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### Pahalgam **Attack**

## One Year On, Memory Holds, Tourists Return



#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: A year after the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam that left 25 tourists and a local pony handler dead, authorities on Tuesday marked the anniversary with the unveiling of a memorial and stepped-up security across the region.

The black marble memorial, erected along the banks of the Lidder river, bears the names of all 26 victims and stands as a stark reminder of the violence that unfolded in the meadows of Baisaran on April 22 last year. Security has been significantly intensified in and around the hill resort, with additional police and paramilitary personnel deployed, checkpoints reinforced, and surveillance heightened to

ensure a peaceful commemoration. Officials said senior political leaders, civil society members, and families of the victims are expected to attend the observance.

The attack had sent shockwaves across Jammu and Kashmir, severely denting the tourism sector, a key pillar of the region's economy. However, officials and stakeholders say the industry has shown signs of recovery in recent months, aided by sustained outreach and promotional efforts by the government.

Investigations into the attack have progressed over the past year. While the three Pakistani militants involved were killed in an encounter in the Srinagar hills within months

### Survivors Struggle With Lasting Trauma

Two days ago, a notification from a social media platform popped up on Asavari Jagdale's phone about a joyful and happy snap of her family's trip from Pune to Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir exactly | [More on P6](#)

### Army Vows Firm Action Against Terror

Ahead of the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack, the Indian Army on Tuesday reiterated its resolve to counter terrorism, warning that any breach of "the boundaries of humanity" would invite a decisive response. | [More on P6](#)

## Emergency Healthcare Access Top Priority: CM

Flags Off Ambulances, Equipment Under CSR Push



#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday flagged off seven ambulances and a range of healthcare equipment from the Civil Secretariat here for distribution across multiple districts of Jammu and Kashmir under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The support has been provided by Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation as part of its outreach to strengthen public healthcare infrastructure.

The ambulances, costing 144.73 lakh, will be deployed across districts to improve emergency response, particularly in underserved areas. In addition, seven TruNat machines worth 58.80 lakh and two handheld X-ray machines costing 35.96 lakh have been provided to enhance diagnostic capabilities.

For the Thalassaemia Day Care Centre at SMGS Hospital, Jammu, medical equipment and essential medicines worth 29.09 lakh have been supplied to support patient care and treatment | [More on P6](#)

## US-Iran Talks In Doubt As Truce Nears End

Trump Threatens Bombing If No Deal; Iran Rejects Talks Under Threat

#### Trans Asia News

Tehran: The prospect of a second round of US-Iran negotiations in Islamabad hung in the balance on Tuesday, as Tehran refused to engage "under the shadow of threats" and Donald Trump sent conflicting signals on diplomacy while indicating he was in no hurry to end the war.

The deepening uncertainty has cast a shadow over Pakistan's high-stakes mediation effort, with the ceasefire due to expire on Wednesday and fears mounting that the region could slide back into open conflict.

Iran's chief negotiator and parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf ruled out participation in further talks under current conditions, accusing Washington of turning negotiations into "a table of surrender" through continued military pressure, including a naval blockade



and recent actions at sea.

"We do not accept negotiations under the shadow of threats," he said, warning that Iran was prepared to "reveal new cards on the battlefield" if tensions escalated.

#### Mixed signals from Washington

Despite Tehran's stance, Trump said he still expected

to dispatch a negotiating team led by vice-president JD Vance to Islamabad. Yet he simultaneously dampened expectations for de-escalation, saying he was "highly unlikely" to extend the ceasefire.

In a series of statements, Trump paired talk of diplomacy with stark threats, warning that the United States could target Iran's infrastructure if a deal were not reached

— rhetoric that Iranian officials say undermines any meaningful negotiation.

The contradictions have reinforced Tehran's view, articulated by foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei, that Washington is not acting in good faith and remains committed to coercive tactics.

#### Islamabad talks in limbo

Pakistan, which brokered the initial ceasefire and hosted the first round of talks earlier this month, is now scrambling to keep the process alive. Officials say the next round has not been formally confirmed, even as preparations intensify in Islamabad.

Security has been significantly ramped up across the capital, with thousands of personnel deployed and routes to key locations heavily guarded, reflecting expectations of high-level delegations if talks | [More on P6](#)

## 2047 Is Not Just a Date, It Is A National Resolve: LG

Says Development Has Reached Every Doorstep Under PM Modi

#### Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said India is moving decisively towards becoming a developed nation, asserting that the vision for 2047 reflects a national resolve rooted in collective progress and inclusive growth.

He made these remarks while unveiling the statue of noted social worker Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh in Ghazipur.

Paying homage to Singh, the Lieutenant Governor described him as a "true karma yogi" who dedicated his life to selfless service. "He discharged his duties without expectation, served without any desire for fame, and built not for himself but for the coming generations," Sinha said, urging people to carry forward such ideals across all sections of society.

Highlighting Singh's contribution to education, Sinha



recalled the establishment of Mahamandaleswar Shri Bal Krishna Yati Inter College in 1974, noting that it was built with limited resources but strong public support. "He did not merely establish a college; he made a promise to the future. His belief that education can transform society remains a guiding force," he said.

Focusing on the broader theme of nation-building,

the Lieutenant Governor said India's development trajectory has undergone a significant shift in recent years. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said, development has moved beyond statistical achievements to directly impact people at the grassroots.

"Crores of families who once had no roof over their heads now have | [More on P6](#)

### Amarnath Yatra 2026

## Police Step Up Yatra Prep; Security Audit Across Routes

#### Observer News Service

Srinagar: Ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra scheduled to begin in July, police on Tuesday reviewed arrangements and security measures along both the Pahalgam and Baltal routes to ensure a safe and smooth pilgrimage.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anantnag, Amod Ashok Nagpure, visited Pahalgam to take stock of on-ground preparations and assess safety measures for pilgrims and tourists. Officials said he inspected key along the route, interacted with officers on duty, and stressed the need for seamless movement and secure facilities.

He directed personnel to maintain heightened vigilance and ensure that all arrangements are in place well ahead of the yatra.

Meanwhile, SSP Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama, conducted a comprehensive inspection of

the Baltal base camp to review preparedness for the Amarnath Yatra 2026.

During the visit, he assessed accommodation facilities, traffic regulation plans, security deployment, emergency response systems, and inter-agency coordination. He emphasised the need for fool-proof security measures, effective crowd management, and smooth facilitation for yatis.

Dhama also inspected the Domail yatra track, taking stock of arrangements on the ground and identifying areas requiring further strengthening. He directed officials to ensure timely completion of all necessary works to avoid inconvenience to pilgrims.

Senior officers and representatives from allied departments accompanied the SSP and briefed him on the status of ongoing preparations. He underscored the importance of close coordination among all stakeholders | [More on P6](#)

### HC Quashes PSA Detention Of Uri Man After 2 Years

M Ahmad

Srinagar, Apr 21: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has quashed a preventive detention order under the Public Safety Act (PSA) of a resident of Uri Baramulla, holding that the curtailment of personal liberty must strictly comply with constitutional safeguards and cannot rest on vague or mechanical grounds.

"Preventive detention laws mandate strict adherence to procedural safeguards, including timely communication of grounds, approval by the Government, and reference to the Advisory Board. Any infraction, however minor, vitiates the detention," said a bench of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal while setting aside the detention order dated 19 April 2024 issued by the | [More on P6](#)



A local man clicks a photograph of tourists at a riverside viewpoint in Pahalgam.

### Reshipora Kahcharai Land Case

## Div Com Asks DC Budgam To Enforce HC Status Quo

#### KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The Divisional Commissioner's office has asked the Deputy Commissioner Budgam to ensure strict compliance with a High Court order mandating status quo in Estate Reshipora, amid an ongoing legal challenge over alleged diversion of Kahcharai land.

The directive follows an interim order passed by the High Court of J&K and Ladakh at Srinagar in a writ petition filed by residents of village Reshipora through Syed Zulfikar Ali and another.

The petition challenges, among other things, Order No. DCB/ARA/CC/2026/94-97 dated March 16, 2026, issued by the Deputy Commissioner Budgam, alleging illegal | [More on P6](#)



## Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan DIPR's Cultural Unit Organizes Awareness Programme

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, the Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) organized an awareness programme at Government Boys High School (BHS) Theed, Harwan.

The event featured a thematic short play and a series of folk songs aimed at highlighting the harmful effects of drug abuse and promoting a healthy, substance-free lifestyle. The performances were well received and widely applauded by the students and staff, who appreciated the engaging and impactful medium of communication.

Addressing the gathering, AECO, Cultural Unit Srinagar, Syed Shakeel

Shan delivered a strong message to the youth, urging them to stay away from drugs and contribute positively to society.

Principal BHS Theed and other speakers also emphasized the importance of awareness, community participation, and early intervention in combating substance abuse.

The Principal expressed gratitude to the Cultural Unit Kashmir, for organizing such meaningful programmes across the Valley, stating that these initiatives play a vital role in educating and guiding young minds.

The programme concluded with a renewed commitment among students to uphold the values of a drug-free society and to act as ambassadors of positive change within their communities.



ON GUARD AMID CALM WATERS: A security personnel stands vigilant along the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar. KO Photo Abid Bhat

## Foolproof Security in Place for Darbar Move: SSP Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Assuring that all necessary security arrangements have been put in place, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Dr G.V. Sundeev Chakravarthy on Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir Police are fully prepared to ensure a safe, smooth and peaceful Darbar Move from Jammu to Srinagar.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event held at Tagore Hall here, the SSP, as reported by KNO, said the annual Darbar Move is being meticulously planned to ensure uninterrupted and secure movement of the civil secretariat and officials.

"We are preparing every year. A detailed plan has been formulated for the safe shifting of the Secretariat from

Jammu to Srinagar. Adequate security arrangements will be in place, and the movement will remain peaceful and secure," he said.

The SSP added that police deployment and protection measures around key officials and convoy routes are being strengthened to ensure foolproof arrangements during the exercise.

Highlighting the ongoing anti-narcotics drive in the district, Dr Chakravarthy said Srinagar Police has intensified its crackdown on drug networks under a structured campaign over the past 10 days.

"In the last 10 days, Srinagar Police have registered around 15 to 20 FIRs, and several drug peddlers have been arrested. Our efforts will continue with greater intensity in the coming days," he said.

He further said the objective is not

only to arrest drug peddlers but to dismantle the entire drug ecosystem, including identification and attachment of properties linked to illegal trade.

"We are targeting not just individuals involved in drug trafficking but also their financial and property networks to completely disrupt the ecosystem," he added.

At the cultural event at Tagore Hall, the SSP appreciated the organisers for promoting heritage and communal harmony through the celebration of Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti, stating that such programmes strengthen social unity and connect youth with cultural roots.

The SSP reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir Police will continue to support events that promote peace, culture and harmony across the region.

## Legal Awareness Programme Held at GHSS Nawakadal

Observer News Service

Srinagar: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar in collaboration with Chief Education Officer Srinagar today organized an awareness programme under the guidance of Haq Nawaz Zargar, Chairman DLSA (PD&SJ) Srinagar and overall supervision of Secretary DLSA Srinagar at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Nawakadal with the objective of sensitizing students about important legal provisions and social issues affecting society.

