousand only) from any Nationalized bank, pledged to the Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Bandipora, (without which offers shall be liable for rejection) The original CDR be submitted before the office on 18/03/2026 upto 2:00 PM.
7	Mode of Payment	c) 10% of the total bid as Bid Acceptance Token on spot d) 65% before taking over the possession e) 25% within 3 months after taking over possession

Instructions to the Bidders regarding I- Tendering process:

Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.iktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendor.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.
- Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.**
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
- Scanned copy of cost of tender document of Rs.- 2000/- in shape of Bank Receipt/challan in favour of Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Bandipora and bid securing declaration must be uploaded with the bid.
- The Bidder must have to upload (soft copies) of the following documents (Photostat/Original should be clearly seen in all respect with Ink Signed and Seal):-
 - Valid original Bank Challan/Receipt
 - Call Deposit Receipt (CDR)
 - BID Securing Declaration on stamp paper duly attested by Notary.
 - Valid GSTIN/ PAN Card No.
 - The Bidder should upload the Tender Document form attached below (Not Mandatory).
 - Bidder must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents including
 - BID Securing Declaration and tender documents fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid. No document(s) which has/ have not been uploaded will not be entertained in the form of hard copy. However, in case of any clarification the bidders shall have to produce original documents in support of soft copies if need arises.
 - The Highest Bidder will have to submit hard copies of all documents uploaded on e-tending portal before issuance of Allotment.

Rated Schedule		
S.No	T Particulars	Scheduled Rate
1	Matador 407 LP Mazda	Rs. 20/- Per Day
2	Service Bus	Rs. 20/- Per Day
3	Government Bus	Rs. 20/- Per Day
4	Load Carried Auto	Rs. 20/- Per Day
5	Sumo/Tavera	Rs. 20/- Per Day
6	Empty Truck	Rs. 20/- Per Day
7	Empty Tipper, Tractor	Rs. 20/- Per Day
8	JCB	Rs. 30/- Per Day
9	Loaded Truck/709	Rs. 50/- Per Day
10	Loaded Tipper	Rs. 50/- Per Day
11	Loaded Tanker	Rs. 50/- Per Day
12	Loaded Platform	Rs. 50/- Per Day
13	Tourist Bus	Rs. 50/- Per Day
14	Full Booking all commercial vehicles	Rs. 30/- Per Day
15	School Bus Vans (Private)	Rs. 500/- Per Month
16	Truck Toller 10 Tyre & 12 Tyre	Rs. 100/- Per Trip
17	Tata Mobile	Rs. 30/- Per Trip

Part B	Terminal Tax	Rate
01	Loaded Trucks/Tipper with sand, Bajree, bolder, stone, Quarry stone/Soiling Metaling /HCC Muck etc., from Nalla Arin	Rs. 50/- Per Trip
02	Loaded tractor/Oneton with sand, Bajree, Bolder stone, Quarry stone/Soiling Metaling /HCC Muck etc.	Rs. 30/- Per Trip
03	Loaded trucks with willow /popular Mochas etc	Rs. 50/- Per Trip
04	Loaded tractor /trolley with willow /popular mochas etc	Rs. 40/- Per Trip

Further details can be had from the office of undersigned on any working day during office hours. No: MC/Bpr/G/25-26/641-49

The Kashmir Clay Rush

And why the National Green Tribunal's strongest orders cannot stop the loot of our karewas.



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

“
The karewas are not coming back. These formations took millions of years to create. They hold our water table steady and give our valley its distinctive look. Once the clay miners scrape them flat, they become useless wasteland.

I walked through Zadoora village in Pulwama this winter and saw something that turned my stomach.

Hillsides lay gouged open like wounds. Red earth stood naked under the sky. Trucks had carved deep ruts into what was once farmland. The air smelled of dust and diesel.

This was supposed to be protected land.

Kashmir's famous karewas, those flat-topped plateaus that hold our history in their layers, were disappearing, truckload after truckload.

I knew the law, and I had read the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act of 1957. I understood that clay, sand and bajri all count as minor minerals. I knew that anyone who wants to dig here needs Environmental Clearance from the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority. This is mandatory and basic.

I also knew that the men doing this digging had papers in their pockets. District Mineral Officers had stamped their approvals, while District Magistrates had looked the other way. Everyone pretended these permissions meant something.

They mean nothing. The Supreme Court settled this question in 2024. The case was Noble M Paikda versus Union of India. The court looked at these exact kinds of permits. It declared them null and void.

A DMO cannot give you permission to destroy a mountain. A District Magistrate cannot sign away our geological heritage. The law never gave them this power.

I wrote about what I saw. Then I did something more. I knocked on the door of the National Green Tribunal.

I picked two villages as examples: Zadoora in Pulwama, and Rangeen Kultreh in Chadoora, Budgam.

I brought photographs, RTI



documents, proof that no Environmental Clearance existed, and evidence that no Consent to Operate had ever been sought.

The DMO Pulwama had actually admitted this in writing. He had replied to an RTI query stating that no such permissions were required. This admission became the smoking gun.

The Principal Bench of the NGT heard my case on February 6th. Justice Prakash Srivastava presided and Dr Senthil Vel sat as expert member. My lawyer, Advocate Saurabh Sharma, laid out the facts with precision. The tribunal understood immediately what was at stake.

It ordered a joint committee to investigate. The team would include senior officers from the Central Pollution Control Board. Representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change would join. The Deputy Commissioners of Pulwama and Budgam would participate. They would visit both sites, measure the damage, identify the culprits, and recommend punishment.

The committee had ten weeks. The order came down strong and clear.

Everyone thought this would stop the looting, but everyone was wrong.

Less than one month later, the DMO Budgam issued another permission. He wrote order number DMO/Bud/DGM/F-123/2792-99 dated March 2, 2026. He authorized earth mining in Nagam, Chadoora. He claimed the Fire and Emergency Services needed one thousand cubic meters of clay for a new office building.

The trucks rolled in, took ten thousand cubic meters, maybe more, and the hills bled again.

The same story repeated itself in Pulwama. The DMO there gave permission for riverbed mining in Sasara nallah. He allowed heavy machinery, and ignored the fact that the NGT had already banned mechanical mining in this same stream last year.

These office bearers know exactly what they are doing. They have read the 2016 Jammu and Kashmir Minor Mineral Conces-

sion Rules. Rule 2 defines minor minerals clearly. Section 3 of the 1957 Central Act lists them specifically: building stones, gravel, ordinary clay, ordinary sand. The second schedule leaves no room for confusion.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Notification makes the requirement plain. Category 1(a) of Schedule I demands Environmental Clearance for all minor mineral extraction. The Jammu and Kashmir Environment Impact Assessment Authority exists for this purpose. Nobody had approached them, filled the forms, and conducted the studies.

The Environment and Forest Department tried to fix this. On March 4, 2025, they sent a letter to all Deputy Commissioners. They attached the 2024 Patna High Court judgment in Abhay Kumar versus Union of India. That court had struck down state notifications that tried to exempt topsoil quarrying for brick kilns. The judges called such exemptions illegal. They said these shortcuts violated the 1957 Act.

If brick kilns need proper clearance, how can DMOs hand out earth mining permissions like festival sweets?

I estimate the damage in Zadoora alone at fifty crores. The Mining Department claims they recovered twenty-six lakhs as compensation. The math tells its own story.

Multiply this across hundreds of villages, and then multiply it across years of unchecked loot.

I believe Jammu and Kashmir has lost ten thousand crores in the last four or five years. This covers only clay and earth mining. Riverbed mining would push the figure higher.

The karewas are not coming back. These formations took millions of years to create. They hold our water table steady and give our valley its distinctive look. Once the clay miners scrape them flat, they become useless wasteland.

Our watch and warden wing simply moves on to the next hill, files its reports, and prepares its findings.

Meanwhile, the trucks keep running at night.

I have a simple suggestion. The government should organise workshops bringing together Mining Department officials, Revenue officers, police and Flood Control staff.

They must be taught the law, shown the Supreme Court judgments and briefed on NGT rulings.

Above all, they must understand that signing illegal permissions makes them part of the problem.

—
The author is an environmental activist and policy commentator. He is the founder and chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Climate Action Group and a member of the J&K State Audit Advisory Board.

Kashmir's Private School Moment

As PSAJK prepares for internal elections, the sector has an opportunity to strengthen transparency, improve teacher welfare and build a more organized education system.



Farooq Ahmad Ashai

Three decades ago, private schools entered Kashmir as cautious experiments in a government-run landscape. Today they anchor much of the valley's learning.

