

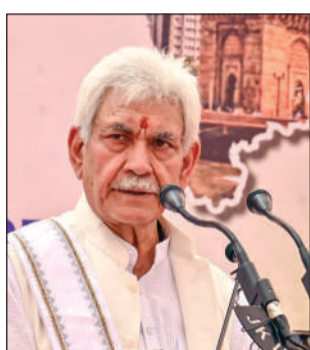
Unity, Heritage Key To India's Rise: LG Sinha

India Witnessing New Confidence Under PM Modi

Abrogation of Article 370 Fulfilled Patel's Vision

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said the abrogation of Article 370 fulfilled the vision of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and strengthened the foundations of national unity, asserting that India's rise is anchored in its shared heritage and collective strength.



He said Gujarat and Maharashtra exemplify this spirit, describing them as engines of growth contributing significantly to the country's economy as well as its social and cultural fabric.

Addressing a gathering at J&K Lok Bhavan during celebrations marking the Foundation Day of Gujarat and Maharashtra, Sinha said the country is witnessing a renewed sense of confidence, dignity and progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said the move of August 5, 2019, which led to the re-organisation of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, reinforced the idea of "Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat" and advanced the process of national integration.

The Lieutenant Governor said India's strength lies in its unity in diversity, adding that the nation's cultural and civilisational heritage continues to guide its development trajectory.

"Unity amidst diversity is our greatest achievement. Our traditions, cultures and shared heritage together form the foundation of India's progress," he said.

Highlighting Gujarat's contribution, Sinha referred to leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, who transformed the freedom struggle through his philosophy of truth and non-violence, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whose vision laid the foundation of India's unity.

He also mentioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that his leadership has reshaped the nation's development path through determination and governance reforms.

From Maharashtra, Sinha paid tribute to icons such as Chhatrapati | More on P6

Ladakh A Model Of Rapid Transformation Since 2019: Shah Calls Buddha Relics Return 'Historic Reunion'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Ladakh has emerged as a model of rapid transformation since the 2019 bifurcation of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, listing wide-ranging political, social and economic changes in the Union Territory.

He said the region has remained at the centre of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's development agenda, adding that visible progress has been achieved across sectors after Ladakh was granted Union Territory status.

His remarks come amid renewed calls by local groups, including the Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance, for resumption of dialogue with the Centre on statehood and Sixth Schedule demands.

"Ladakh had long demanded Union Territory status due to lack of development. Today, change is visible across sectors," Shah said.

Infrastructure Sees Sharp Expansion

Highlighting infrastructure gains, Shah said road length in Ladakh has increased from around 1,799 km before 2019 to over 4,040 km now, nearly doubling in a



few years.

He said the number of bridges has risen from 19 to 72, while mobile towers have increased from 344 to 653. Helipads, he added, have gone up from seven to 41, significantly improving connectivity in remote areas.

Snow-clearing machines, crucial for the high-altitude region, have increased from 60 to 215, ensuring better winter mobility.

Connectivity, Power and Mega Projects

Shah said improved infrastructure has reduced road closure days on key routes. Zojila Pass, which earlier remained shut for 127 days, was closed for only 19 days this year, while the

Kargil-Leh road saw closure reduced from 175 days to just 11.

He said work on the Zojila tunnel is underway, construction of the Shinkun La tunnel has begun, and a new civil airport is also in the pipeline.

On power infrastructure, he said grid-related works have increased from 145 to 184, while distribution transformers have risen from 1,182 to 3,153. VSAT connectivity, he added, has been extended to all panchayats.

Governance, Education and Welfare

Shah said Ladakh now has seven districts and 193 panchayats, with five new districts created after 2019. He also noted that local languages including Bhoti, Purgi

and Urdu have been given administrative recognition alongside Hindi and English.

In the education sector, he said Sindhu Central University has been established, along with 174 ICT labs, 130 smart classrooms, 40 science labs and 24 Atal Tinkering Labs.

He claimed Ladakh became a fully literate administrative unit in 2024 and said nearly 98 per cent households have been provided tap water under the Har Ghar Jal scheme.