The programme witnessed active participation of students and staff, and featured informative sessions by legal experts. Jahan Ara, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel (LADC) delivered an insightful

lecture on the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, highlighting the rights of children, legal safeguards available to them, and the importance of reporting offences without fear. Emphasis was laid on creating a safe environment for children both at home and in educational institutions.

Adv. Sofiya Mudassir, Trained Mediator DLSA, spoke on the Dowry Prohibition Act and the concept of free legal aid. The speaker elaborated on the legal consequences of demanding or giving dowry and stressed the need to eradicate this social evil. Students were also informed about the availability of free legal aid services for eligible persons under various schemes, ensuring access to justice for all sections of society.

## Two School Students Injured in Maisuma after Hit by Vehicle

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Two school students were injured in a road traffic accident in the Maisuma area of Srinagar on Tuesday after their scooter was hit by a Maruti vehicle, police said.

The injured were shifted by a police team from Police Station Maisuma to SMHS Hospital Srinagar,

where doctors said their condition is stable.

The incident occurred in central Srinagar when the two minors, riding on a scooter, were struck by the vehicle, according to initial information provided by attendants.

The injured have been identified as Shayam, 15., a resident of Bemina, and Arsalan, 10, a resident

of Batmaloo.

Police acted promptly, shifting the injured to the hospital for treatment. Medical officials confirmed that both children are under observation and their condition is stable.

According to KNT, further investigation into the incident is underway, and efforts are being made to identify the vehicle involved.

## Srinagar Continues to Grapple with Over 64,000 Stray Dogs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The issue of stray dogs continues to pose a major urban challenge in Srinagar, where official figures indicate that over 64,000 stray dogs roam the city, contributing to growing public concern over safety and sanitation.

According to data shared by the government in the Jammu and

Kashmir Assembly recently, a total of 1,52,775 stray dogs were estimated across major urban centres of the Union Territory, based on a 2023 survey. Of these, 64,416 were recorded in Srinagar alone, making it the worst-affected city in the region.

Earlier, responding to a query by National Conference MLA Tanvir Sadiq, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah—who also holds the Housing and

Urban Development portfolio—had informed the House that the figures reflect the scale of the issue in key municipal areas.

Despite the passage of time since the disclosure, the situation on the ground remains a matter of concern, with residents across Srinagar continuing to report frequent dog attacks and rising unease, particularly among children and the elderly.

**Office of the Naib Tehsildar Palhallan**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that a case for issuance of Date of Birth Certificate has been submitted in favour of Yaqoob Hasnain, S/o Mohammad Maqbool Yattoo, R/o Sultanpora, with Date of Birth recorded as 24-09-2013. Objections, if any, regarding the particulars of the applicant may be submitted in writing before the Office of the Naib Tehsildar Palhallan within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. If no objections are received within the stipulated period, the case shall be processed as per rules.  
Naib Tehsildar  
Palhallan  
FKO

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM**  
Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420230003687  
Issued in favour of UMER RASHID DAR Parentage ABDUL RASHID DAR  
Whereas an application has been received by one UMER RASHID DAR Parentage ABDUL RASHID DAR wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as UMER RASHID DAR Which needs to be changed as UMER RASHID DAR. Also Date of Birth is entered as 22-03-1997 which needs to be changed as 23-03-1997.  
Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.  
Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir  
mcb

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**E-Tender Notice**  
Sr. DEE/GJAT acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders ([www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in)) against below titled Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only.  
Tender No.: 251-J-Elect-T-04-2026-27  
Name of work: 'Electrical Work in c/w Raising and Extension of High-Level Platforms at 11 stations in BAH-L-BRML section'.  
App. Cost (in Rs.): Rs. 1,71,82,832.55  
Earnest Money (in Rs.): Rs. 3,43,700.00  
Completion Period: 6 months  
Opening of tender: 13.05.2026 after 15:00 Hrs.  
Website Particulars: [www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in)  
No.: 251-J-Elect/T. Notice No. 04-Elect/2026-27 Dated: 20.04.2026 1318/2026  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

**Before The Hon'ble Court Of Principal  
District Judge Srinagar**  
In the case of:  
Ahmad Wani S/O Mohammad Maqbool Wani  
R/O 65/1 Dalgate Srinagar  
Caveator  
V/s  
Public at large  
Non-Caveators  
In the matter of: Caveat Petition  
May it please your honour,  
That the caveator reasonably and bonafidely apprehends filling of civil suit or any other proceeding/s by the non-caveators against the caveator and in case any such proceeding/s is filed the caveator be heard before according consideration in the matter.  
Caveator through counsel  
Shahid Makhdoomi  
Advocate  
IKO

Government of Jammu & Kashmir  
**OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT Hajin**  
Subject: Engagement of candidates for the Posts of Sahayikas (AWHs).  
This office has advertised Two posts of Sahayikas (AWHs) vide Advertisement Notice No. 01 of 2026 Dated 21-01-2026 under endorsement No: CDPO/Poshan/Hajin/Recruitment/2025/675-87 Dated: 21-01-2026 and same was published through department of information vide DIP No #DIPK-10263/25 in Newspapers Kashmir Images, Srinagar Times & The Counsellor Magazine on 23-01-2026 and vide publicity was given through PRLs and same was also uploaded on website of DC Bandipora and applications were received accordingly. After proper scrutiny of application forms by the Block Level selection committee the tentative selection of candidates for each ward was made accordingly as per H.R policy for Sangnis (AWW) & Sahayikas (AWH) constituted by Government vide order No: 222-JK (SWD) of 2022 Dated: 30-11-2022 which is now being published for inviting of objections if any within 10 days from the date of publication, after expiry of cut date no objection shall be entertained. The list of all candidates who have submitted the application form is mentioned at Annexure "A" and provisional/Tentative selection list as per Annexure "B" is shown below.

Annexure "A"							
S. No	Name of Candidate	Parentage / Husbands Name	Marital Status	DOB	Name of location for which she has applied	Marks obtained as per 10th Class Marks Sheet	Percentage of Marks
01	Shahnaza Bano	D/o Zahoor Ahmad Dar	Un-married	25-02-2006	Sri Hari Karangund W.No.1	332/500	66.40%
02	Rubeena Bano	D/o Abdul Haameed Kaloo	Un-married	14-02-2007	Sri Hari Karangund W.No.1	304/500	60.80%
03	Maiser Ara	W/o Aadil Bashir	Married	10-10-1996	Sri Hari Karangund W.No.1	257/500	51.40%
01	Afreena Ashraf	W/o Mohamad Ashraf Rather	Married	07-08-1992	Rather Mohalla Aias W. No.5	230/500	46.00%
01	Bisma Ashraf	W/o Sameer Ahmad Dar	Married	14-02-2000	Chringpora B W. No.1	248/500	49.60%
01	Salma Bano	W/o Mohd Ishaq Dar	Married	25-10-2000	SK Payeen F W.No.1	211/500	42.20%
Annexure "B"							
S. No	Name of Candidate	Parentage/ Husband's Name	DOB	Location for which selected Provisionally	Marks obtained as per 10th Class Marks Sheet	Percentage of Marks	Remarks
01	Maiser Ara	W/o Aadil Bashir	10-10-1996	Sri Hari Karangund W.No.1	257/500	51.40%	
02	Afreena Ashraf	W/o Mohamad Ashraf Rather	07-08-1992	Rather Mohalla Aias W. No.5	230/500	46.00%	
03	Bisma Ashraf	W/o Sameer Ahmad Dar	14-02-2000	Chringpora B W. No.1	248/500	49.60%	
04	Salma Bano	W/o Mohd Ishaq Dar	25-10-2000	SK Payeen F W.No.1	211/500	42.20%	

No: CDPO/Hjn/Estt/2026-27/  
DIPK-615/26 Dated: 21-04-2026  
Child Development Project Officer,  
Poshan Project Hajin Bandipora.  
(Chairperson/Member Secretary BLS)

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

**AIRPORTS**  
SHEIK 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 )

**PRAYERS**  
FAJR 4: 23  
ZUHR 12: 32  
ASR 5: 13  
Magrib 7: 10  
ISHA 8: 37

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
04 Zil-Qadah  
1447

**This Day In History**

- 536 St. Agapetus I ends his reign as Catholic Pope
- 1056 - Supernova Crab nebula last seen by the naked eye
- 1073 - Pope Alexander II buried and Ildebrando chosen as Pope Gregory VII
- 1145 - 19th recorded perihelion passage of Halley's Comet
- 1164 - Raynald of Dassel names Guido di Crema as anti-pope Paschalis III
- 1370 - Building begins on the Bastille fortress in Paris
- 1500 - Pedro Álvares Cabral is the first european to discover Brazil, landing near Monte Pascoal, claims it for Portugal
- 1521 - French King Francois I declares war on Spain
- 1529 - Treaty of Saragosa: Spain & Portugal divide eastern hemisphere
- 1648 - English army claims King Charles I responsible for bloodshed
- 1659 - Lord Protector Richard Cromwell disbands English parliament
- 1671 - King Charles II sits in on English parliament
- 1674 - Netherlands & Munster sign peace treaty
- 1676 - Battle of Etna - Neth/Spain vs France, M de Ruyter fatally wounded
- 1677 - Battle at Catania: between French & Dutch fleet
- 1692 Edward Bishop is jailed for proposing flogging as a cure for witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts
- 1809 - Battle at Eckmuhl - Napoleon beats Austria Archduke Karl
- 1817 - Curacao prohibits use of white paint due to fierce sunlight

## KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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### KO VIEW

## Kashmir's Culture of Overqualification

Kashmir's classrooms stay full even as its job market stays narrow. Families continue to invest in higher education, and young people stretch their academic journeys into their late twenties and early thirties. Degrees multiply, but matching jobs remain scarce in a region with a weak private sector and a limited number of government posts.

Data points to a widening mismatch. The Periodic Labour Force Survey shows that unemployment among graduates in India remains far higher than among those with basic schooling, and the gap is sharper in regions with fewer formal jobs. Jammu and Kashmir has recorded high overall unemployment in recent years, with youth bearing the largest share. The expansion of colleges has increased the supply of degree holders, while the demand for skilled roles has not kept pace.

This gap creates a culture where overqualification becomes routine. Students pursue master's degrees and doctorates as a way to stay competitive in an uncertain system. Years of study become a strategy to delay entry into a crowded labour market. Research on overeducation shows that early career mismatch reduces long-term earnings and lowers the chance of moving into better roles. Skills lose value when daily work does not require them, and motivation declines when effort and reward fail to align.

Kashmir gives a visible example of this pattern. Recruitment drives for Class IV posts often attract applicants with postgraduate and doctoral degrees. Official notifications and media reports have repeatedly shown tens of thousands of highly qualified candidates applying for a few thousand low-skill positions.

This trend reveals a deep shortage of suitable jobs and a rising fear of being left out of the system.

The social effects run deep, as status in Kashmir still connects closely to income and occupation. A person with advanced degrees working in a low-paying role faces a sharp gap between expectation and outcome. Studies in organizational psychology link such gaps to lower job satisfaction, weaker engagement, and higher turnover. A society that produces large numbers of overqualified workers also risks normalizing frustration as a shared condition.