They absorbed overflow from crowded public classrooms, introduced computers in villages still waiting for reliable electricity, and built science labs and English programs that opened pathways for Kashmiri students across India.

Perhaps their greatest gift has been genuine opportunity.

A student in a remote mountain village now accesses the same quality of education as a child in Delhi. She competes for engineering seats at top universities and applies for scholarships abroad. These possibilities once seemed distant dreams.

Behind every successful graduate stands a dedicated professional who chose teaching over more lucrative paths.

Kashmir's private schools employ thousands of highly educated staff. PhD holders guide middle schoolers through biology experiments, M.Com graduates keep administrative offices running, and MBA holders coordinate complex academic programs.

These are some of the valley's brightest minds, and they have happily chosen classrooms over corporate careers. And this choice holds real significance for the community.

Private schools employ hundreds of fresh

graduates each year, providing meaningful work that keeps talented young people in the region. These educators guide students in classrooms, counselors support them through academic pressure, and together they build careers that strengthen local society.

But serious challenges remain visible to anyone paying attention.

Private school teachers frequently earn less than their government counterparts. Their contracts often lack basic security protections. Some institutions operate without clear regulatory guidelines. These concerns surface regularly in marketplaces and family gatherings.

These challenges demand a unified voice and credible platforms where founders, teachers, and administrators work together as partners rather than competitors.

The Private Schools Association of Jammu and Kashmir has begun recognizing this necessity.

District leaders recently convened in Srinagar to discuss holding elections across Kashmir Division before March concludes. On the surface this appears merely procedural, but in reality it opens possibilities for meaningful transformation.

Genuine democratic elections introduce transparency into organizational culture. They create accountability that benefits every stakeholder.

When school owners cast votes for representatives, they invest emotional and practical energy in the outcome. And when teachers see their concerns on leadership agendas, they engage more deeply with institutional life. Quality rises naturally across the sector.

Government officials find organized partners far easier to work with than scattered individuals. Regulatory clarity emerges through sustained dialogue between association leaders and education departments.

Teacher welfare receives serious attention when backed by collective pressure rather than isolated complaints.



“

The upcoming elections show that private education leaders are ready to strengthen their institutions through transparency and reform. This is a moment to build fair platforms where every school is heard, with clear term limits, attention to teacher welfare and focus on curriculum development.

The current moment holds much significance. Kashmir's youth population expands gradually each year. These young people seek far more than traditional textbook knowledge.

They want practical skills for global employment markets, technology training, and opportunities to develop critical thinking. Schools must evolve quickly to satisfy these growing appetites.

Private institutions have already demonstrated remarkable adaptability. They introduced interactive smart classrooms while public schools still relied on chalkboards.

They launched entrepreneurship programs years before government curricula acknowledged business studies, and formed partnerships with universities outside Kashmir, giving students early exposure to higher education possibilities.

Stronger internal governance would enable even greater achievements.

Fair elections within associations generate legitimate authority. Legitimate bodies attract genuinely talented leadership. And capable leaders advocate effectively for improved teacher salaries and robust professional development.

These enhancements help retain excellent educators. Better retention produces stronger student outcomes across the sector.

Strong private schools support the wider education system. They ease pressure on crowded government classrooms, introduce new teaching methods, and raise standards through healthy competition.

Kashmir benefits when both systems grow together. Families gain real choices for their children, students find paths suited to their goals, and the valley strengthens its reputation for educational excellence.

The upcoming elections show that private education leaders are ready to strengthen their institutions through transparency and reform.

This is a moment to build fair platforms where every school is heard, with clear term limits, attention to teacher welfare and focus on curriculum development.

The stakes go beyond administration.

Kashmir's identity is deeply rooted in its intellectual traditions. The valley has produced scholars and poets for centuries, and today's classrooms continue that legacy.

Teachers sustain this tradition every day. Their work deserves systems that respect and support their profession.

Stronger leadership and better organization will benefit students and strengthen private education across Kashmir.

—
The author is a Srinagar-based business leader and social development advocate. He heads Green Scan Consultants and Sabzar Nurseries, and previously served at Jammu and Kashmir Bank as a Public Relations and Enforcement Officer.

Kashmiris Who Built Shimla

A 1993 journey to document migrant labour reveals the hidden Kashmiri hands behind the hill town's railways, hotels and history.



Syed Nissar H. Gilani

Some journeys stay with you in exact detail. This one began on April 13, 1993.

We left Jammu in a special coach that morning, bound for the mountain air of Shimla. I had never been to the Queen of Hills before, and I carried with me the particular excitement of a first-time traveller combined with the official purpose that had sent me there.

I was to document the lives of Kashmiri migrant labourers working in Himachal Pradesh, men from my own administrative jurisdiction of Dooru Shahbad who had travelled this route decades earlier and built lives in the high altitude towns.

The coach moved through Punjab during Baisakhi, and the landscape outside my window exploded with colour. Crowds lined the roadside in their finest traditional attire, celebrating the spring harvest with a joy that seemed to spill into the vehicle itself.

We passed through Jalandhar and Ludhiana without hurry, stopping frequently for tea and lunch, allowing the road to set its own tempo. This unhurried progress meant we did not reach the gates of Shimla until midnight had come and gone.

Despite the late hour, our hosts had secured rooms in an impeccable hotel. The place was warm, pristine, and hospitable, a familiarity that made no sense until I understood what I was seeing.

The entire staff, from attendants to the manager, were Kashmiri, most from Dooru Shahbad. News of our arrival had arrived before us, and they received us with a warmth that felt more like family than hospitality.

Exhaustion overtook formalities that night. We skipped dinner for quick cups of tea and snacks, and I watched Shimla's lights glitter through the dark pines like scattered pearls in the valley below.

Morning arrived with the crisp air of the mountains and a breakfast that felt like a homecoming. They served steaming Noon Chai topped with thick cream, fluffy omelets, and handmade parathas dripping with butter.

Surrounded by my own people, the hotel felt like an extension of my own living room, a domestic space transported whole to these high altitudes.

Before our Gypsy transported us toward the landscapes of Kufri, I insisted on walking through the main markets.

Shimla's history as the Summer Capital of the British Raj is etched into every stone you touch. The British developed this town in the likeness of Murree, and it remains a testament to their engineering, most notably the Kalka-Shimla Railway that winds through the mountains like a steel ribbon.

What the guidebooks rarely mention is that the backbone of this scenic marvel was formed by Kashmiri and Balti hands.

These settlers came to these heights driven by necessity. Some were fleeing the hardships of Begaar, the forced labour system that had chained their fathers and grandfathers to arbitrary work. Others were escaping the economic shifts in the pashmina trade that had collapsed their traditional livelihoods.

They built the railway tourists now ride with cameras raised, and many stayed, leaving behind settlements that survive to this day.

Beyond the architecture, Shimla is a city of political ghosts.

It was here, at the Retreat, that the Shimla Agreement was signed in 1972. I stood on those grounds thinking about the eventual fates of the signatories, and the mountain air felt heavy with the irony of history.

Our primary host was Mr. Mohd Yousuf Rather of Zamalgam, Dooru Shahbad, the head of the Kashmiri Laborers' Union. He provided a sobering account of the difficulties faced by our labourers in the far-



flung reaches of Himachal.

Yousuf spoke of Noorpur, a town where Kashmiri-speaking settlers have lived since pre-Partition days, when migrant labourers travelled the distance from Kulgam to Punjab on foot, walking for days through undivided territory that now requires permits.

It was during these discussions, later enriched by insights from Aziz Pathan of Agnoo Zamalgam, another union leader settled in Himachal, that a remarkable historical connection emerged.

The ancestors of Saadat Hasan Manto, the legendary short story writer whose chronicles cut through the subcontinent's self-deceptions with surgical precision, hailed from Dooru Shahbad.

As skilled labourers, they travelled this very path to Noorpur in Himachal, eventually descending to Amritsar and finally to West Punjab in undivided India.

To think that the roots of one of

the subcontinent's greatest writers were nourished by the same soil as the labourers I was sent to document added a layer of solemnity to our mission.

Beyond anonymous workers disappearing into historical footnotes, these were part of a continuum that produced genius and endurance in equal measure.

My tight schedule prevented me from visiting Noorpur, a regret I still carry with me when I think of that trip. But the spirit of that Kashmir away from home was felt everywhere I turned.

Our task, a census of the migrant labourers of Dooru Shahbad, documenting their wages, work hours, and the conditions of their daily lives, was completed and promptly submitted to the District Collector and the Labour Commissioner. The paperwork felt insufficient to capture what I had seen, the networks of mutual aid and shared language that sustained these men in a for-

eign state.