Budget Boost, Push for Self-Reliance

The Home Minister said Ladakh's budget has increased from around 1,000 crore before 2019 to 6,000 crore now.

He also announced the formation of the Sindhu Infrastructure Development Corporation to promote industrial growth, asserting that the goal is to make the border region self-reliant.

"Historic Reunion" of Buddha Relics

Earlier in Leh, Shah inaugurated the exposition of sacred relics of Tathagata Buddha and described their return to Ladakh after 75 years as a | More on P6

West Asia Crisis Commercial LPG Sees Record ₹993 Hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi: The price of commercial LPG was hiked by the steepest ever Rs 993 per 19-kg cylinder on Friday, marking the third straight monthly increase due to rising global energy prices linked to the West Asia conflict.

A 19-kg commercial LPG - used by establishments such as hotels and restaurants - now costs a record Rs 3,071.5 in Delhi as against Rs 2,078.50 previously.

Rates were last increased by 195.50 per cylinder on April 1. Prior to that, prices had gone up by Rs 114.5 per 19-kg cylinder on March 1.

In three increases, commercial LPG rates have gone up by Rs 1,303.

Prices of domestic cooking gas LPG - the one used in household kitchens - remained unchanged. Domestic LPG rates were last hiked by Rs 60 per 14.2-kg cylinder on March 7. It costs Rs 913 per 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum revise ATF and LPG prices on the first day of every month based on international benchmarks and the exchange rate.

Global oil prices have shot up almost 50 per cent after the war in West Asia disrupted energy supply chains.

Petrol and diesel prices continue to remain frozen after a Rs 2 per-litre reduction in March last year; petrol currently costs Rs 94.72 per litre in Delhi and diesel Rs 87.62. | More on P6

Lt Gen Balbir Is New Chinar Corps GoC

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Lieutenant General Balbir Singh on Friday assumed the command of the Army's Srinagar-based strategic XV Corps from Lt Gen Prashant Srivastava, who has been appointed as Quarter Master General at the Army headquarters.

Lt Gen Singh had earlier commanded the Victor Force, which looks after counter-insurgency operations in south and central Kashmir. His tenure saw the killing of Col Manpreet Singh, Major Ashish Dhonchak and Deputy Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Humayun Bhat by terrorists in the higher reaches of Kokernag on September 13, 2023.

A statement from the XV Corps, often referred to as Chinar Corps, said Lt Gen Singh is a highly decorated and battle-hardened officer with over 34 years of service.

After assuming charge of the new role, the General Officer Commanding (GoC) paid respects at the Chinar War Memorial, honouring the supreme sacrifice of the nation's bravehearts.

In his inaugural address, Lt Gen Singh reaffirmed his resolve to work in close synergy with the civil administration and the people of Kashmir to further strengthen the | More on P6

No Move To Drop Urdu; PDP Spreading Lies: CM

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday accused the People's Democratic Party (PDP) of raising the Urdu language issue to divert public attention from its alleged role in aiding the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the recent Rajya Sabha polls, even as he categorically denied any move to drop Urdu from government functioning.

"There is no truth in claims about dropping Urdu. No order has been issued. The file is still on my table, and I have not approved it," Omar told reporters after inaugurating 368 residential quarters for government employees at Sempora in Pampore.

The Chief Minister said the



government had only sought public feedback on a departmental proposal and no final decision had been taken.

"There is a difference between asking for public comments and dropping a subject," he said, challenging critics to produce any official order regarding the | More on P6

Employee Welfare A Priority: CM

Observer News Service

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday inaugurated 368 newly constructed residential | More on P6

Wetter May Ahead For J&K: IMD

Day Temps Likely Below Normal

Agencies

Srinagar: The India Meteorological Department has forecast above-normal rainfall and below-normal temperatures for Jammu and Kashmir in May, indicating a cooler and wetter start to the summer season.

According to the latest outlook, most parts of the Union Territory, including the Kashmir Valley, are likely to receive higher-than-usual precipitation, with frequent spells of rain and increased cloud cover expected through the month.

Maximum temperatures are projected to remain below the seasonal average, suggesting relatively mild daytime conditions compared to typical May patterns.