The economic cost is equally serious. Underused skills reduce overall productivity and weaken the return on public spending in education. The World Bank and the International Labour Organization have both warned that skill mismatch slows growth in emerging economies.

Kashmir's case shows how a gree-heavy system without a matching job base can create an expanding pool of underemployed graduates. Policy can change this trajectory. Targeted support for small and medium enterprises can expand local hiring. Sector-focused training linked to tourism, healthcare, information technology, and crafts can align skills with real demand. Transparent and timely recruitment can restore trust in public hiring. Career guidance in colleges can steer students toward diverse paths instead of a single narrow track.

Kashmir has invested in education with determination. The next step requires equal focus on building an economy that can absorb that talent. A better balance between learning and work can turn degrees into opportunity rather than a symbol of mismatch.

### CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

## Recovery Path

From Portugal to Iceland, data proves that treatment, prevention, and community action can reverse even severe drug trends.

Irshad Mushtaq

Kashmir's drug crisis has reached a scale that demands calm, data-led action. Estimates suggest over 5.4 lakh opioid users across Jammu and Kashmir, with use rising threefold in three years. Around 1.68 lakh adolescents between 10 and 17 are affected, while more than 33,000 syringes are used daily for heroin injection in the valley. The urgency is clear, and the response needs to match the scale.

The roots lie in a mix of economic and social shifts. A tight job market leaves many educated youth without pathways, which weakens motivation and routine. Homes increasingly provide comfort without structure, and community networks that once guided young people now feel thinner. Early exposure to money without effort shapes risky choices later.

Evidence from abroad gives workable direction. Portugal moved from punishment to treatment in 2001, reducing heroin addiction from about 100,000 to 25,000 by 2018 and cutting overdose deaths by over 90 percent. Iceland invested in sports, arts, and strong parent engagement, bringing teen alcohol use down from 42 percent to 5 percent. Both models show that prevention, dignity in treatment, and structured daily life change outcomes.

India's own stories reinforce this pattern. Entrepreneurs such as Chinu Kala and Farrhad Acidwalla built careers from modest beginnings through skills and persistence. Schemes like Mission Youth and Start-Up India are already nudging young people toward enterprise in crafts, services, and digital trade in Kashmir.

The path ahead is practical. Strong enforcement under the NDPS Act can disrupt supply chains, while expanded rehabilitation and skill programs can rebuild lives. Families and schools can introduce early responsibility, financial awareness, and honest earning as daily habits rather than slogans.

Kashmir has the ingredients for recovery. When work, mentorship, and community return to the center, the data can shift as quickly as it rose.

— The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial educator.

# Iran's Smart Power Strategy

Iran's wartime doctrine shows how soft power, when fused with strength, can shift perception and global alignments.



Wajahat Qazi

As Trump's idiosyncratic approach to domestic and international politics unravels the US imperium, the Islamic Republic of Iran's soft power is increasing proportionately.

Whatever the denouement of the US-Israel war of aggression on the country, Iran's amplified soft power will be its enduring legacy.

What explains this? What all goes into and informs the matrix of Iran's evolving soft power? How does it undercut Trump's United States?

First, a note on 'soft power'.

Coined by the eminent Harvard professor, late Professor Joseph Nye, soft power means 'the ability of a country or society to attract on account of its values, ideals, and cultural appeal that are seen as moral and legitimate'.

This definition, a rough one, posits soft power in contradistinction to hard power, the military and coercive powers of states.

Obiter dictum, it needs to be pointed out here that the Trump administration disavowed soft power in favour of a clearly hard power informed, militarized foreign policy. This was made clear in explicit terms in the Trump administration's National Security Strategy document.

Pared to its essence, the NSS 2025 postulated an 'Imperial United States' carved out through hard power and in terms of 'spheres of influence'.

The first 'test case' of this approach was Venezuela. Spurred by the success of the Venezuelan experience and egged on by meretricious advice from motivated advisers, Trump had Iran in his crosshairs.

Long a sore sticking point for the US and Israel in the Middle East, especially since 1979, the conflict with Iran was managed by various administrations.

While Iran's foreign and defense policy was defined by a doctrine called 'strategic patience', the US-Israel strategy toward Iran was underpinned by 'hybrid war', a technique that meshed sanctions, cyberwar, currency manipulations, and the grooming of disaffected Iranians within the country.

US-Israel hopes lay in the premise that sustained hybrid war pressure would bring about 'regime change' in Iran. But Trump, being impulsive, crude, and having an inflated self-belief to the point of being at odds with reality, and encouraged by powers that be, waged war against Iran on February 28, 2026, while negotiations were going on between the two sides.

The details since this infamous date are known to everyone. This is exactly where Iran's soft power kicks in.

Ablly resisting the US-Israel war of aggression, Iran validated its 'strategic patience' doctrine. The country had used time and its resources very well. It had ably and deftly built its hard power capabilities and integrated these with soft power, which Joseph Nye had called 'smart power'.

Iran had also built a resilient economy under the shadow of sanctions and crafted even more resilient and flexible governance systems, under the broad rubric of a foreign and defense policy designed to resist and survive.

The beauty of this full spectrum approach lay



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in its practical application. It worked seamlessly as it was designed to under conditions of great stress.

The coup de grace of this seamless integration is the amplification of Tehran's soft power.

Hitherto, Iran was misrepresented and demonized by Western media and politicians through their narrative dominance and control of airwaves, print, and mass media. It was denigrated as a 'humorous theocracy', a 'murderous regime that thwarted the freedom and aspirations of its citizens against their will', a country of 'oppressed women waiting to be liberated', and so on.

This vituperative and poisonous narrative was directed at multiple audiences in the West: 'ordinary Westerners', feminists, journalists, and a media ecology through which it reached the Western university system.

These audiences were, to borrow a phrase from the 1999 movie *The Matrix*, 'blue pill' to believe these narratives.

But enter the Feb 28, 2026 war on Iran, and this

immoral war of aggression appears to have released a pent-up burst of creative genius and energy.

It has also produced a diplomatic posture and maneuvering that, in judo-like moves, uses the superior force of the enemy against it, aided by an asymmetric war strategy and complemented by mass displays of support for Iran's government and its stance against the war.

Courtesy of social media, which has 'democratized' access to information, emblemized by Iran's use of LEGO animated themes that cut to the marrow of the issues as they emerge, Iran's soft power is suddenly ubiquitous and resplendent.

Complemented by a very deft, able, and sophisticated campaign by Iran's embassies across the world, Tehran's era of underwhelming cultural misrepresentation is over.

The entire world is suddenly 'red pill', waking up to a reality from the slumber of a simulated one.

The LEGO animated videos, so brilliantly done that they would put Netflix and Hollywood to shame, synchronized with the civilizational, philosophical, poetic, and aesthetic achievements that blend the Iranian with the modern, with a distinct Iranian flavour, and the architectural achievements and splendour of Iran, shatter the deliberately orchestrated and cultivated Western mythical and reductively stereotypical images of Iran.

All of a sudden, resistance to imperialism or neo-imperialism is cool. Iran is hip. The entire world is riveted and transfixed.

People across the world are waiting for the war to be over, just to be able to visit Iran and learn about its history, culture, ethos, and faith-inspired values.

The brilliance of it all perhaps lies in how effortless this seems, another tribute to the particular genius of Iran and its people.

To conclude, there are two key takeaways from all this: one is that soft power matters, and two is that it works best when integrated with hard power. The late Joseph Nye called it 'smart power'.

Whether Iranian strategists had read Nye or not is moot, but what is relevant is Iran's able and dexterous use of smart power. Viva Iran!

The author holds a Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen and combines scholarship with real-world engagement. He has worked in academia and media, including as Associate Editor at Kashmir Observer.

### Letter to Editor

## J&K's CUET Exit Raises the Bigger Question

A year of reforms has pushed education in Jammu and Kashmir into the spotlight. Calls for a National Law University and the passage of the Private Universities Bill signal ambition and fresh energy. In the middle of this momentum, one decision has redirected undergraduate admissions. Authorities have rolled back CUET-based admissions for the 2026-27 session and returned to a 10+2 merit system.

This shift looks simple on paper, but it rests on a deeper structural reality. Jammu and Kashmir runs a dual academic system through JKBOSE, divided into summer and winter zones. Climate drives two separate school calendars. Students in the winter zone finish Class 12 exams by October or November and often receive results by January. Students in the summer zone follow a February to March schedule.

This split creates a gap that CUET never fully addressed. National time-

lines place CUET admissions around July and August. Winter-zone students, therefore, faced a long wait of six to seven months before entering college. That gap brought uncertainty, extra costs, and a sense of drift at a critical stage. The return to merit-based admissions seeks to close this gap and move students straight into higher education.

Families and students will see clear benefits. A shorter admission cycle reduces anxiety and removes the burden of national entrance logistics. The decision gives immediate relief and a smoother transition.

At the same time, important questions demand attention. Many students had already applied for CUET through the National Testing Agency and paid significant fees. Clear answers on refunds and accountability would build trust and protect aspirants.

A larger issue sits at the centre of this debate. CUET began in 2022 as a national effort to create a common standard

for admissions. It aimed to level differences between boards and widen access to top institutions. The rollback in Jammu and Kashmir raises a key concern about preparedness. Low participation, digital gaps, and geographic hurdles point to system weaknesses. These challenges call for stronger support rather than a complete step back.

A divided path now takes shape within the region. Government degree colleges will follow the local merit route. Institutions such as the Central University of Kashmir and the Central University of Jammu will continue with CUET. Two systems will run side by side, and that difference goes beyond process, and affects exposure.

Exposure matters in a region that hosts institutions like IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, and NIT Srinagar. Entry into these spaces demands strong preparation and comfort with national competition. CUET provided early contact with that environment. It helped students

test themselves and build confidence over time.

This decision eases entry into college today. It also raises a deeper concern about long-term readiness. Competitive ability grows through early experience and consistent engagement. A delay in that exposure shifts the challenge to a later stage, often when stakes feel higher.

Jammu and Kashmir stands at an important moment in its educational journey. Expansion of institutions brings new opportunities. Policy choices now will decide how well students use those opportunities. The focus must stay on both access and preparedness.

Students deserve a system that supports them today and equips them for tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Adnan Ur Rehman  
adnanbattccc342@gmail.com

# Holding On to Light

In a village near Kokernag, grief led to depression, and small acts of love became the path toward healing.



Gowher Bhat

In the soft morning light of Larnoo, a small village near Kokernag, Hina Khan believed life was exactly as she had planned it.

The architect's home rang with her son's laughter, her sketchbooks filled with clean lines and balance. At work, her designs earned praise. Her husband spoke proudly of her strength.

In those days, she felt steady, certain, surrounded by the small, familiar joys that make a life feel complete.

Then, one rain-soaked morning, a phone call changed everything.

Her younger brother had died in a road accident near Anantnag. The sky that day, she says, "looked tired, like it already knew."

Grief came in waves she didn't know how to swim through.

For weeks she stayed composed for her parents, family, and everyone who looked to her for strength. Then, when the condolences stopped and the house turned still, she began to break from within.