The care we received remains vivid in my memory. Mr. Ismail, a young manager from Mantapura, Dooru, treated us to coffee and ice cream at the prestigious Holiday Home Himachal. Another gentleman guided us through the historic Old Post Office and the winding down-ways of the city, paths that seemed to descend into the past rather than merely downhill.

At a gathering of the Kashmiri community, I was presented with Himachal shawls and small souvenirs. These were expressions of love and respect for their brothers from back home, a recognition that we belonged to the same web of place and memory even as we stood hundreds of miles from the valley.

Today, it heartens me to know that Mr. Yousuf has settled back in his village of Zamalgam with his children and grandchildren, having finally passed the guard of the Shimla union to the next generation.



AT A GATHERING OF THE KASHMIRI COMMUNITY, I WAS PRESENTED WITH HIMACHAL SHAWLS AND SMALL SOUVENIRS. These were expressions of love and respect for their brothers from back home, a recognition that we belonged to the same web of place and memory even as we stood hundreds of miles from the valley.

The labourers continue their work in the high hills, and the railway continues its climb, and the pines continue their watch over the scattered lights below.

I think of them sometimes when I drink my morning tea, remembering that crisp mountain air and the faces of men who had travelled so far from home only to find themselves waiting for me when I arrived, as if they had known all along that I was coming.

—The author is a former member of the Jammu and Kashmir administrative service. He can be reached at nisargilani57748@gmail.com.

Marriage in Fiction

From Regency England to modern India, two literary voices expose the constraints, compromises and defiance within marriage.



Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee

Jane Austen and Anita Desai have always been among my favourite writers.

I taught their works for decades in colleges and universities in India and abroad, and I was often struck by how easily students, even those new to literature, connected with them.

For many years, Jane Austen was a compulsory author in British literature courses. Later, as Indian English literature gained recognition as a separate field, writers like Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande came into focus.

At first glance, the literary worlds of Austen and Desai seem far apart. One writes about early nineteenth-century England, the other about modern, post-Independence India. Their settings, cultures, and social customs are different.

But beneath these differences lies a powerful connection. Both writers explore how women live and struggle within patriarchal systems, especially through the institution of marriage.

Across time and culture, marriage becomes a shared space where women must negotiate duty, desire, identity, and survival.

Anita Desai once wrote that life does not flow smoothly like a river,

but moves in sudden jumps, as if held back by locks that open now and then. This idea captures much of her fiction.

Born Anita Mazumdar, Desai is widely regarded as one of the most important contemporary Indian novelists. Her writing combines poetic language with sharp psychological insight.

From her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, to later works like *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, she repeatedly returns to the emotional lives of women constrained by family, tradition, and marriage.

Jane Austen, writing more than a century earlier, also placed women at the center of her fiction.

Her novels closely examine women's inner lives in a society where marriage largely determined their future. Though often labeled romantic, Austen's work is deeply realistic. She shows marriage not as a fairy tale ending, but as a serious social, economic, and moral decision.

Despite their differences, Austen and Desai are united in their concern for women negotiating restrictive social systems. Their heroines think, question, suffer, resist, and adapt.

Austen's Elizabeth Bennet, Elinor Dashwood, Anne Elliot, Emma Woodhouse, and Fanny Price can be read alongside Desai's Maya, Monisha, Sita, Bim, and Tara.

All of them struggle between what society expects and what they desire for themselves.

In Austen's novels, marriage is often a careful compromise between love and social reality. Women had little access to education, employment, or independent wealth. A good marriage was often the only path to security. But Austen never presents marriage as merely practical. Her heroines seek



respect, understanding, and moral compatibility.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the contrast between marriages is telling. Charlotte Lucas marries Mr. Collins for financial safety, fully aware that affection and intellectual companionship will be absent. Austen does not mock her. Instead, she invites sympathy for a woman with limited choices.

Elizabeth Bennet's refusal of Mr. Collins is not a rejection of marriage, but a refusal to give up self-respect. Her eventual marriage to Mr. Darcy represents Austen's ideal, a relationship based on mutual growth and understanding, even if Darcy's wealth cannot be entirely ignored.

Similarly, *Sense and Sensibility* explores how emotion and restraint shape marital choices. Marianne's romantic impulsiveness nearly ruins her, while Elinor's unspoken strength allows her to endure social pressure and disappointment.

Their eventual marriages suggest



WHILE AUSTEN'S NOVELS OFTEN MOVE TOWARD STABLE MARRIAGES, DESAI'S FICTION DISMANTLES THE IDEA OF MARITAL HARMONY. Her women resist silently, through withdrawal, rebellion, or inner struggle. Their resistance is deeply psychological.

that maturity and moral judgment matter as much as feeling.

In *Emma*, marriage becomes a lesson in self-knowledge. Emma Woodhouse's misguided matchmaking reveals her own blindness. Only when she confronts her flaws does she become capable of a balanced relationship.

In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price's refusal of Henry Crawford is a moral stand. Though poor and powerless, she chooses integrity over comfort.

Austen here presents marriage as a test of character rather than a reward. Across Austen's fiction, marriage is both a constraint and a possibility. Her heroines operate within patriarchal limits, but they assert agency through intelligence, ethics, and emotional resilience. Their resistance is mild but meaningful.

Anita Desai, however, presents a far darker picture.

In her novels, marriage is rarely comforting. It is often a source of emotional suffocation and psychological pain.

In *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya's marriage to Gautama is socially acceptable but emotionally empty. Gautama's rational detachment clashes with Maya's intense inner life, leading to her mental collapse. The tragedy exposes a system that ignores women's emotional needs.

In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, Sita feels trapped by domestic expectations. Her retreat to an island is not an escape from marriage itself, but from a life that has erased her sense of self.

Marriage here becomes a symbol of confinement rather than fulfillment.

Clear *Light of Day* complicates the picture further. Bim remains unmarried but feels trapped by family responsibility. Tara marries but loses her independence. Desai avoids easy conclusions.

Marriage does not guarantee happiness, and remaining single does not ensure freedom.

In *Fire on the Mountain*, Nanda Kaul retreats into isolation after a life defined by duty and sacrifice. Marriage stays as a painful memory rather than a comfort.

In *Voices in the City*, urban marriages are marked by emptiness and alienation, mirroring the chaos of modern life.

While Austen's novels often move toward stable marriages, Desai's fiction dismantles the idea of marital harmony. Her women resist silently, through withdrawal, rebellion, or inner struggle. Their resistance is deeply psychological.

But both writers understand marriage as a powerful social institution, not merely a personal choice.

Austen suggests that within limits, women can achieve dignity and fulfillment through careful moral negotiation. Desai exposes how those same structures can fracture a woman's identity.

Across centuries and cultures, marriage continues to shape women's lives in lasting ways.

Through their work, Austen and Desai remind us that women's struggles within marriage are deeply tied to social power, tradition, and expectation.

And yet, within these constraints, women continue to search for meaning, selfhood, and silent forms of resistance.

—Dr. Ratan Bhattacharjee is a fiction writer and academic. He is the author of *Twilight of Love* (Partridge, 2025) and a former Affiliate Faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University, USA. He can be reached at prfratanbhattacharjee@gmail.com.

Centre Identifying Sites In J&K For New Hydropower Projects: Power Minister

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Centre has begun identifying locations in Jammu and Kashmir for new hydropower plants and is reviewing ways to channel water to northern states, Union Power Minister said in an interview with TOI.

The minister said some hydropower stations in the region are already operational, while work is under way to restore reservoir capacity through desilting. In addition, construction has resumed on three to four projects that had earlier stalled.

"Some plants are already operating, and desilting work is being undertaken to restore reservoir capacity. Work has also started on three-four projects that were stalled. Additional projects are being planned, and site identification is under way," he said.

Authorities are now examining potential sites for more plants as part of plans to increase power generation from

the region.

Economic Times reported the former Haryana CM saying that the government is also studying the possibility of diverting water from the region toward Punjab and further to Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi through canals or tunnels.

"There are also proposals to divert water towards Punjab and further to Rajasthan, Haryana, UP and Delhi through canals or tunnels. There are two-three possible routes; we have to see which one can be built faster and will be financially viable. One that has been proposed through the city of Jammu may not be feasible. The feasibility of another alignment around the city is being checked," the union minister added.

According to the Khattar, two or three potential routes are under evaluation. One alignment proposed through the city of Jammu may not be practical, while another route bypassing the city is currently being



assessed for feasibility and cost. The remarks come amid wider discussions on strengthening India's power infrastructure to keep electricity supply ahead of rising demand.