The forecast marks a clear deviation from the region's usual early summer trend, which is generally characterised by rising heat and drier conditions.

Officials said the outlook is based on probabilistic seasonal models and may vary at the local level.

Pulwama Family Finds Closure As Missing Boy's Body Recovered

Four-year-old found downstream in Hirpora; village mourns loss

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Bringing a tragic end to days of anxious waiting, the body of a four-year-old boy from Pulwama was recovered on Friday morning after a five-day search operation in south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Officials said the deceased, identified as Mohammad Hanzala of Tiken village, had slipped into the fast-flowing Ranbiara nallah near Dubjan Bridge on April 26 and was swept away within moments by the strong current.

"The body was retrieved from a downstream location in the Hirpora area this morning after relentless efforts over the past five days," an official said.

Soon after the incident, a large-scale search operation was launched involving teams from the Army. | More on P6

LG, CM Express Grief

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the death of five-year-old Mohammad Hanzala from Pulwama, whose body was recovered in Shopian after several days of intensive search operations. In a post on X, the Office of the JK LG termed | More on P6



Shri Manoj Sinha
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor J&K

Walk for Change, Walk for a Drug-Free J&K

**NASHA MUKT
JAMMU KASHMIR ABHIYAAN**

MEGA PADYATRA

SUNDAY | MAY 3, 2026

From TRC Football Ground via Polo-view
to Gantaghar, Lalchowk

Chief Guest
Shri Manoj Sinha
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor J&K



Har Kadam,
Ek Nayi Umeed

For a Stronger, Healthier
Jammu Kashmir

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS, J&K

DIP No: DPK-946/26 Dated: 01.05.2026



Cancer Care Bolstered With Diverse Clinical Experiences, Personalised Approach: Experts

Press Trust Of India

Experts on Friday stressed the need for stronger international collaboration, innovation and personalised treatment approaches to improve cancer care outcomes, ahead of a global cancer summit in the national capital. The remarks came at a press conference organised a day before the Fortis Cancer Summit 2026 -- being held on May 2 and 3 here. The event has been organised by Fortis Healthcare Limited, which aims to bring together oncologists and researchers from India and over 25 countries, according to a statement. Speaking at the press conference, Iliya Karniliyus Salu, chief medical director, Trust Charitos Hospital, Abuja, Nigeria, said, "Cancer care today demands stronger global collaboration than ever before, as the challenges we face are increasingly complex and universal." Speakers at the event said that the platforms like the Fortis Cancer Summit are critical in bringing together diverse clinical



experiences, research advancements and technological innovations from across geographies. The summit's theme 'Beyond Evidence-Based Oncology' is particularly relevant, as the future of cancer care lies not only in evidence, but in translating that evidence into personalised, multidisciplinary and patient-centric treatment approaches, they said. Dr Nitesh Rohatgi, principal director, Medical Oncology,

Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, said, "The future of cancer care lies in collaboration, innovation, and the ability to adapt evidence into personalised patient care pathways. This summit is about building a globally aligned oncology community committed to transforming patient outcomes." Dr Ankur Bahl, principal director, Medical Oncology, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, said oncology is

evolving rapidly with new technologies and precision medicine improving outcomes, and there is a need to better connect research with real-world clinical practice. Experts also said that improving access to care, early detection and wider use of advanced diagnostics remain key to better outcomes, according to the statement. Speakers also highlighted that head and neck cancers are among the most common in



The future of cancer care lies in collaboration, innovation, and the ability to adapt evidence into personalised patient care pathways. This summit is about building a globally aligned oncology community committed to transforming patient outcomes

India, especially in North India, largely due to tobacco use. The summit will see participation from experts across fields such as medical, surgical and radiation oncology, haematology, paediatric oncology and genomics, along with international experts from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Oman, Nigeria and Uzbekistan, according to the statement.