"I stopped recognizing myself," she recalls. "I couldn't feel joy or sadness. I felt erased."

The days slipped by without shape. She avoided people. Work felt impossible. Small things, like bathing, cooking, and even combing her hair, became unbearable.

When friends told her to pray or rest, she wanted to scream but couldn't find her voice. At night she



lay awake, her thoughts circling the same dark corners.

"Depression tells you that you're a burden," she says. "And the worst part is, you start to believe it."

It was her mother who saw through the fog.

One evening she arrived from the nearby village, sat beside Hina for a long while, and said softly, "My child, this is illness. Let's go see a doctor."

That moment, Hina says, was her first step toward the light.

"It wasn't what she said," she recounts, "it was how she said it. She didn't blame me. She loved me through it."

A week later, Hina and her husband visited a psychiatrist in Srinagar. The doctor listened, nodded, and told her, "You are unwell, not weak. And you can heal."

Those words shifted something inside her. "For the first time, I felt hope," she says.

Treatment began slowly. The medicines dulled the sharp edges of despair, and therapy gave her a way to speak her pain aloud.

"My therapist told me, 'You can't heal from what you refuse to face.' That sentence stayed with me," she says.

Healing, though, wasn't a straight line.

Some days she felt like herself again. On others, she fell back into darkness.

On those mornings, her husband would bring her tea and say, "Just one sip, Hina." Her son would crawl into her bed, touch her face, and whisper, "Mama, smile."

Those small gestures became her anchors.

Soon she started walking again, first around the courtyard, then through the meadows near Larnoo.

"I noticed the smell of pine, the shimmer of sunlight on wet grass," she says. "It felt like breathing after

being underwater."

She returned to her sketchbook. The lines she drew began to open up: more windows, bridges, and air. "Every drawing became a way to talk to myself again," she says. "It was as if my art was pulling me back to life."

Months later, when her strength returned, she went back to work in Srinagar. Her designs grew lighter, her voice steadier. But she carried within her a sense of duty: to speak about what she had endured.

"People think depression only happens to others," she says. "I wanted them to know it can happen to anyone."

She joined a small mental health awareness group in Anantnag. The first time she spoke publicly, her hands trembled. She told the audience about the sleepless nights, the emptiness, and the fear.

When she finished, a woman came up to her with tears in her



**A WEEK LATER, HINA AND HER HUSBAND VISITED A PSYCHIATRIST IN SRINAGAR.** The doctor listened,

nodded, and told her, "You are unwell, not weak. And you can heal." Those words shifted something inside her. "For the first time, I felt hope," she says. Treatment began slowly. The medicines dulled the sharp edges of despair, and therapy gave her a way to speak her pain aloud. "My therapist told me, 'You can't heal from what you refuse to face.' That sentence stayed with me," she says. Healing, though, wasn't a straight line.

eyes and said, "I thought I was the only one."

That single sentence, Hina says, made all the pain worth it.

Today, she receives messages from people seeking help. Among them are young women, students, and even elders.

She listens, shares her story, and gently urges them to seek treatment. "I tell them, if you can talk about fever or pain, you can talk about sadness too," she says.

Her husband tells her she has changed. "You used to build homes," he once said. "Now you build hope."

Hina smiles when she recalls it. "Maybe pain makes us see life differently," she says. "It breaks us, but it also deepens us."

In her new projects, she designs with light in mind: open courtyards, broad windows, and places where air moves freely. "I want people to feel warmth in their walls," she says. "Light heals."

Every morning, she walks to the edge of her village. The hills rise like slow-breathing giants, and the mist curls through the pine trees. Children pass by, laughing on their

way to school.

"That sound," she says, "means life is still happening."

There are days when old sadness returns, uninvited. When that happens, she sits by the window, breathes, and reminds herself, "I've come too far to go back."

When asked what kept her moving through those years of darkness, she pauses. "Love," she finally says. "My mother's hand on my forehead. My husband's patience. My son's smile. And kindness from people who didn't even know me."

Perhaps that's why her sketches now carry feeling, softness, and life.

When the wind moves through the pine trees, she listens. It reminds her that even after long winters, something always begins again.

Healing, she says, is about learning to live with hurt and still finding beauty around you.

And in that understanding, Hina has found her peace.

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# The Illusion of Escape

When comfort becomes control, and reality starts to slip away.



Faizaan Bashir

I used to sit down to write about how erotica and cigarettes wrecked my life, but then I would hear all these imaginary voices judging me.

People who think they are so proper and perfect would whisper in my head. Those thoughts always stopped me before.

This time I said no more, and decided to tell the full truth about how screen and smoking took control of me for so long.

I believe real confessions matter more than the hushed gossip and sneaky looks from a messed-up society.

It all started when I was twelve. One day I was playing with my cousin's phone, and suddenly pictures and videos of men and women in intimate moments popped up.

The images shocked me. My young mind could not understand what was happening. I had no clue what they were doing to each other.

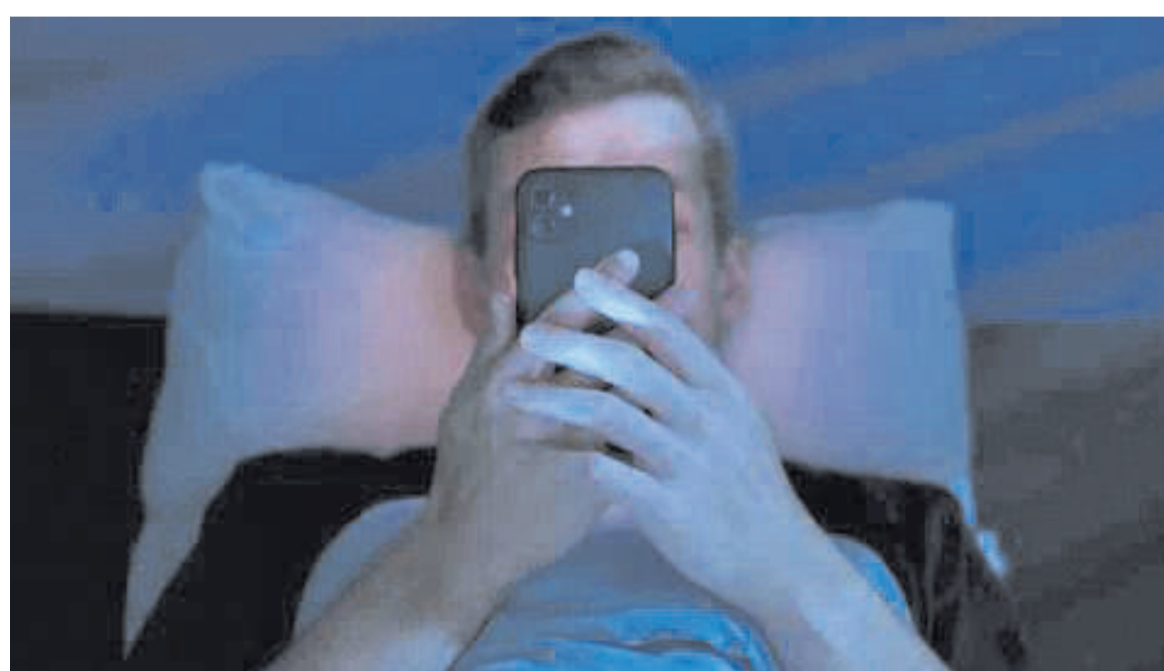
Months passed, and I got pulled in deeper.

Those scenes kept flashing in my head all day long. I begged my cousin for his phone again and again so I could see more naked bodies.

Things got worse fast. I bought my own phone. From then on, I spent hours every single day watching porn. Right after, I always smoked a cigarette or two.

If I missed even one day of this routine, I felt something huge was missing from my life.

The urge took over everything. I let



it win without any resistance. I disappeared into those fake worlds until I could not find my way out.

School became the biggest victim. Among all the boys who broke rules, I got the worst reputation as the biggest troublemaker. Every time I tried to study, my hand grabbed the phone and pulled me back to the videos.

My bad grades shamed my whole family again and again, no matter where we were. Society's rules stayed in my mind, and that pressure crushed me.

I got so hooked on those quick little highs it gave me that I didn't even notice how it was eating me alive.

It left my body skinny and weak, and my mind totally empty, like a shell with nothing left inside.

Living inside that fake world made me afraid all the time.

When I went outside, I saw kids my age full of energy. They talked fast, thought quick, reacted sharp, and looked truly alive.

Seeing them made me hate myself.

I kept asking what had happened to me. Sadness sat heavy on my heart. I lost all confidence around friends. They teased me for being so thin, which came straight from those endless adult sessions and the tiredness that followed.

I could not defend myself, so I went right back to the habit. It distracted me from the real world that terrified me, and that helped me push everything away for a while.

My life turned into a cruel cycle. I failed at studies, could not face normal life, and ran back to the fake comfort.

Those videos gave me a high that helped me deal with stress. That is exactly how addictions take over our minds.

My mental health got worse, so I went to psychiatrists to understand what was wrong. We talked many times, and they gave me medicines.

Nothing worked in the end. I held on to stories of people who quit porn for good. I made promise after

promise to myself that I would stop. I prayed hard, even asked God to take my life.

Every try failed, and I stayed trapped in that awful loop.

Time passed, and I finally started to understand how addictions really work. The details became clear to me.

Now, after a long time without those bad habits of staring at screens and going on endlessly, I can say the problem comes partly from our everyday routines.

One simple click brings a rush of hidden urges that fight against what we consciously want.

We often push away feelings that built up for years, maybe from childhood. Those feelings come out in different forms. Worries about the future make us feel helpless. That is why people pick their favourite escape.

Some turn to alcohol instead of screens. Others choose plant. Porn works as a powerful way to handle inner pain in the same way.

You can admit you fell into it because of your situation. No shame needed. The important thing is to understand it.

Noticing the connection between your inner pain, past hurts, future worries, and how they show up in your actions is the first step to escape the online trap and other addictions.

Next, stop beating yourself up right away if you slip. Harsh self-talk only makes the cycle stronger.

Switch from trying to be perfect forever to noticing and celebrating small wins every day. That helps a lot.

You cannot destroy an addiction completely in one go. Being gentle with yourself and not pushing too hard makes healing easier.

It gets harder because intimacy and connection are basic human needs, and clicking and chasing tie right into that. That is why this escape feels so tough to fight.

Beyond lust, this secret online activity is a cheap replacement for emotions that really need care and healing.

Counseling can help clear confusion and show you a path to stay on. A good counselor checks in with you along the way and guides you if you slip, until you find balance and learn to control urges instead of letting them control you.

When you mix professional help with your own thinking, people stuck in this cycle can replace bad habits with good ones that feed the body and mind.

Even now, thinking about how people hurt themselves just to avoid hard parts of life gives me chills.

We forget our own strength and will sometimes, and that makes our suffering bigger.

We hold on to the pain without wanting to. It is a real tragedy.

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**NOW, AFTER A LONG TIME WITHOUT THOSE BAD HABITS OF STARING AT SCREENS AND GOING ON ENDLESSLY, I can say the problem comes partly from our everyday routines. One simple click brings a rush of hidden urges that fight against what we consciously want.**

# Will Constitution Not Come To Rescue Of Believer Who Is Not Allowed To Touch Deity: SC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the chief priest of the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple if the Constitution will not come to the rescue of a believer who is not allowed to touch the deity.