The minister added that the PM Modi-led Central government is expanding generation capacity with a greater emphasis on renewable energy. While thermal plants earlier dominated capacity additions, the current focus is on solar power and other green sources.

Since solar energy is not available around the clock, the government is working on storage solutions to ensure reliability.

Nuclear power is also expected to play a larger role in the future energy mix. India currently has around 8GW of nuclear capacity, with another 12GW under development.

The long-term goal is to reach about 100GW of nuclear capacity by 2047, and states have been encouraged to host at least one project each.

Thermal power will continue to play a role in ensuring continuous supply and maintaining grid stability, the minister said.

Around 20,000MW of thermal capacity is currently under

development, with projects planned up to 2032. After that, the need for new coal-based plants may diminish as renewable energy capacity expands and India moves toward its target of net-zero emissions by 2070.

He also pointed to improvements in the power supply situation over the past decade. The demand-supply gap, which stood at around 5.5% in 2014-15, has narrowed significantly to about 0.1% in 2024-25, largely due to technical factors and expansion of capacity.

On the financial health of power distribution companies, the minister noted that while discoms reported profits of about Rs 2,700 crore recently, the sector still carries accumulated losses of roughly Rs 6.7 lakh crore.

Losses had previously widened because tariffs were often lower than the cost of supply, particularly when governments offered subsidised electricity.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

2 More Indian

the 22 remaining Indian-flagged vessels on the west side, six are LPG vessels, one is a liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier, four are crude oil tankers, one is carrying chemical products, three are container ships and two are bulk carriers. Of the remaining, one is a dredger and another is empty, holding no cargo. Three others are on dry docks, meaning on routine maintenance.

Hundreds of ships had been stranded in the narrow sea lane between Iran and Oman since the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran, and Tehran targeted the region in retaliation.

"Several of our ships remain on standby in the Gulf region. We propose to continue to remain in touch and coordinate with all the concerned countries to ensure a safe and unimpeded transit for them in our effort to ensure our energy security," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at the briefing.

Sinha said in all 28 Indian flags vessels were stuck - 24 on the west of the Strait of Hormuz and four on the east.

Jag Prakash was loaded with gasoline from Sohar port in Oman and headed to Tanga in Tanzania. It is due to reach Tanga on March 21.

"The remaining 22 vessels (on the west side) have 611 seafarers," he said adding Indian authorities including DG Shipping are closely monitoring the situation.

Three vessels remain stuck on the east side with 76 seafarers on board.

He said DG Shipping is coordinating with ship owners, RP&L agencies and Indian missions on the remaining vessels.

Sinha said port operations across India remain stable. SOPs have been issued for major ports and state maritime boards, according priority berthing to vessels carrying LPG, a fuel that is running short in the country.

Six vessels arrived from different parts of the world at Indian ports and were given safe anchorage, he added.

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways continues to closely monitor the maritime situation in the Persian Gulf, he added.

Back-to-Back WDs

in the plains while higher reaches may receive fresh snowfall around March 15-16 and March 18-20," he said.

The MeT Director said the precipitation and cloud cover could lead to a noticeable drop in daytime temperatures across several parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

He added that the impact of the weather systems may also be felt in the form of increased cloud cover and intermittent precipitation during the period.

Western Disturbances are weather systems originating in the Mediterranean region that frequently bring rain and snowfall to north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent during winter and early spring.

SIT Formed To

The order said that on March 11, Abdullah was attending a marriage ceremony at a banquet hall in the Greater Kailash area of Jammu. At around 10:10 pm, while the protectee was leaving the venue, an individual allegedly flashed a revolver and attempted to open fire from close range.

However, the attempt was foiled due to the prompt action of the police personnel deployed with him, the order states. Following the incident, a case under Section 109 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 3/25 of the Arms Act was registered at Police Station Gangyal.

Given the seriousness and sensitivity of the case, police said a Special Investigation Team comprising seven officers has been constituted to ensure a thorough probe.

The SIT members include SSP Sanjay Sharma, SP Headquarters Irshad Hussain Rather, DySP Arvind Kumar Sambhal, Inspector Saroop Singh, Inspector Paramjeet Singh, Inspector Sanjeev Chib, who is also the SHO of Gangyal police station, and Inspector Shariq Majeed.

Police said the team has been directed to conduct the investigation promptly while adhering to the statutory timeframe.

The assassination attempt occurred earlier this week when Abdullah was attending a wedding function in Jammu's Greater Kailash locality. As he was leaving the venue, a man allegedly approached him and tried to fire from close range using a pistol.

Security personnel, however, reacted swiftly and overpowered the attacker before he could carry out the act. Abdullah escaped unhurt due to the quick response of his security staff and

commandos present at the venue.

Police identified the accused as a 63-year-old man from Jammu who was immediately taken into custody. During preliminary questioning, he reportedly claimed to have harboured a personal grudge against Abdullah for several years and had been planning the attack for a long time.

Officials added that the weapon used in the attempt was reportedly a licensed firearm.

Wangchuk's Detention

following protests during an agitation led by the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), which are demanding statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Police said Wangchuk walked out of the jail around 1.30 pm after receiving the release order. His wife, Geetanjali Angmo, completed the formalities at the prison.

Detention Revoked To Facilitate Dialogue: Centre

In a statement announcing the decision, the Centre said Wangchuk's detention was revoked with immediate effect in order to create an atmosphere conducive to constructive engagement with stakeholders in Ladakh.

The activist had been held in Jodhpur Central Jail under an order issued by the Leh district magistrate after protests turned violent during the agitation last year.

The government reiterated its commitment to fostering peace, stability and mutual trust in Ladakh and said issues concerning the region would be addressed through dialogue, including through the High-Powered Committee constituted to examine demands raised by Ladakhi groups.

The decision also comes days after the Supreme Court adjourned to March 17 the hearing on a petition filed by Wangchuk's wife challenging his detention.

Wangchuk Reaffirms Commitment To Ladakh

Two days before his release, Wangchuk had said his activism would continue and called for sincere dialogue on the future of Ladakh.

"Our struggle has always been for Ladakh's protection, dignity and long-term well-being," he wrote on social media, adding that a just future for the region would require clarity, unity and constructive engagement.

Political Reactions
Opposition parties including the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Aam Aadmi Party and the National Conference criticised the Centre, saying Wangchuk should not have been detained under the stringent law.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the government had effectively reversed its earlier decision and demanded an apology to Wangchuk and the people of Ladakh.

Congress leader and lawyer Vivek Tankha also defended the activist, calling him a nationalist and an environmental campaigner whose role would remain important for the region.

Ladakh Groups Call It 'Victory'
The Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance termed Wangchuk's release a "big victory" for the people of Ladakh, saying it vindicated their stand that the allegations against him were baseless.

LAB co-chairman Chering Dorje said the movement for Ladakh's political demands would continue despite the development and could gain fresh momentum.

The groups have been engaged in talks with the Ministry of Home Affairs over their key demands of statehood and Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh since the region was carved out as a Union Territory in 2019.

Leaders also demanded the release of other detained activists, including Deldan Namgial and Smanla Dorje.

Leaders Welcome Decision

Welcoming the move, newly appointed Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena called the revocation a positive step but stressed that protests, bandhs and violence had no place in Ladakh and urged peaceful engagement.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also welcomed Wangchuk's release and called for the release of those detained in the Valley during recent protests.

"He should not have been arrested. His arrest was wrong and that too under the NSA," Abdullah said while speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Spring Festival in Srinagar.

Ladakh MP Mohamad Hanifa said the protest movement was a constitutional right and urged the government to pursue dialogue.

Meanwhile, Mehbooba Mufti said the

stringent law should never have been invoked against the environmentalist.

The Jammu and Kashmir Congress also demanded the release of Aam Aadmi Party MLA Mehraj Malik, who was detained under the Public Safety Act last year

As Eid Nears,

and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday urged authorities to release young people detained in the Valley during recent protests, particularly with Eid approaching.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Spring Festival at Badamwari here, Omar said Wangchuk should not have been detained under the stringent law.

"He should not have been arrested. His arrest was wrong and that too under the NSA," he said.

The chief minister said that just as the revocation of the NSA in Wangchuk's case was welcomed, similar humanitarian consideration should be extended to those arrested in connection with recent anti-US and anti-Israel protests in Kashmir.

"Given the sanctity of this holy month of Ramadan, with Eid almost a week away, it would be appropriate to extend similar consideration to others, just as was done with Wangchuk," Omar said.

He noted that many of the detained youths are first-time offenders and may not have been actively involved in the protests.

"As an expression of goodwill, revoking cases against them and releasing some from jail would be a positive step," he added.