Rotavirus Vaccine Trial Data: CIC Questions ICMR's 'No Data' Claim, Seeks Affidavit

Press Trust Of India

The Central Information Commission (CIC) pulled up the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for claiming that participant-level data on a rotavirus vaccine trial is "not maintained". The ICMR said this in response to an RTI plea seeking statistical details of trial outcomes, including cases of intussusception (a condition where part of the intestine slides into another, causing blockage). The CIC termed the handling of the RTI plea as "cavalier". It directed the ICMR to conduct a fresh search for the records and file an affidavit confirming their non-availability if they are not found.

The case pertains to an RTI application filed by RTI activist Amrita Johri seeking details of a clinical trial of the 116E strain of rotavirus conducted with government funding and registered with the Clinical Trial Registry of India. The applicant had sought data on the number of children who received the vaccine and placebo in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, and on cases of intussusception recorded during the two-year study period. During the hearing, Information Commissioner Jaya Varma Sinha noted that neither the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) nor the First Appellate Authority had furnished a reply within the stipulated time under the RTI Act. "The Commission, after adverting to the facts and circumstances of the case, hearing both the parties and perusal of the records, observes that no reply has been given to the Appellant either by the CPIO or by the First Appellate Authority within the stipulated frame as per the provisions of the RTI Act. Therefore, the Commission expresses displeasure at the conduct of both the CPIO and FAA for treating the instant matter in a cavalier manner,"

the order said. However, in its written submission, the ICMR said the Clinical Trial Registry-India (CTRI) maintains trial protocols and methodological details but does not hold participant-level data, adding that "the participant's data is not maintained in CTRI and hence the queries are not relevant to CTRI". Taking note of the contention, the Com-



mission directed the CPIO to make a thorough effort to trace the relevant records and provide the requested statistical information within three weeks, if available. "On the contrary, if the relevant record is still not found, the CPIO is directed to submit an appropriate affidavit, on non-judicial stamp paper, deposing the factum of non-availability of the relevant record," the Commission said. Johri told PTI that she had sought details of the trial results, "especially the incidence of the risk of intestine obstruction," but received no response to her RTI application or first appeal. She said, "The RTI application was filed more than 18 months ago. The ICMR also claimed that they did not maintain this information. In the hearing, it was pointed out that no personal details of the trial participants have been sought, only statistics regarding the results of the study." She also flagged concerns over transparency, saying such information "should in any case be proactively published since this is an issue of great public interest due to its direct impact on our health".

OBSERVER

Published Since 1997 KASHMIR
<https://kashmirobserver.net>

IS AVAILABLE IN SOUTH KASHMIR AT FOLLOWING PLACES

JANISAR NEWS AGENCY	ANANTNAG
REYAZ NEWS AGENCY	ANANTNAG
RESHI NEWS AGENCY	ANANTNAG
BUDROO NEWS AGENCY	BIJBEHARA
GHULAM HASSAN NEWS AGENCY	SRIGUPWARA
LOORI NEWS AGENCY	SANGAM
IRSHAD NEWS AGENCY	KOKERNAG
FRIENDS NEWS AGENCY	KULGAM
JAVAI NEWS AGENCY	KULGAM
MALIK NEWS AGENCY	AERWANI
IRSHAD NEWS AGENCY	KOKERNAG
RAYEES NEWS AGENCY	AWANTIPORA
PAMPOR NEWS AGENCY	PAMPOR
SANGAM NEWS AGENCY	SANGAM
GAZI KHURSHEED NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
MANZOOR NEWS AGENCY	PUWLAMA
ALTA NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
MANZOOR NEWS AGENCY	NORPORA
JAVAI NEWS AGENCY	AWANTIPORA
LONE NEWS/ADVT AGENCY	RATNIPORA, PULWAMA
BOOZE NEWS AGENCY	AWANTIPORA
3 WAY TRAL NEWS AGENCY	TRAL
SYED MAQBOOL NEWS AGENCY	TRAL
DAR NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
SHAFI NEWS AGENCY	RAJPORA
REYZ NEWS AGENCY	PAMPOR
QUDOOS NEWS AGENCY	SHOPIAN
TURRAY NEWS AGENCY	SHOPIAN
FAROOQ NEWS AGENCY	KAKAPORA PULWAMA
JAVAI NEWS AGENCY	QAZIGUND
NISAR NEWS AGENCY	BANIHAL

FOR ANY QUERY, CALL CIRCULATION DEPTT. : 0194-2502327

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that I have lost my registration certificate of my maruti baleno car bearing registration number JK01AH 7270 while traveling in Srinagar to airport. Now I am applying for its duplicate and if anyone has any objection in this regard may contact R.T.O. Kashmir within a period of 7 days from the date of publication after that no objection will be accepted.