The remark by the top court came after the chief priest said that when a devotee goes to a temple for worship, it can't be in antagonism to the characteristics of a deity.

The nine-judge Constitution bench is hearing petitions related to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala, and on the ambit and scope of the religious freedom practised by multiple faiths.

The bench comprises Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan, and Joyimalya Bagchi.

Appearing for the 'thanthri', senior advocate V Giri submitted that the nature of ceremonies and rituals followed in any temple forms the integral part of the religion and



therefore is a religious practice.

He said continuance of such practice, which is an essential religious practice, would be a part of the right to worship that is for every member who believes in the religion or religious denomination.

"When a devotee goes to a temple for worship, it can't be in antagonism to the characteristics of a deity because its for the purpose of worshipping the deity. The devotee surrenders to the divine spirit contained in the deity. He/she has to accept the essential characteristics of the deity," Giri said.

Posing a question, Justice Amanullah asked, "When I go to a temple, my fundamental belief is that he is the Lord, he is my creator, he has created me, right? 'I go there with one hundred percent belief. I am totally devoted, absolutely nothing impure in my heart. And there, I am told that because of a birth, a lineage, a certain situation, permanently you are not allowed to touch the deity. Now, will the Constitution not come to the rescue? Justice Amanullah remarked, adding that there cannot be a difference between the creator and

creation.

Giri replied that if there is a complete ban on anybody becoming a priest, then that will be taken care of either by a Article 25(2)(b) legislation or it will be taken care of by the State itself.

"If priest means the person who is instructed in the 'Shastras' as to how to conduct worship and how to worship the deity, if there is a complete ban on any person becoming a priest and then doing the 'seva', as we call it, only by reason of birth, that will be taken care of either by a Article 25(2)(b) legislation or it will be taken care of by the State itself," he said.

The senior lawyer said "Naishtika Brahmachari" (perennial celibate) can be considered as an essential characteristic to the deity and the ceremonies and rituals performed in Sabarimala are in synchronisation with the concept. "I have a right to practice my religion under Article 25 of the Constitution...If the characteristics of the deity are as such that its not possible for me to go there, if I am a woman, it has to be in sync with the characteristics of the religion. The characteristic of the deity insofar as Sabarimala is concerned contemplates that the deity is a

permanent celibate," Giri said.

He contended there is a total lack of material on the part of the writ petitioners to show that the concept of "Naishtika Brahmachari" pleaded by the petitioner are either ill founded, misconceived, or doesn't form the essential form of the religion.

The hearing is underway. Observing that denominational practices can be subject matter of judicial scrutiny, the top court on April 17 had said that judges must rise above personal religious beliefs and be guided by freedom of conscience and the broader constitutional framework while adjudicating matters of faith. In September 2018, a five-judge Constitution bench, by a 4:1 majority verdict, lifted the ban that prevented women between the ages of 10 and 50 from entering the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple and held that the centuries-old Hindu religious practice was illegal and unconstitutional.

Later, on November 14, 2019, another five-judge bench headed by the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi, by a majority of 3:2, referred the issue of discrimination against women at various places of worship to a larger bench.

## HC: Second Maternity Leave Allowed Within Two Years

Press Trust Of India

Lucknow: The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday held that a second maternity leave cannot be denied merely because it is sought within two years of the first, observing that statutory rights under the law override provisions of the financial handbook.

The order was passed by Justice Karunesh Singh Pawar of the high court's Lucknow bench while hearing a petition by Manisha Yadav, who had challenged an April 4, 2026 order rejecting her request for a second maternity leave.

The petitioner argued that the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 is a beneficial legislation and its provisions must take precedence. The state government, however, relied on Rule 153(1) of the financial handbook to contend that a minimum gap of two years between two maternity leaves is mandatory.

Referring to earlier rulings, the high court said that the Maternity Benefit Act, being a law enacted by Parliament, would prevail over any executive instructions or provisions in the financial handbook. In case of inconsistency, the provisions of the Act would have an overriding effect.

The court noted that the petitioner had her first child in 2021 and had applied for a second maternity leave in 2022, which was rejected on untenable grounds.

Setting aside the impugned order, the court directed the competent authority to grant her maternity leave from April 6, 2026, to October 2, 2026.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

## One Year On,

of the incident, the National Investigation Agency continued its probe and filed a chargesheet in December against seven accused, including Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and its proxy, The Resistance Front.

The aftermath of the attack also saw an unusual public response, with people across Kashmir taking to the streets in protest—one of the rare large-scale demonstrations against a terror incident in recent decades.

In a significant political move, the Jammu and Kashmir government had convened a special session of the Legislative Assembly days after the attack, passing a unanimous resolution condemning the killings and vowing to counter attempts to disrupt communal harmony and development in the Union Territory.

Despite the shadow of last year's violence, Pahalgam is witnessing a steady flow of tourists. Many visitors said they felt safe and welcomed, crediting both the security arrangements and the hospitality of locals.

Tourists from different parts of the country, including Assam, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, said their experience in Pahalgam had been reassuring, with no sense of fear or discomfort during their stay. Several said they would encourage others to visit, describing the atmosphere as secure and the reception by locals as warm and accommodating.

Officials said all arrangements have been put in place to ensure the anniversary passes off peacefully, even as the region balances remembrance with a gradual return to normalcy.

Stakeholders Hopeful as Tourist Arrivals Inch Up

Local stakeholders, who bore the brunt of last year's downturn, say the recent uptick in tourist flow has revived hope for recovery.

Hotelier Zakir Ahmad said that while the numbers are still below pre-attack levels, the improvement over the past few weeks is encouraging. "There has been a gradual increase in tourist arrivals over the last few weeks. After what we went through last year, even this modest rise feels significant. We are hopeful that the coming months, especially the peak summer season, will be much better," he said.

Echoing similar sentiments, pony operator Aadil Ahmad, whose earnings depend entirely on tourist activity, said the return of visitors has brought much-needed relief. "Last year was extremely difficult for us. There was hardly any work, and many of us struggled to make ends meet. Now we are seeing more tourists coming in, and we hope this trend continues so that we can recover our losses," he said.

Handicraft dealer Ghulam Rasool Malik also expressed optimism, noting that business has started picking up after months of stagnation. "Tourism is the backbone of our economy. When tourists come, everyone benefits—from shopkeepers to transporters. We are hopeful that this year will bring stability and growth after the setbacks we faced," he said.

Officials and stakeholders alike believe that sustained peace and positive word-of-mouth from tourists will play a crucial role in restoring Kashmir's image as a safe and welcoming destination.

Data from last year highlights the severe impact of the April 2025 attack. While the first four months of 2025 saw strong tourist inflows—April alone recording over 2 lakh visitors—the numbers plummeted drastically in the months immediately following the attack, particularly in May and June, reflecting the sudden loss of confidence among travellers.

Over the course of 2025, Pahalgam recorded a total footfall of over 10 lakh visitors, including domestic and foreign tourists as well as locals.

However, stakeholders point out that the distribution was uneven, with peak months disrupted and the overall season falling short of expectations.

With early signs of recovery visible, the local economy—deeply intertwined with tourism—is pinning both financial and emotional hopes on a sustained revival.

"We just want people to come and see for themselves that Kashmir is safe and welcoming," said a local stakeholder. "Tourism is not just our livelihood, it is our identity. We believe better days are ahead."

As summer approaches, all eyes are on

whether this gradual recovery will gather momentum, offering much-needed relief to thousands dependent on the Valley's tourism industry.

## Survivors Struggle

one year ago.

While for most people these digital reminders are a source of nostalgia, for Asavari, they were a haunting glimpse of her world collapsing in the Baisaran Valley in Pahalgam.

"Whenever we speak about that day, it feels like we are reliving it," a visibly emotional Asavari told PTI.

"It's not a memory of the past, it plays out in front of us even now," she said.

April 22 marks the first anniversary of the tourists who fell victim to a premeditated act of terror in Pahalgam. The scenic Baisaran meadows, supposed to serve as a perfect backdrop for clicking pictures, turned into a massacre scene that led to the killing of 26 people, including Asavari's father Santosh Jagdale and his best friend Kaustubh Ganbote.

Termining April 22 of last year as her "black day", Asavari's mother Pragati broke down while recalling the incident.

"We were all happy, taking pictures at Baisaran Valley when suddenly gunshots were heard. Within moments, terrorists targeted my husband, his friend Kaustubh Ganbote, and other unarmed Hindu tourists on the basis of religion and killed them," said Pragati Jagdale.

"I saw my husband and his friend being killed in front of my eyes. The incident has deeply scarred my psyche and it is not possible to forget that trauma," she said.

Asavari said she and her mother continue to suffer from anxiety, disturbed sleep and heightened fear, especially at sudden loud sounds.

"If there is a loud noise, even something like firecrackers, we panic - wondering whether it is another attack. There is always a sense of fear, even around strangers. It has changed the way we live," she said.

Despite counselling and medical support over the past year, the psychological scars remain deep.

"I don't think any treatment can erase this memory or reduce its intensity. It will stay with us for life," she added.

Asavari said, "On April 19, Snapchat showed a memory from our trip from Pune to Jammu and Kashmir. We wondered that if we had missed our flight or had something else happened before the journey leading to its cancellation, the incident might not have taken place."

In the wake of her father's death, the state government provided a job to Asavari. In March this year, she was appointed as an administrative officer with the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and is currently undergoing training.

She, however, said the family's emotional toll was compounded by an arduous struggle to secure a job in the aftermath of the tragedy.

"There were times when we were given evasive responses regarding the job. My mother broke down once, saying we should give up because it felt like we were begging. That feeling of having lost a loved one and still having to fight is something I cannot forget," Asavari said. She said it was only after sustained efforts and intervention at higher levels that the process moved forward.

While she acknowledged the job as crucial support, Asavari said many other affected families are still awaiting similar assistance.

Expressing concern for other victims' families, Asavari said not every family has the same support system or ability to fight.

"It is the responsibility of the government to ensure all affected families are taken care of," she said.

Asavari, who has been in touch with other victims' families, including that of Shubham Dwivedi from Kanpur, said a common concern is the lack of recognition and support.

"They have also demanded that the victims be accorded the status of martyrs so their sacrifice is remembered," she said.

On the first anniversary of the attack, the Jagdale family has chosen to mark the day quietly through acts of charity rather than holding any formal event.

"We performed the rituals as per tradition earlier. On April 22, we will donate food grains and essentials to an old-age home and an organisation working for the poor," she said.

Asavari added that she has resolved to donate a portion of her salary every month in her father's memory.

"It is a way of keeping his name alive and helping those in need," she said.

She said the probe into the Pahalgam attack is ongoing and that she is ready to testify whenever summoned by the agencies.

"Whatever it takes, I will stand for justice for my father and other victims," she said.

But for her and her mother, healing remains a distant prospect. "We will carry this with us for life," she said.

Kunal Ganbote, son of Kaustubh Ganbote, said he and his mother have been grappling with trauma over the past year.