Omar also stressed the importance of stability in Ladakh and said the assurances made to the region must be fulfilled, just as promises made to Jammu and Kashmir should also be honoured.

Responding to a question about the Centre's review of security for National Conference president Farooq Abdullah after a recent assassination attempt, the chief minister said the circumstances behind the incident must first be explained.

"The attack occurred; it should not have happened. First, they need to explain why it took place. Only then can we discuss further actions. God saved him," he said.

Speaking about the Spring Festival and the upcoming opening of the Tulip Garden in Srinagar, Omar expressed hope that the events would mark the beginning of a strong summer tourist season in the Valley.

However, he said rising airfares due to tensions in the Middle East could affect tourist inflow.

"We hope tourism will increase, but airfare is rising not only for international flights but also domestically. IndiGo has started adding a fuel surcharge. We need to see how much impact this will have on the season," he said, adding that the government remains optimistic about the tourism outlook.

J&K Now Leads

fisheries to incentivize entrepreneurship, establish hatcheries, trout farming and value-added ventures," he said.

Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir holds the potential to become a national model for integrated fisheries development, adding that a value-chain approach could help generate employment, reduce post-harvest losses and improve the income of fish farmers.

Highlighting the sector's progress, the Lieutenant Governor said trout production has increased significantly in recent years.

"Trout output rose from 1,663 tons in FY 2021-22 to a record 2,650 tons in 2024-25. Private sector trout units increased from 936 to 1,649; hatcheries from one to nine; trout feed mills from zero to six; Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) units from two to nine; and biofloc units from 10 to 59," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also expressed gratitude to the Government of India for sanctioning a Rs 100 crore Integrated Aqua Park project in Anantnag, which he said would strengthen aquaculture infrastructure, enhance fish production and generate employment opportunities in the region.

Referring to the broader development of the region, Sinha said the rapid economic and social progress of Jammu and Kashmir requires sustained efforts from all sections of society, particularly farmers.

"At the heart of development lies our vibrant farming community, who are not mere producers but the bedrock of our identity and economy. Now is the time to honor their role with due respect, investment and technology," he said.

He also pointed out several challenges facing the fisheries sector, including the impact of climate change, rising water temperatures, water scarcity, slow growth of native species and fish health risks.

"To unlock its full potential, we must advance cold-water agriculture scientifically, genetically improve trout and carp breeds, prioritise climate-resilient systems, disease diagnostics and aquatic health management. Innovation in indigenous feeds and robust seed-feed supply chains are vital for the fisheries sector," he said.

On the occasion, model guidelines for the development of cold-water fisheries were released. Progressive fish farmers, fisheries startups and FFPOs were felicitated, while sanction letters were handed over to beneficiaries under the Kisan Credit Card scheme and other initiatives.

The conference brought together policymakers, researchers and stakeholders from different states and Union Territories to explore collaborative strategies for the sustainable development of India's cold-water fisheries.

Among those present were Omar Abdullah, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister of State for Fisheries S. P. Singh Baghel, J&K Minister for Agriculture Production Javid Ahmad Dar, senior officials, experts and researchers.

'Anantnag To Get

during the National Conference on Cold Water Fisheries organised by the Department of Fisheries in Srinagar.

The event was attended by Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Union Minister of State for Fisheries S. P. Singh Baghel, among others.

Sinha said the Integrated Aqua Park in Anantnag would help strengthen aquaculture infrastructure, boost cold-water fisheries development and increase fish production in Jammu and Kashmir while creating employment opportunities.

The Union minister stressed the need to scale up trout production and enhance the income of cold-water fish farmers by improving productivity, expanding value addition and tapping export markets where these species have strong demand.

He also highlighted the government's focus on developing an end-to-end value chain to ensure that cold-water regions can efficiently produce, process and market trout and other fish species with improved access to modern infrastructure and stronger market linkages.

Singh further urged the organisation of fish farmers through cooperatives and encouraged states and Union Territories to support farmers in accessing government schemes, infrastructure and credit facilities.

On the occasion, the Union minister, along with the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister, jointly released the Model Guidelines for Reservoir Fisheries and Aquaculture Management.

The guidelines provide a comprehensive framework covering scientific seed stocking, cage and pen-based aquaculture, leasing and governance mechanisms, biodiversity conservation, value-chain linkages and monitoring systems.

Natural Fish Stocks

while production must increase, protecting the region's fragile ecosystem and natural fish stocks remains equally important.

"While increasing production, we must ensure sustainability. Our environment must not be damaged and our natural fish stocks must remain protected," he said.

The conference, organised by the Department of Fisheries under the Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, brought together policymakers, experts and stakeholders to discuss the sustainable development of India's cold-water fisheries sector.

Among those present were Union Minister for Fisheries Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Minister of State for Fisheries S. P. Singh Baghel and J&K Minister for Agriculture Production Javid Ahmad Dar.

Welcoming the delegates to Srinagar, Abdullah thanked the Government of India for choosing Jammu and Kashmir as the venue for the conference and said it offered an opportunity to share experiences and learn from emerging practices in the fisheries sector.

Highlighting the importance of innovation, the Chief Minister said technological advancements are increasingly reshaping aquaculture and even overcoming geographical limitations.

Referring to an example shared during the conference, Abdullah said a young entrepreneur in Hyderabad has successfully established a facility producing nearly 200 metric tonnes of trout using advanced techniques despite operating in a tropical climate.

"This shows that technology can overcome geographical limitations. Regions like ours must therefore continue to improve techniques and adopt modern scientific practices to stay ahead," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government has a responsibility to support fishermen and aquaculture entrepreneurs who depend on fisheries for their livelihoods.

"Our responsibility is to strengthen those who have taken up fisheries as their livelihood. We must help them increase production, improve infrastructure in remote areas and ensure better post-production facilities," he said.

Abdullah also called for greater use of scientific research and innovation to ensure sustainable growth in the sector.

"Science and research must guide the development of this sector. We need to identify new techniques and innovations that can help increase cold-water fisheries production in a sustainable manner," he said.

He further noted that climate change poses new challenges to sectors such as agriculture, horticulture and fisheries in the region.

"Climate change is becoming increasingly visible. We recently witnessed unusual temperatures in Srinagar in February and early flowering of trees this year. Even the Tulip Garden is ready much earlier than usual. These changes will inevitably impact sectors like fisheries, and we must be prepared," he said.

Highlighting Kashmir's long association with trout farming, the Chief Minister said the region has over a century of experience in the sector.

"It has been about 126 years since trout was first introduced in Kashmir around 1900. We have rich experience in this sector and must share it with others while also learning from best practices in states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and those in the Northeast," he said.

Only 1-2% Corruption

that eventually carries out the trap operation to ensure impartiality.

Trap Cases Often Involve Lower-Rank Officials

Responding to criticism that the ACB targets lower-rank officials more frequently, Pathak said such perceptions arise because these officials are usually the ones dealing directly with cash transactions.

"The officers who deal directly with cash and smaller payments are usually at the lower level. That is why trap cases are more visible at that level," he said.

However, he said the bureau is ready to act against higher authorities if complainants come forward and cooperate with investigators.

Safeguards Against False Complaints

Pathak acknowledged that false or malicious complaints do occur and said the bureau has safeguards to prevent innocent officials from being framed.

He said anonymous and pseudonymous complaints are generally not entertained in accordance with government guidelines.

"Our responsibility is not only to catch corrupt officials but also to ensure that honest officers are not wrongly implicated," he said.

Outreach And Awareness

The ACB Director said the bureau has been conducting public outreach programmes to encourage citizens to report corruption and understand complaint mechanisms.

During Vigilance Awareness Week, organised around the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on October 31, the bureau reached nearly 50,000 people through awareness campaigns under the theme "Vigilance is Shared Responsibility."

J&K Bank Case Under Investigation

On the alleged scam involving Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Pathak said the investigation is ongoing and requires careful examination of evidence and documents.

"Investigation is a long process. Evidence has to be collected, documents examined and links between the accused established. It cannot be concluded in just a few days after registering an FIR," he said.

Reiterating the need for public support, Pathak said corruption can be effectively tackled only when citizens actively refuse to participate in corrupt practices and cooperate with investigative agencies. (KNO)

CM Launches E-ticketing System for J&K Gardens

'Badamwari Reflects Kashmir's Cultural Vibrancy'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Almond Blossom Festival symbolizes Kashmir's timeless connection with nature and its vibrant cultural traditions, describing Badamwari as a cherished part of Srinagar's heritage, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Saturday.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Almond Blossom Festival-2026 at Badamwari in Srinagar's old city, the Chief Minister said the blooming almond trees mark the arrival of spring and reflect the spirit of renewal and hope in the Valley.