"The horrific images refuse to fade from my mother's mind. She is still in shock. It has been one year, but we are still coming to terms with it," said Kunal, who is continuing his father's traditional snacks business.

"I was also offered a government job, but I refused as I wanted to carry forward the business started by my father. Despite the psychological hardships, we have managed to continue it, and that is a fitting tribute to him," he said.

The Ganbote family is also planning to donate to the needy on the first anniversary of the Pahalgam attack. -PTI

## Army Vows

In a post on X, the Army said, "When boundaries of humanity are crossed, the response is decisive. Justice is served. India stands united." The message was accompanied by a visual referencing Operation Sindoor, with the caption: "Some boundaries should never be crossed. India does not forget."

The April 22, 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam's Baisaran Valley had left 26 people dead and more than 20 injured, most of them tourists.

In response, the Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindoor on the intervening night of May 6 and 7, 2025, targeting terrorist infrastructure across the border.

According to officials, the coordinated strikes hit nine locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), aimed at dismantling camps used by terror groups for training and logistics.

More than 100 terrorists, including trainers, handlers and aides, were killed in the operation, officials said, adding that those targeted were linked to outfits such as Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahideen.

Officials said the strikes were carried out with precision to minimise civilian casualties while maximising damage to militant infrastructure. (KNO)

## US-Iran Talks

proceed.

A Pakistani security source said army chief Asim Munir had warned Trump that the ongoing US naval blockade of Iranian ports was undermining mediation efforts — a concern echoed by analysts who say continued military pressure risks collapsing diplomacy altogether.

Foreign minister Ishaq Dar has remained in contact with regional partners, while China has backed Islamabad's efforts. Beijing's ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, conveyed support for facilitating dialogue, underlining the broader geopolitical stakes.

The war, which began in late February, has already exacted a heavy human cost. More than 3,300 people have been killed in Iran, alongside over 2,200 in Lebanon, with additional casualties reported in Israel and across Gulf states. Military losses include Israeli and US personnel deployed in the region.

The conflict has also spilt into critical maritime routes. A recent US action against an Iranian merchant vessel in the Sea of Oman — described by Tehran as piracy and a violation of the ceasefire — has further inflamed tensions. Iran has responded by tightening control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz, raising concerns over global energy supplies.

Narrowing path to diplomacy  
With Iran refusing to attend talks under

pressure, the US maintaining its blockade, and the ceasefire on the brink of expiry, the diplomatic window appears to be rapidly closing.

Analysts say the scale of security preparations in Islamabad suggests readiness for a breakthrough — but also underscores how fragile the process has become.

For now, Pakistan's mediation hangs in the balance, caught between escalating military posturing and diminishing trust on both sides. Whether the talks proceed may depend on a shift in tone from Washington — and a willingness from Tehran to re-engage before the conflict enters a new and potentially more dangerous phase.

## Girls Lead;

out of 26,706 who appeared. Private schools, meanwhile, reported a higher pass percentage of 94.86 per cent, with 22,811 students qualifying out of 24,048 candidates.

Congratulating the successful candidates, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extended his best wishes and encouraged those who did not achieve their desired results to stay determined and continue striving for excellence.

Education Minister Sakina Itoo also congratulated the students, praising their hard work and dedication. She said the results reflect the combined efforts of students, teachers, and parents.

Highlighting the performance of government schools, the minister termed the 83.44 per cent pass rate as encouraging, pointing towards improving educational standards in public institutions.

She also lauded the consistent performance of girls, noting that their success reflects both determination and the positive impact of initiatives aimed at promoting education among girls.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, the minister said efforts are ongoing to strengthen infrastructure, improve teaching standards, and ensure an inclusive and high-quality education system across Jammu and Kashmir.

## Police Step Up

and called for a proactive approach to address emerging challenges.

Reaffirming the commitment of the police, Dhama said all efforts are being made to ensure a safe, secure, and hassle-free pilgrimage, urging officers to remain vigilant and maintain the highest standards of service during the yatra.

## 2047 Is Not

homes, bringing dignity and security. Roads have reached villages, the number of airports has increased, and the digital revolution has connected even the most remote sections," he said.

Sinha emphasized that access to banking, identity, and digital financial tools has empowered marginalized communities. "This is not merely technological progress but social empowerment," he added.

He also stressed the transformative role of education in shaping the future of the country. Referring to new schools, universities, and policy initiatives, the Lieutenant Governor said the focus has shifted towards creating aware and responsible citizens rather than merely producing graduates. He noted that educational opportunities, particularly for girls, have expanded significantly.

Calling for an inclusive vision of development, Sinha said the country must move forward by ensuring that every individual and community becomes part of the mainstream of progress. "The goal of 2047 is not merely a date; it is a national commitment that reflects the aspirations of millions," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor concluded by reiterating the importance of service, sacrifice, and collective responsibility in building a stronger and more inclusive India.

## Div Com Asks DC

diversion and utilisation of Kahcharai land under Survey No. 211 in the estate.

Hearing the matter, a bench of Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani permitted the petitioners to file the case in a representative capacity, observing that all villagers share a common interest in the subject matter.

The court also directed that a public notice be issued through widely circulated newspapers, inviting objections from other stakeholders.

In the interim, the court ordered all parties to maintain status quo at the site until the next date of hearing, subject to any modification after hearing the respondents.

Meanwhile, following the application by the residents, the Divisional Commissioner's office has communicated to the Deputy Commissioner underscoring the need for strict adherence to the court's directive.

"On the above quoted subject enclosed kindly find the copy of application preferred by the Inhabitants of village Reshipora through Zulfikar Ali Razvi along with the copy of Order Dated: 31.03.2026 passed by the Hon'ble High Court of J&K and Ladakh in CM 1542/2026 In WP (C) 601/2026 CM 1543/2026. In this connection, I am directed to communicate with your office and request that the matter be looked into for lawful implementation of Hon'ble High Court directions," reads the communication by Reader To Divisional Commissioner to Deputy Commissioner Budgam (vide No. Div Com/Reader/2026/210 dated April 11).

## HC Quashes PSA

District Magistrate Baramulla against the detainee, Maqсад Ali Kohli, and directed his immediate release if not involved in any other case.

Kohli, a resident of Navarunda Uri, had challenged the PSA detention order by filing a petition on 18 May 2024.

Emphasizing the sanctity of personal liberty, the Court observed that procedural safeguards are not "empty formalities" but the only bulwark against arbitrary detention.

"The power of preventive detention, being drastic in nature, casts a corresponding duty upon the detaining authority to exercise the same with due care, caution, and circumspection," the court said, adding, "The safeguards provided under the Constitution and the statute are not empty formalities but constitute the only bulwark against arbitrary detention."

The Court underlined that it cannot act as a mute spectator where the liberty of a citizen is curtailed without strict adherence to the mandate of law.

"If the subjective satisfaction is found to be based on vague, irrelevant, or insufficient material, or if the procedural safeguards have not been strictly followed, the detention order cannot be sustained," the court said.

Allowing the habeas corpus petition, the Court quashed the detention order dated April 19, 2024, and directed release of Kohli forthwith, provided he was not required in any other case.

## Emergency Healthcare

services.

The CSR initiative also extends to social welfare institutions. Essential items worth 3.11 lakh have been provided to child care institutions at Palaash, Parisha and SAA Udhampur to improve living conditions and meet the needs of children. Further, Braille learning materials worth 2.90 lakh have been distributed to the Blind School at Roop Nagar, Jammu.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said strengthening emergency healthcare access remains a key priority for the government. "These ambulances and medical equipment will significantly improve timely medical response and save precious lives," he said.

Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakina Itoo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Managing Director JKSPDC Rahul Yadav, Director Health Services Jammu and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister was also briefed about civil construction works undertaken by JKSPDC during the financial year 2025-26 across multiple districts, amounting to 237.28 lakh.

The total expenditure under CSR initiatives, including procurement of medical equipment and construction works, stands at 523 lakh for the last financial year.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Chief Minister appreciated JKSPDC's role in supporting critical sectors like healthcare and social welfare through its CSR interventions.

## CM Unveils 'Six Seasons'- Shishur Magazine Of J&K Tourism Deptt



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday unveiled the January-March 2026 edition of the 'Six Seasons' - Shishur (Severe Cold) magazine of the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department at the Civil Secretariat here.

The issue, themed Shishur, captures the winter essence of J&K and highlights a range of tourism initiatives undertaken during the period. The magazine has been compiled by the Directorate of Tourism Kashmir.

The event was attended by Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Ashish Chandra Verma, Director Information Shreya Singhal,

Directors Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad and Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta besides other senior officers.

The magazine features curated stories on prominent tourist destinations, coverage of international events organised by the department, annual conventions of travel, trade and hospitality bodies, participation in major travel fairs, and outreach programmes led by the Chief Minister.

Appreciating the efforts of the Tourism Department, the Chief Minister commended the initiative, noting that such publications play an important role in showcasing the rich tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir and strengthening its global outreach.

## J&K Braces for 7 GW Winter Load by 2030

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a stark warning, Jammu and Kashmir has indicated that a power load requirement of up to 7 Gigawatts (GWs) by the coming five years needs to be considered in the winter season—signaling major infrastructure upgrades to avoid seasonal blackouts.

However, the officials have conservatively trimmed the load requirement to 5 GW by the financial year 2029-30.

According to KNO, the statutory body Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) in a joint study meeting has said that "J&K indicated that a load of 6-7GW needs to be considered in the winter season by 2029-30."

"However, on conservative side load is considered to the tune of 5 GW," it reads. Stating the details of Northern

Region states load considered in Power System Simulator for Engineering (PSSE) for 2029-2030, the committee has projected 4211 Megawatts (MWS) of Emergency Power Supply (EPS) load in J&K by 2029-2030 timeframe.

However, the load considered in the revised PSSE file is 5000 MWS.

Pertinently, as already reported by KNO, Jammu and Kashmir is importing more than 95 percent of its electricity in the month of December.

The officials earlier in the month had informed that Jammu and Kashmir is importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours.

It also 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 in-

cludes all the sources including the power allocated from the center and other Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).

Earlier the news agency reported that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to face a four percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increase in electricity requirement and six percent increase in peak electricity demand for the period of 2025-26 to 2035-36.

The official documents in this regard reveal that it has considered electrical energy requirement projections as per J&K State Load Dispatch Center (SLDC).

The documents further reveal that the SLDC has projected that the annual electrical energy requirement of the UT is likely to grow at a CAGR of 4 percent while the peak electricity demand for the utility is likely to grow at a CAGR of 6 percent for the period of 2025-26 to 2035-36.

## EPFO Kashmir Organizes Campaign on Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PMVBRY)

**SRINAGAR:** The Regional Office, Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Kashmir conducted an outreach session on Tuesday at SIDCO Complex Industrial Growth Centre (IGC), Lassipora, Pulwama, on the request of the President IGC Lassipora Mukhtar Ahmad Khan, to disseminate information regarding the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PMVBRY) and the Employment Enrolment Campaign 2025.