"The blooming almond blossoms mark not only the arrival of spring but also the spirit of renewal, hope and cultural vibrancy that defines Kashmir," he said.

Abdullah said festivals like the Almond Blossom Festival help revive historic spaces while promoting tourism and creating economic opportunities for lo-



cal artists, artisans and craftspeople.

"Events like the Almond Blossom Festival provide a wonderful platform to showcase the grandeur of Kashmir's spring season, cultural heritage, traditional crafts and artistic talent. These also help attract tourists and encourage community participation in preserving our heritage," he said.

The event, organised by the

Floriculture Department, witnessed participation from officials, artists, students and a large number of visitors including tourists.

Among those present were J&K ministers Javid Ahmad Dar and Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Tanvir Sadiq and other senior officials.

During his visit, the Chief Minister toured the almond

and interacted with visitors who gathered at the historic garden to witness the spring blossoms.

He also inspected an exhibition at the venue where progressive farmers, florists and artisans displayed their produce and handicrafts. Abdullah appreciated the stall owners for showcasing a wide range of products and commended their role in preserving Kashmir's traditional crafts while promoting horticulture and floriculture.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also launched an online ticketing system for gardens across Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at simplifying the ticketing process and improving convenience for visitors.

"The introduction of online ticketing for our gardens is an important step towards modernising tourist facilities and ensuring a seamless experience for visitors," he said, adding that the initiative would make access to

gardens easier for both tourists and locals.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, Abdullah said the Almond Blossom Festival marks the beginning of the tourism season in Kashmir.

"Today's event marks the beginning of our tourist season, which will continue with the opening of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden in the coming days. We hope a large number of tourists will visit and enjoy the beauty of Kashmir," he said.

The Chief Minister, however, noted that rising international airfare and fuel surcharges could affect tourist inflow, though he expressed optimism about the overall season.

"Ticket prices on international flights are increasing and fuel surcharges have been introduced, which may impact the tourist season. Even then, we remain hopeful that the number of visitors will rise this year," he said.

J&K, Ladakh Likely to Rely on 30% Coal Energy by 2030

Observer News Service

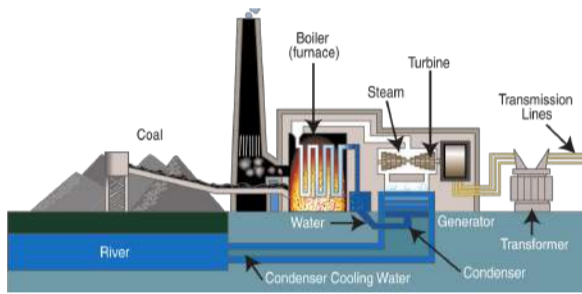
SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Union Territories are likely to depend on nearly 30 per cent of coal-based energy by the year 2030.

According to official documents available with KNO, the likely total projected contracted capacity for the year 2035-36 is around 11,001 Megawatts (MW).

"The projected contracted capacity consists of 3239 MW from coal, 129 MW from gas, 68 MW from nuclear, 3666 MW from hydro, 2040 MW from solar, 598 MW from Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) and 1261 MW from MTOA or STOA," it reads.

The documents reveal that the capacity shall be able to meet the projected demand with prescribed reliability criteria.

It further said that any deviations in the commissioning schedule of the planned capacity could result in a situation where the UT is unable to meet the projected peak demand and energy re-



quirements identified with the available resources.

"Such changes may also lead to an increase in the cost of reliably meeting the UT's power demand," it reads.

In February 2025, KNO reported that Jammu and Kashmir has informed Central Electricity Authority (CEA) that it has planned an additional 2200 Megawatts (MWs) of power till 2030.

This includes nearly 1,000 MWs of coal and solar energy, with the officials saying that "Last JKPDD has already entered a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) of coal-based power of over 390 MWs under Shakti Policy."

This news agency in December 2025 had reported

that Jammu and Kashmir imports more than 95 per cent of its electricity—a stark dependency that leaves the region vulnerable as it grapples with an 800 MW power deficit.

In that month, Jammu and Kashmir was importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours.

The officials had said that during the other hours, the region is importing electricity ranging from 2400 MWs to 2800 MWs.

The official, however, had clarified that the power import includes all the sources including the power allocated from the centre and other Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).

Dr Darakhshan Chairs Meeting to Review Eid, Shab-e-Qadr Arrangements

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, on Saturday chaired a high-level meeting in Jammu to review and finalize arrangements for the upcoming religious occasions of Shab-e-Qadr and Eid across the Jammu division.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from various departments, including Additional Commissioner Jammu Dr Mushtaq Ahmad, DIG Security Rashmi Wazir, SP Headquarters Irshad Husain Rather, Dy SP Security Bishness Kumar, Deputy Director Fire Services Himanshu Gandotra, Additional District Magistrate Jammu Sania Haq Khan, Joint Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation Abdul Sattar, Dy SP Traffic South Dr Sumaiya Wani, Executive Engineer PHE City Sanjeev Kumar Gupta, Superintendent Engineer PDD Jammu Anil Verma, Field Publicity Officer DIPR Jammu Mohit Sharma, Assistant Director Food Supplies

Haroon Naik, Special Officer Auqaf Dr Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Administrator Jammu Abid Hussain, Executive Officer Samba Riaz Malik, Executive Officer Doda Javed Iqbal Zargar, Executive Officer Reasi Mohammad Akhlaq, and Executive Officer Kishtwar Firdaus Bhavani, among others.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held to chalk out foolproof plans to facilitate devotees and ensure smooth conduct of religious gatherings during Shab-e-Qadr and Eid celebrations in the Jammu division.

Dr Andrabi stressed the need for close coordination among all departments and the Waqf Board to ensure



that adequate arrangements are put in place for the convenience of the public during the festive occasions.

"Our holy festivals bind us together and infuse in us the spirit of compassion and love. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that all necessary facilities are provided for the people during these festivals," she said while addressing the officers.

She directed the concerned departments to work in close synergy to ensure proper arrangements, including security, sanitation, power and water supply, traffic regulation, and other essential services at mosques, shrines, and other places of religious significance across the division.

Dr Andrabi stressed the need for close coordination among all departments and the Waqf Board to ensure

that adequate arrangements are put in place for the convenience of the public during the festive occasions.

"Our holy festivals bind us together and infuse in us the spirit of compassion and love. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that all necessary facilities are provided for the people during these festivals," she said while addressing the officers.

She directed the concerned departments to work in close synergy to ensure proper arrangements, including security, sanitation, power and water supply, traffic regulation, and other essential services at mosques, shrines, and other places of religious significance across the division.

CS Assesses Preparedness to Promote Arts Activities

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Saturday chaired a review meeting to examine a proposal for extending cultural activities to schools and higher education institutions across all districts of Jammu & Kashmir, with the aim of harnessing and channelising the creative potential of the youth through structured arts based interventions.

The meeting, convened under the aegis of the Department of Culture, was attended by senior officers of the Culture and School Education departments along with other stakeholders.

Chairing the meeting, the Chief Secretary called for a well-structured and actionable plan for attracting the young population of J&K towards arts and cultural activities. He suggested that a number of selected High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools and higher education institutions be identified and utilised as nodal centres for discovering, nurturing and giving direction to potential talent in art forms including poetry, creative writing, theatre, visual arts, painting and music.

The CS underlined the critical importance of identifying and engaging resource persons from diverse art forms as an essential prerequisite for the success of the programme. He emphasised that youth engagement through the arts is fully in consonance with the spirit and vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates for a holistic, experiential and multidisciplinary approach to learning.

The Chief Secretary stressed that participation of youth in cultural activities must be made impactful and interactive, moving beyond passive reception to active engagement. "We need to encourage our youth to participate meaningfully in such activities. The engagement has to be impactful and interactive," he observed. (Observer News Service)

Spring Bloom to Bring Tourism Opportunities: Director Tourism

SRINAGAR: Director Tourism Kashmir Peerzada Qamar Sajad on Saturday said the opening of Badamwari and the scheduled opening of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden on Monday send a strong and positive message to tourists across the country and the world.

Badamwari garden was thrown open to the public earlier in the day by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, marking the arrival of the spring season in the valley. Sajad said the developments create encouraging vibes for the tourism sector and reflect the beginning of a vibrant season in Kashmir.

According to KNS, he said the tulip garden, known as Asia's largest, will welcome visitors from Monday and is expected to attract a large number of tourists during the bloom period.

"The exhibition of colorful flowers and the grandeur of different varieties add to the glamour of the tourism world," Sajad said, adding that the coming days are expected to bring prosperity and happiness for the tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir. (Observer News Service)

Drug Peddler Arrested in Pulwama

SRINAGAR: Acting against drug trafficking, Police in Pulwama arrested a drug peddler and recovered charas-like substance during naka checking in Litter.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a police party from Police Station Litter at a checkpoint established at Rakh Litter and checking pedestrians and vehicles. During checking, a person carrying a polythene bag was seen approaching from Litter towards Rakh Litter. On noticing the police party, the person attempted to flee from the spot, however, the police team acted swiftly and apprehended the individual. During search, substantial quantity of charas-like substance was recovered. He has been identified as Nawaz Ahmad Khan son of Gull Mohammad Khan resident of Wachi, Shopian. (Observer News Service)

Rs 800/kg Mutton Ahead of Eid Sparks Public Anger in Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With the holy month of Ramadan nearing its end and Eid al-Fitr just days away, mutton prices in several Kashmir markets have reportedly surged to nearly rupees 800 per kilogram, triggering widespread anger among consumers who accuse authorities of failing to regulate the market.

Residents from various parts of Srinagar and other districts said that the steep hike has placed an additional burden on households already grappling with rising living costs during the holy month.

"Every year, the same story repeats. As Ramadan approaches its final days and Eid draws closer, mutton prices shoot up overnight, and there is no one from the

government on the ground to check the rates," said a resident from Srinagar's Bemina area. "For a middle-class family, paying Rs 800 per kilo is simply unaffordable."

Another consumer questioned the absence of enforcement teams in markets. "If the government has fixed rates or rules, why are they not being implemented? People are being forced to buy at whatever price is demanded," he said.

Many shoppers accused authorities of ignoring the issue despite repeated public complaints. "Officials move around in vehicles and make statements, but when it comes to regulating essential food items, they are nowhere to be seen," a group of residents from downtown Srinagar said. When contacted, Mehraj

ud Din, General Secretary of the Mutton Dealers Association Kashmir, told KNO that authorities have not taken any concrete steps to address the situation.

"The government is not doing anything at all. They are sleeping over the issue," he said, adding that officials appear more active on social media rather than resolving problems affecting traders and consumers.

He said the issue of livestock transportation from Punjab has also been flagged multiple times by traders, but nothing has been done so far despite the passing of over three months.

"Trucks carrying livestock still face harassment and delays at checkpoints such as Shambhu and Madhopur, while the government has

not been able to resolve the issue yet," he said.

Several other mutton dealers said that the absence of a proper regulatory framework has also contributed to the problem.

They said that after the administration scrapped the earlier Jammu and Kashmir Mutton (Licensing and Control) Order, 1973, which allowed authorities to regulate the trade and enforce price notifications, the market has largely been left to operate without effective oversight.

"If the government really wants to control prices, they should bring a proper law or pass a bill once the elected Assembly is in place and create a clear regulatory system for the trade," a dealer said.

Another trader said the government cannot simply

blame dealers when there is no clear mechanism in place. "When the previous regulatory order was removed, the government stepped back from price control. Now the market runs on supply and demand," he said.

Sources in the mutton dealers' association revealed to KNO that this is the first time in many years that no meeting was held between authorities and traders ahead of Ramadan and Eid.

"In earlier years, meetings used to be conducted at district levels to review supply and prices. Even officials at the block level, including BDOs, would coordinate with traders. But this year, no such meeting was held. It seems the government is either asleep or deliberately ignoring the issue," a dealer said.

Unlabelled Frozen Chicken Continues to Enter Kashmir, Officials Seize Consignment

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Despite last year's major rotten meat controversy, unlabelled frozen chicken continues to enter Kashmir Valley markets, raising fresh concerns about food safety standards and enforcement of regulations.

According to KNT, authorities in south Kashmir's Anantnag district have seized and sealed around 200 kilograms of frozen boneless chicken that was brought from outside the region for sale in local markets.

The consignment, officials said, was found without mandatory labelling details such as manufacturing and expiry dates, which are required under

food safety regulations. Officials said the frozen chicken had been transported from Delhi and was intercepted during an inspection drive conducted by the Food Safety Department in the district.

"The consignment did not mention the manufacturing and expiry dates, which is a violation of food safety norms," an official associated with the inspection said.

Authorities said the entire consignment was sealed after discrepancies were found in the labelling of the product.

Officials added that an investigation has been initiated to determine how the unlabelled poultry product was brought into the Valley and supplied to local markets.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE, SRINAGAR
NEAR PETROL PUMP BAGHI ALI MARDAN KHAN, SRINAGAR - 190011
Email ID: gmdic-srinagar@jk.gov.in TEL/FAX: 0194-2427478

PUBLIC NOTICE
M/s Zahoor Steel Works, IE Zakura, Srinagar stands formally registered with this office under No. 07/09/03464/PMT/MSME dated 4-11-1988 for the activity of "Gates Grills, Water tanks and roof trusses with additional line of activity fabrication of MS carpet looms, MS doors, windows and angle iron posts as proprietorship concern of Mehraj Ud Din Bhat S/o Ghulam Rasool Bhat R/o Kokerbagh Malla Bagh Hazratbal Srinagar.
Now the promoter of the unit has approached this office for change in name and style and change in line of activity from existing to M/s Al Rehman Poultry and "Dressing and processing of chicken by manual process by hand tools".
Any person having any objection to the above proposed changes in favour of the unit shall report to the office of General Manager, District Industries Centre, Srinagar within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.
Sd/-
General Manager
District Industries Centre
Srinagar
DIPK-11888-25
DT: 14/03/2026

Email:- telkrmrzone@jkpolice.gov.in Phone No.(office) 0194-2452698 (Fax) 0194-2506526

ZONAL HEADQUARTERS POLICE TELECOMMUNICATION KASHMIR

PUBLIC NOTICE

Muzamil Arfat Lone S/O Gh Ahmad Lone R/O Mastan Gurez Bandipora working as HC (Telecom) in J&K Police Telecommunication under Regimental No. No. 2378/PW, TEL-991729 has represented for correction in his name recorded as Muzamil Arfat instead of Muzamil Arfat Lone in the service records of this office.

As such, objections if any, in this regard are invited from General Public, which should reach this office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this Notice.

No:- ESTT/PF-2378/KZ-2026/ 5057 Sr. Supt. of Police,
Dated:- 14-03-2026 DIPK-11894-25 DT: 14/03/2026 Telecommunication Kashmir.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE, SRINAGAR
NEAR PETROL PUMP BAGHI ALI MARDAN KHAN, SRINAGAR - 190011
Email ID: gmdic-srinagar@jk.gov.in TEL/FAX: 0194-2427478

PUBLIC NOTICE
M/s Ismail Enterprises, Industrial Estate Zainakote, Srinagar stands formally registered with this office under No. 0101/003/08969/PMT/MSME dated 25-04-2016 for the activity of "Tea Processing and Grading (on provisional basis)," as proprietorship concern of Ulfat Gowher W/o Gowhar Sultan Mattoo R/o Zainakote Srinagar.
Now the promoter of the unit intends to change the line of activity from existing to "Warehouse Service for edible items",
Any person having any objection with regard to the above proposed changes in favour of the unit, shall report to the office of General Manager, District Industries Centre, Srinagar within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.
Sd/-
General Manager
District Industries Centre
Srinagar
DIPK-11889-30
DT: 14/03/2026

68k Cases Settled in J&K's First National Lok Adalat-2026

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: About 68,000 cases were settled at the day-long National Lok Adalat across Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, officials said.

An amount of over Rs 55.86 crore was awarded as compensation or settlement amount in motor accident claims, civil, criminal, labour disputes, electricity and water bills cases, land acquisition, family matters, cheque dishonour and bank recovery cases, according to an official spokesperson.

Continuing its endeavour to fulfil the constitutional commitment of providing swift, cost-effective, and efficient dispute resolution to the masses in general and the litigant public in particular, the J-K Legal Services Authority organised the first National Lok Adalat for the year 2026 across the Union Territory to promote amicable settlements in



a wide range of cases, the spokesman said.

According to the available information, out of the total 76,707 cases taken up by 194 benches, 67,993 cases were amicably settled and disposed of involving an amount of over Rs 55.86 crore as compensation or settlement amount, he said.

To ensure maximum participation and effective disposal of cases, the spokesman noted that pre-Lok Adalat sittings and pre-

counselling sessions were conducted well in advance across the districts of the Union Territory, encouraging parties to explore amicable settlement of their disputes.