The session was led by Shri Sunil Kumar Taura, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-II/OIC, along with the EPFO Kashmir team. The initiative aimed to create awareness among employers and employees about the benefits, eligibility criteria, and procedures under PMVBRY, a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, focused on promoting formal employment and encouraging job creation in organized establishments.

During the session, the RPFCE-II/OIC elaborated on the incentives available to employers for enrolling new employees under the scheme and emphasized the importance of compliance with the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952. Participants were also apprised of the digital facilities provided by EPFO to facilitate ease of registration and claim processing. (Observer News Service)

## Cemtec Cements Holds Plantation Drive



**KHREW:** Cemtec Cements on Monday organised a plantation drive at its plant site in Pulwama, with officials from the Forest Department Jammu & Kashmir and the Jammu & Kashmir Pollution Control Committee in attendance.

The drive witnessed the presence of Mudassir Mehmood, DFO Awantipora Division, officials of the Forest Department, and Fayaz Ahmad, District Officer, Pulwama Division (JKPCC), among others. Around 1,000 saplings of different species were planted as part of the initiative aimed at enhancing green cover and promoting ecological balance in the area. Members of J&K Eco Watch also participated in the drive.

Speaking on the occasion, DFO Awantipora Division, Mudassir Mehmood, said,

"Such initiatives by industrial units are a positive step towards environmental conservation. Increasing green cover is essential for maintaining ecological balance, and we appreciate Cemtec's efforts in this regard. We hope to collaborate with them in future plantation drives. (Observer News Service)

## Altaf Bukhari Questions PAGD's Disappearance

**SRINAGAR:** Apni Party president Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Tuesday questioned the relevance and disappearance of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), asking its key leaders to clarify its purpose and present status.

Speaking to reporters, Bukhari asked Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti, and Omar Abdullah why the alliance no longer appears active.

"Where is PAGD?" he said, questioning whether it was formed and dissolved at the behest of Delhi. He further asked whether the alliance was created to "befool people," stating that the public deserves clarity on why it does not exist now.

Bukhari also targeted the National Conference, alleging that the party does not support people in distress. He cited a recent case involving the brother of the Deputy Chief Minister, whose property was reportedly acted upon by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).

Referring to remarks made by Omar Abdullah at a recent rally, where he said he was "powerless" in certain matters, Bukhari questioned the claim. (Observer News Service)

## Record 15 Lakh Birds Flock Kashmir Wetlands

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir's wetlands have become a paradise for migratory birds this season, attracting over 15 lakh feathered visitors, with the Ramsar-designated Hygam wetland in Sopore hosting the lion's share of more than 4 lakh birds.

Regional Wildlife Warden Kashmir, Tawheed Ahmad Deva, speaking exclusively with KNO, said the Hygam wetland in Sopore accounted for the highest share, with over four lakh birds recorded during the annual census.

He said Hygam, a designated Ramsar site spread over 7.62 square kilometres, remains fully demarcated and free from encroachment. "The entire wetland area is intact. There is no encroachment, and the water level is being maintained," he said.

Deva said the wetland has effectively served its ecological purpose this season, reflected in the un-

precedented arrival of migratory birds. He said the counting was carried out under the Asian Waterbird Census programme, and the final report is being compiled and will be released within two months.

Highlighting conservation efforts, he said the department remains committed to preserving wetlands across Kashmir. "We are taking sustained measures to conserve these habitats and ensure they continue to support biodiversity," he said.

The warden added that two major project proposals for Hygam have already been submitted, including desiltation and water diversion plans to improve the wetland's health.

"The department is also working on a proposal to promote eco-tourism at the site. The aim is to enhance its aesthetic value and restore its past glory. Once funding is approved, the projects will be taken up," Deva said.



**J&K WAQF BOARD CHAIRPERSON** Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi called upon Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju at New Delhi and submitted a detailed report of the achievements of the Board during the last financial year and shared the roadmap for future plans and programmes to be taken up during this fiscal year.

## Zoji La Tunnel Breakthrough Likely by Last Week of May: LG Ladakh

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, on Tuesday said he called on Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, and discussed key road infrastructure projects in the Union Territory.

In a post on X, the LG said the meeting focused on the progress of the Zoji La tunnel, upgradation of NH-3 in Leh city, construction of the Leh Bypass, and pending works under the Central Road Infrastructure Fund.

"The Union Minister informed that the breakthrough of the Zoji La tunnel is likely by the last week of May, adding that once completed, it will ensure all-weather connectivity between Ladakh and the rest of the country," Saxena, as per KNO said.

The minister directed officials to expedite clearances for all pending road and infrastructure projects and ensure their timely completion, he said.

"These projects are expected to significantly enhance connectivity and safety in the region, while boosting tourism, trade, economic growth, and generating sustainable employment opportunities in Ladakh," the LG Ladakh said.

## Polls Return to Kashmir Association Bangalore After 13 Years



KO Web Desk

**BANGALORE:** Karnataka's capital is set to witness a significant moment for its Kashmiri community as the Kashmir Association Bangalore (KAB) prepares to hold elections on Wednesday, ending a hiatus of more than 13 years and reviving a key platform for community representation, a spokesperson for the association said.

The long-delayed vote, scheduled for 22 April, is being framed by organisers and participants as a turning point, not only restoring democratic leadership within the body but also attempting to rebuild trust, relevance and cohesion among Kashmiris living in the southern Indian metropolises.

A total of 14 candidates, divided into two panels, are contesting for seven leadership positions in what is shaping up to be one of the most closely watched elections in the association's history, a KAB spokesman told Kashmir Observer.

Panel A has fielded Arshid Hussain

Baba for president, Hilal Ahmed for vice-president, Tahir Bazaz for general secretary, Sarwar Hussain Mir for secretary, Mir Nawaz for joint secretary, Javed Saleem Mir for organising/managing secretary, and Mir Riyaz Ahmad for treasurer.

Panel B has nominated Firdous Ahmad Malik for president, Mohammad Waseem Baba for vice-president, Hakim Waseem for general secretary, Altaf Bhat for secretary, Irfan-ul-Hasan for joint secretary, Mohammad Yaseen Malla for organising/managing secretary, and Mohammad Yousuf Jolly for treasurer.

According to the spokesperson, the elections have generated "renewed energy and participation" within the community, with strong engagement from professionals, entrepreneurs, students and long-term residents. The vote is expected to draw a significant turnout, reflecting what many see as a collective push for transparency, accountability and inclusive leadership after years of organisational inactivity.

Both panels have centred their campaigns on broadly similar priorities, including strengthening community unity, expanding support systems for members, and creating opportunities in business, employment and education. The need for credible governance structures and better representation has also emerged as a recurring theme in campaign outreach.

## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER BUDGAM

**Subject:-** 3rd Tentative District Cadre Combined Seniority list of Jr Grade Nurses  
**Reference:-** Administrative Department Health & Medical Education Circular No: 15-HME of 2024 Dated: 24-06-2024 duly endorsed by Directorate of Health Services Kashmir under No:- DHSK/Est/NG/E-7509487/5814-48 Dated: 27-06-2024, and also Est-5th/DHSK/NG/7248-55 Dated: 12-11-2025,

### CIRCULAR

On the basis of information received from subordinate offices and as per the available records in this office, 1st & 2nd Tentative Seniority List of Jr Grade Nurses of the district was issued vide this office circular NO: Est/CMOB/NG/2025-26/18519-565 Dated: 16.02.2026 & Est/CMOB/NG/19731-756 Dated: 24.03.2026, which was circulated amongst all concerned through their DDOs, and also published in the local newspapers for inviting objections.

Whereas, as per instructions issued by Director Health services Kashmir vide No. Est-5th/DHSK/NG/7248-55 Dated: 12-11-2025, the seniority list shall invariably be determined based on merit/position in the selection list issued by the recruiting agency viz SSRB etc.

Now the 3rd Tentative seniority list of Jr Grade Nurses (2210) as per SSRB merit position is circulated amongst all concerned through their DDOs inviting objections, with regard merit position if any, and also in case any such employee is left out the concerned DDOs shall furnish his/her complete biodata along with documentary evidence and SSRB merit list and 1st appointment order copy through their DDO's in order to include his/her name at the appropriate place/serial within 05 days positively from the date of publication of this notification in the newspapers and website.

No: Est/CMOB/NG/886-912  
Dated: 21/04/2026

DIPK-612-26  
DT: 21/04/2026

Chief Medical Officer,  
Budgam

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TRANS. LINE MAINTT. DIVISION-VII, JKPTCL BEMINA, SRINAGAR-190010



Ph. No. 0194-3516481 e-mail: tlm-d-vii.sgr@jk.gov.in

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No: TLM-D-7/02 of 2026-27 Dated: 20: 04: 2026

For and on behalf of the Managing Director Jammu & Kashmir Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. (JKPTCL) Kashmir, Executive Engineer TLM-D-VII Bemina Srinagar invites online e-bids valid for 180 days, from eligible and financially sound registered Contractors of Class having sufficient experience of the relevant works as per Terms, Conditions, Technical Specifications and Schedules thereto mentioned in the Standard Bidding Document.

The cost of tender document shall be deposited in the Account of Executive Engineer Transmission Line Maintenance Division-VII, Srinagar bearing CD A/C No. 036701020000182. Scanned copy of original EMD in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the Executive Engineer TLM-D-VII Srinagar shall be uploaded along with other credentials. However, the hard copy of EMD instrument shall have to be deposited along with hard copy of Bid.

S. No	Description of Work	Qty	Estimated Cost (INR Lacs)	Earnest Money (INR)	Cost of Tender Documents (Nonrefundable) INR	Completion period
1.	Carrying out detailed route survey from Grid Station Badampora upto Grid Station Hajin including Soil Investigation at different Tower Locations of 132kV D/C Badampora-Hajin Transmission line and within the premises of Grid Station Hajin as per scope of work in SBD.	As per BOQ	24.00	Rs. 48000/-	Rs.1000.00	60 Days

The Bidding Documents consisting of Pre-Qualifying Requirements / eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of Quantities (BOQ), set of Terms and Conditions of the contract and other related details can be seen/downloaded from the J&K State Government's website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>, as per Scheduled of dates given below:-

(i)	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	20-04-2026
(ii)	Online Start date of downloading of Tender Documents	21-04-2024 (10:00Hrs.)
(iii)	Online Start date & time of e-Bid submission	21-04-2026 (14:00 Hrs.)
(iv)	Online Last date & time of e-Bid submission	13-05-2026 (14:00 Hrs.)
(v)	Online Techno-Commercial Bids Opening Date & time	15-05-2026 (14:00Hrs.)
(vi)	Date and time of opening of Price e-Bid (Only of the technically qualified Bidders)	The date & time of opening of price e-bids shall be notified separately
(vii)	Status of TS & AA	Accorded
(viii)	Status of Funds	PDSS2425100194 Available (Capex)

- The Techno-Commercial Bids of all participating Bidders shall be opened online in the office of Superintending Engineer O&M Circle-II, JKPTCL Bemina Srinagar. The date & time of opening of Price Bids shall be notified on J&K Government's website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> and conveyed to the Bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address.
- Before participating in the online Bids, the intending Bidders shall get acquainted with the sites of work and local conditions thereof.
- Clarifications, if any, can also be sought from the office of the undersigned on e-mail: [tlm-d-vii.sgr@jk.gov.in](mailto:tlm-d-vii.sgr@jk.gov.in).
- The Department reserves the right to reject any or all the Bids at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

No: TLM-D-7/TS/ 209-13  
Dated: 20:04: 2026

DIPK-NB-220-26  
DT: 21/04/2026

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
TLM-D-VII Srinagar

# SC Agrees to Hear Plea Challenging Validity of NIA Act, 2008

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea challenging the validity of the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the Centre, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and others seeking their responses on the plea.