Several awareness programmes, meetings and sensitisation sessions were also conducted by the Legal Services Institutions to promote the concept and importance of Lok Adalats among litigants and stakeholders, he said.

Iran Evacuation: 101 J&K Students to Reach Home Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant development in the ongoing evacuation of Indian medical students from Iran, the first batch of around 101 students, including many from Jammu and Kashmir, is expected to reach India on March 15.

According to details obtained by KNO, the first batch will depart at 1:25 AM from Zvartnots International Airport in Yerevan, Armenia, after crossing into the country from Iran. The students will travel via Dubai before reaching India.

As per the travel schedule, the flight is expected to arrive in Mumbai at around 4:15 AM, while another group will reach New Delhi at approximately 9:55 AM on March 15.

Officials said that around 90 students have already crossed into Azerbaijan, while others are currently on their way towards different international borders as part of the evacuation route being facilitated for Indian nationals stranded in Iran.

Most of the students in the first batch belong to Urmia University of Medical Sci-



ences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, institutions that host a large number of Indian medical students, particularly from Jammu and Kashmir.

However, the evacuation schedule has faced certain disruptions. Two previously scheduled flights—one expected to reach Mumbai on March 14 and another planned for March 17—have been cancelled, leading to changes in travel arrange-

ments and delays in the evacuation process.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, National Vice President of the All India Medical Students Association (AIMSA), said that efforts are on to bring back all students stranded in war-hit Iran.

Students from Isfahan and Arak, who are currently staying in their respective hostels, have requested that concerned authorities, including AIMSA, raise their

concerns with the authorities and expedite their relocation. They said uncertainty regarding their evacuation schedule is causing anxiety among them.

Several students from Islamic Azad University and Iran University of Medical Sciences, including those who were earlier relocated from Tehran, have already reached Azerbaijan as part of the evacuation route, while others are still travelling towards the border

checkpoints.

Another group of students has successfully reached Tabriz after travelling from Qom, where they had stayed overnight. They are now moving towards the Armenian border, from where further travel arrangements are expected to be made.

Students studying in Kerman were shifted to Qom on the evening of March 13, while those from Shiraz University of Medical Sciences are also currently stationed there and are awaiting further instructions regarding their evacuation and travel arrangements.

Families of the students in Jammu and Kashmir have expressed relief over the progress of the evacuation, but have urged authorities to ensure the safe and timely return of all remaining students still stranded in different parts of Iran.

The evacuation process is being carried out in phases as students are being moved from different Iranian cities to safer locations and then transported towards neighbouring countries to facilitate their return to India.

Ladakh Plans to Create 50 Small Water Bodies

Press Trust Of India

LEH: Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday directed the administration to prepare a plan for creating at least 50 small water bodies across the Union Territory.

The L-G, during a meeting with Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra, also directed that the locations be identified and a detailed action plan be prepared within a period of 15 days.

"Ladakh, being a high-altitude cold desert region, is increasingly experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change. The region is witnessing decreasing snowfall, receding glaciers, rising temperatures and depletion of the water

table, all of which are posing serious challenges to water availability for the inhabitants of Ladakh," the L-G said.

He stressed that adopting sustainable water management practices is essential to mitigate the impact of climate change and ensure long-term water security for the people of Ladakh.

He said the proposed water bodies would not only help address irrigation needs but also contribute to strengthening the sustainability and livelihoods of local communities.

Saxena directed that the proposed plan should be holistic and scientifically designed, taking into account the geographical and climatic conditions of the



region, so that the water bodies can effectively serve both agricultural and community needs.

He reiterated the commitment of the Union Territory administration to undertake measures to safeguard Ladakh's fragile ecosystem while ensuring the welfare and livelihood security of its people.

An official said the key objective behind developing these water bodies is to

address the water-related challenges faced by the people of Ladakh, particularly farmers who depend heavily on limited water resources for irrigation.

Further, these water bodies would also fulfil the watering needs of the roadside plantation, which will begin in a mission mode, soon, he said.

He said the water bodies, to be developed in consultation with the local people, will also be used to conserve the rainwater as well as the melting snow that otherwise gets wasted every year.

Further, during the winters, when these water bodies would freeze, they could also be used for organising winter sports, the official said.

Demand Grows for Extension of Ladli Beti Scheme to Entire J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Voices are growing across Jammu and Kashmir demanding the extension of the Ladli Beti Scheme to all districts of the Union Territory, with residents questioning why the scheme currently covers only a limited number of districts while many others remain excluded.

The scheme, which was launched to promote the birth and education of girl children and to discourage gender discrimination, is presently operational in only eight districts of Jammu and Kashmir, leaving twelve districts outside its ambit. This selective implementation has drawn criticism from locals who argue that the benefits should reach every eligible girl across the region.

People from several districts told KNO that the scheme was initially designed to address concerns regarding the low girl-child ratio and to encourage families to support the education and well-being of girls. However, they alleged that the criteria for selecting districts have not been applied fairly.

"Some districts where the girl child ratio is comparatively better have been included under the scheme, while others with lower ratios have been left out. This raises serious questions about the selection process," said a resident of Shopian.

Another resident from Ganderbal said that limiting the scheme to a few districts undermines its broader objective of promoting gender equality and empowering girls. "Every

girl deserves equal opportunity and support. Restricting the scheme to a handful of districts creates inequality and leaves many deserving families without assistance," he added.

He added that Ganderbal has a lower girl child ratio than many districts included in the scheme, and due to unknown reasons, this district hasn't been covered under the scheme.

Ladli Beti Scheme provides financial support to families of girl children, which is deposited in a bank account and can later be utilised for the girl's education or other important needs once she reaches adulthood. Many families, especially from economically weaker sections, view the scheme as a significant support mechanism.

Waqar Fayaz, a social ac-

tivist, said that extending the scheme to all districts would help improve awareness regarding the importance of educating girls and discourage gender bias. "The government should ensure that such welfare initiatives are inclusive. If the aim is to protect and empower the girl child, then the scheme must be implemented uniformly across the entire Union Territory," he said.

Parents also expressed disappointment that their daughters are unable to benefit from the scheme simply because their district is not covered. "Our daughters are as deserving as any other child. The government should not differentiate between districts when it comes to schemes meant for the welfare of girls," said another resident from Kulgam.



Achieve financial freedom

Set up Systematic Investment Plans in Exchange Traded Funds (Shariah Based ETF)



Contact: M I Securities - 9906518342 / 9906684475

1, 10 Samad Complex, Ma Link Road, Srinagar, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar - 190001

Registered Office: Sharekhan Limited, The Ruby, 18th Floor, 29 Semapuri Bapat Marg, Dadar West, Mumbai 400 028, Maharashtra, India. Tel: 022-67502000. Fax No: 022-24327343. Correspondence Address: 10th Floor, Grigopol Bldg, No. 9, Raheja Mindspace, Aroki Knowledge Park Rd, MSEB Staff Colony, TTC Industrial Area, Aroki, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra 400708, India. Tel: 022-61169000/61150000. Fax no: 61168699. SEBI Regn. Nos. BSE / NSE - CASH / IPO / CD / NCF - Commodity: B1200021237. DP: NCF - CDS: IN-20-2018. CN: U99999MH1999R1008498. Sharekhan Ltd. (AMFI registered Mutual Fund Distributor) Mutual Fund: AMFI 20669. (date of initial registration: 03/07/2004, and valid till 02/07/2026). IPO: Registered Corporate Agent (Composite) License No. CA950, valid till June 13, 2027. PMS: IPO0000782. Research Analyst: BH00006183. NCF Member ID: 26125. For any complaints email at: ig@sharekhan.com. Compliance Officer: Mr. Joby John Meledan, email id: compliance@sharekhan.com. Tel: 022-42263303. Please refer the Risk Disclosure Document issued by SEBI and go through the Rights and Obligations and Do's and Don'ts issued by Stock Exchanges and Depositories before trading on the Stock Exchanges. For commodities derivatives, please note that Commodities Derivatives are highly leveraged instruments. PMS is not covered in Commodity Derivative Segment by Sharekhan Limited. Before investing in the asset class consider your investment objectives, level of experience and risk appetite carefully. Mutual Fund investment are subject to market risk. Read all the scheme related documents carefully before investing. Brokerage will not exceed SEBI prescribed limit. Mutual Funds are not Exchange traded products and all disputes with respect to the distribution activity would not have access to Exchange investor redressal forum or Arbitration Mechanism. The figures shown above are as of 30th November 2024. Such representations are not indicative of future results. For more details visit www.sharekhan.com. (AP Regn. Nos. BSE-0107480196720; NSE-206970951)