"Issue notice," the bench said, noting that the questions raised before it were of vital importance.

The plea has sought the setting aside of the 2008 Act,



claiming it was "violative" of Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution and beyond the legislative competence of the Centre.

The National Investiga-

tion Agency (NIA) was set up under the Act as a central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. The court directed that a

counter affidavit be filed by the respondents within four weeks and the petitioner would thereafter have two weeks to file the rejoinder affidavit.

Senior advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for the petitioner, said 'police' falls under the State List.

He referred to various provisions of the 2008 Act, including Section 3 which deals with the constitution of the NIA.

"Without being a police station, can the NIA register an FIR?" the bench asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, who was appearing in the matter.

Dave also referred to Section 6 (5) of the Act, which deals with the investigation of scheduled offences and says: if the Centre is of the opinion that a scheduled offence has been committed which is required to be investigated under this Act, it may suo motu direct the agency to probe it.

"You will have to assist us on the suo motu registration of FIR also," the bench told the law officer.

The top court, which said the questions raised before it were of vital importance, posted the matter for hearing on July 14.

# International Body Revokes Recognition Of Volleyball Federation Of India

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** World volleyball body FIVB on Tuesday revoked Volleyball Federation of India's recognition with immediate effect for breach of "legal and administrative requirements", days after two senior players quit the national camp over "poor and unscientific facilities" and "politics" in selection.

The FIVB has tasked an existing steering committee comprising Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Executive Council member Rohit Rajpal, CEO Raghuram Iyer, FIVB General Sports Director Steve Tutton, FIVB Head of Legal Affairs and General Counsel Stephen Bock and Hitesh Malhotra, to safeguard the sport in the country and look after athlete welfare.

The committee, which had been overseeing the VFI's operations until Tuesday, will continue in charge, Iyer told PTI.

"In accordance with Articles 1.5.3 and 1.9.1 of the FIVB General Regulations, the FIVB Board of Administration has determined that the legal and administrative requirements established by the interim leadership of the Volleyball Federation of India (VFI)," the world body said in a statement.

"As such, the VFI's provisional recognition has been revoked with immediate effect, granting temporary administrative competence to a Steering Committee - comprising representatives from the FIVB and the Indian Olympic Association - to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of volleyball activities in India."

The FIVB said the welfare and support of athletes remains its top priority, and to this end, the Steering Committee has been mandated to ensure continuity, stability and proper governance during the transitional period.

"Their responsibility spans the following court-mandated areas: establishment of the Athletes' Commission; conduct of State Association elections, and the alignment of the VFI Constitution with applicable legal and governance frameworks."

"Further, the Steering Committee will work to implement a transparent, merit-based national team selection,



coordinate upcoming international and national competitions, and provide technical and high-performance support through the FIVB Volleyball Empowerment programme, including the deployment of international coaching expertise.

"Under this Programme, the FIVB will contribute USD 258,000 in 2026 toward athlete support and national team development across both genders and disciplines in India, reaffirming its commitment to a stronger, more transparent future for Indian volleyball."

The FIVB had given only an eight-month interim recognition to the Indian body, subject to compliance with administrative norms.

On April 12, Indian volleyball has been hit by turmoil as two senior players quit the national camp in Ahmedabad over "incompetent coaches", removal of foreign coach Dragan Mihailovic, "poor and unscientific facilities" at the camp venue and "politics" in selection.

Anand K, a libero (a defensive position), and middle-blocker John Joseph left the camp after their confidential communication to the IOA seeking better facilities at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) centre in Ahmedabad was leaked to the VFI.

The VFI, on its part, has denied the charges, calling them "politics at play."

Anand, in a conversation with PTI, had said that they were asked to apologise and disown the "seven to eight e-mails", complaining of various concerns, which they refused, despite the "imminent risk of a ban by the VFI".

"It's going to be terrible for our careers but the fact is we shouldn't have to play like this. There is no analysis, no recovery, the coaches don't know anything, they are living in the 1950s. The one who was making a difference (Dragan Mihailovic of Serbia) has been removed for no clear reason.

# Trump Says US Weighing Currency Swap with UAE



AP

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump has said that he's considering the possibility of a currency swap with the United Arab Emirates to help the Mideast ally secure US dollars, as its oil-rich economy has been rattled by the Iran conflict.

During an interview with CNBC, the president expressed surprise that the nation needs assistance, but made clear he was open to the prospect of making the move to help meet his ally's concerns.

"I mean I'm surprised because they are really rich," Trump said. He added, "You know, they're very good for this country. So, yeah, if I

could help them, I would." The United Arab Emirates, an autocratically ruled federation of seven sheikdoms on the Arabian Peninsula that's home to Dubai, became wealthy from its oil deposits. It pegs its currency, the dirham, to the US dollar.

While it has been able to send some of its oil out via a pipeline to the Gulf of Oman, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has squeezed the country's oil exports.

The UAE has an estimated USD 2.5 trillion in savings and sovereign wealth funds but may be seeking the swap to "bolster investor confidence in the UAE's financial position if the war were to drag on," said Jason Tuvey, an analyst at Capital Economics.

# Pahalgam Victim's Wife Yet to Come to Terms with Grief

Press Trust of India

**BHAVNAGAR (GUJARAT):** A year after losing her husband and teenage son in the Pahalgam terror attack, Kajalben Parmar is yet to put the trauma behind her, but she thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday for Operation Sindoor as it brought her a "sense of justice".

Bhavnagar resident Yatishbhai Parmar, a hair salon owner, and his 17-year-old son Smit were among those killed by terrorists in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on April 22, 2025.

Kajalben, who was with them, survived the attack. Recalling that tragic day, Kajalben told PTI that the loss left her "completely helpless".

"I lost my husband and my son...They became martyrs for the country. Even today, I am not able to come to terms with it," she said, her voice marked by anguish.

The trauma also took a toll on her health, requiring frequent hospitalisations in the last one year.



"For the last two days, I was admitted to hospital. My chest hurts often," said the 45-year-old. Her primary concern now is the future of her elder son, Abhishek (23), who is currently completing a lab technician's course.

"My only demand from the government is that my son should get a small government job. I have no financial support now," she said, adding that the family has made multiple representations to authorities but not received any concrete assistance so far.

"We ran around everywhere, approached officials, but we have not received any support

or cooperation," she said. Kajalben, however, expressed appreciation for the government's response to the attack, particularly Operation Sindoor, which she said brought her some sense of justice.

"I want to meet Modi Sir once and thank him for carrying out Operation Sindoor... My only prayer to Modi Sir is to wipe out terrorism completely," she said.

Her son is always worried about her health and their uncertain future, Kajalben said. Apart from the Parmar father-son duo, Surat resident Shailesh Kalathiya was also among the three victims from Gujarat.

# MI Securities

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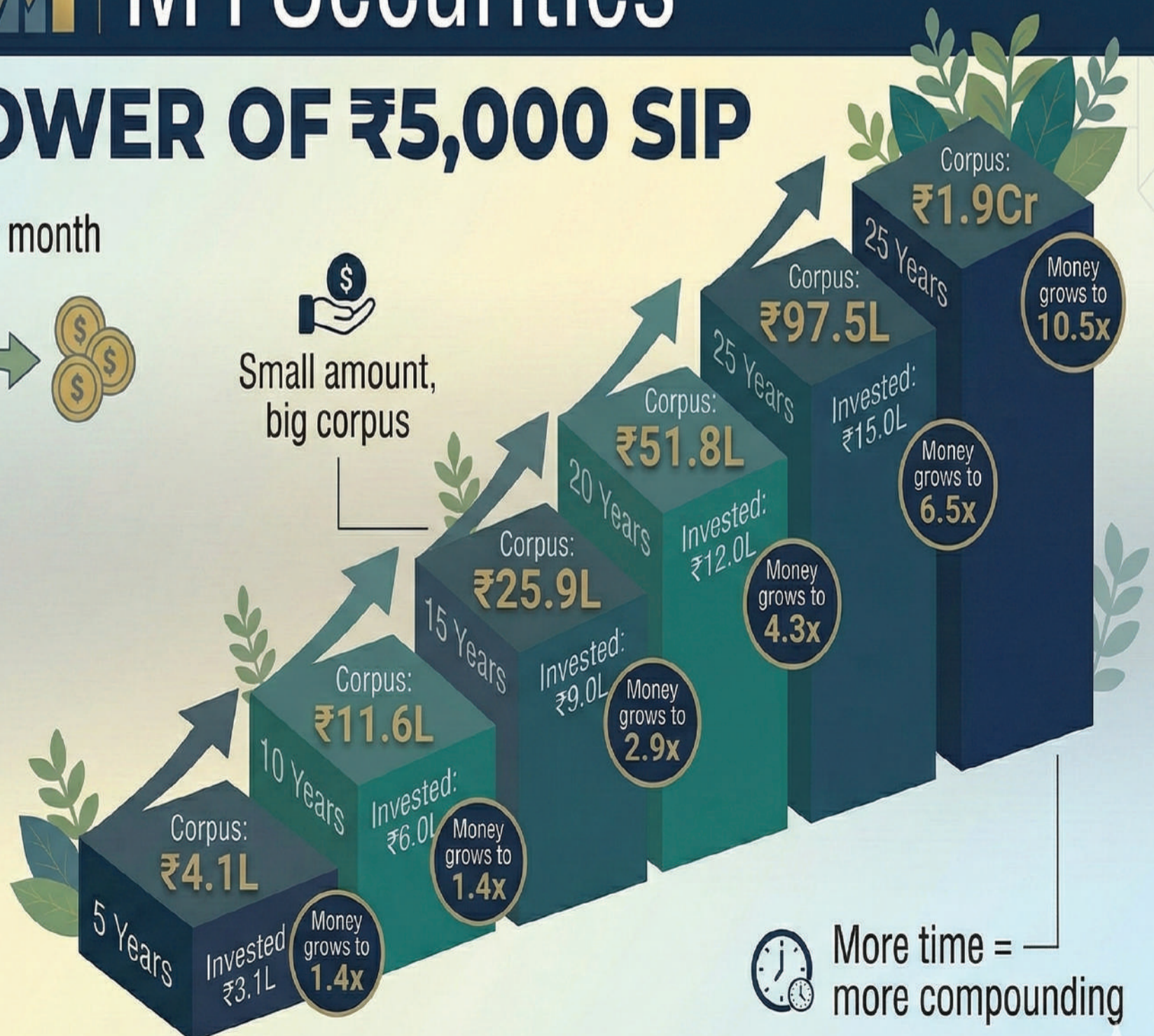
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10	6.0L
15	9.0L
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25	15.0L
30	18.0L

Small amount, big corpus



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