Nisar Ahmad Gojri,
 S/O Lala Gojri
 R/O Cheek Lachman Pora S.k Airport Sgr.

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer ID NO 0213030015924 from (old Name) Ishfaq Ahmad Sheikh S/o Khazir Mohd Sheikh R/o Bohripora Sopore to (New Name) Khazir Mohd Sheikh R/o Bohripora Sopore. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Khazir Mohd Sheikh
 R/o Bohripora Sopore

FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer ID NO 0213030000413 from (old Name) Shaheen Ahmad Ganie S/o Ghulam Mohidin Ganie R/o Bohripora Sopore to (New Name) Ghulam Mohidin Ganie R/o Bohripora Sopore. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Ghulam Mohidin Ganie
 R/o Bohripora Sopore

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of the general public that I, Suhail Ahmad Bakshi, S/o Ghulam Hassan Bakshi, R/o Rambir Pora Balla, Kunzer, have applied for issuance of a "D" Class Contractor Card in the office of R&B Department. If anybody has any objection regarding the issuance of the said Contractor Card in my favour, they may file their objection before the concerned authority within the stipulated period.

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Diploma Certificate and want to apply duplicate copy of it, if anyone has any objection, he/she can contact concerned department within the period of seven days from the issue of this Notice.

Name: Showkat Ahmad Wani
 S/O: Mohamad Maqbool Wani
 Roll No. 344536
 Year: BI Annual 2004
 School: Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School Nehalpora
 Registration No: 00NKM3114038
 Serial No: 2505395

fko

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

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

This office has received a written application from Qaisar Ahmad Lone S/o Habibullah Lone R/o Edipora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of ward Namely Sudais Qaisar born on 09-12-2020 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
 Executive Magistrate
 Bomai

fko

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

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

This office has received a written application from Mohammad Shaban Wani S/o Ab Ahad Wani R/o Nathipora, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of ward Namely Aadia Nazli born on 01-08-2017 Ahsan Alaie born on 26-05-2021 Sobiya Shaban born on 15-02-2016 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
 Executive Magistrate
 Bomai

fko

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS ZAINGEER BOMAI

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

This office has received a written application from Fayaz Ahmad Bhat S/o Abdul Ahad Bhat R/o Zalosa, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death certificate in favour of ward Namely Seerat Jaan born on 06-07-2009 Aaliyah Jaan born on 08-03-2014 Irfay Fayaz born on 24-06-2016 and as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard, if anyone has any objection, he/she may file the same before the undersigned within 07 days. After that, no objection whatsoever will be entertained by this office.

Tehsildar
 Executive Magistrate
 Bomai

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that the name of Aiza Jan D/o Ghulam Ahmad Khanday R/o Sumbal Bagh Hardu Aboora, Baramulla, has been wrongly recorded as Dazy Jaan in Aadhaar No. 5005 2004 6327. The correct name is Aiza Jan.

Now I have applied for the correction of the same if any person having objection may approach the concerned Aadhaar Centre at Jammu/ Srinagar within 7 days.

Aiza Jan
 D/o Ghulam Ahmad Khanday
 R/o Sumbal Bagh Hardu Aboora, Baramulla

fko

NOTICE

In my driving licence bearing No. JK04 2010 0005439 my name has been wrongly mentioned as Kousar Al Mali while as my correct and actual name as per my Aadhaar card is Kousar Hussain Malik. Now the necessary correction is to be made. In this regard if any body is having any objection may convey to ARTO Budgam within a period of seven days, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Kousar Hussain Malik
 S/o: Bashir Ahmad Malik
 R/o: Rakh Shalina Taingan
 Chinar Bagh Budgam

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Nadeem Yousuf Lone, S/o Mohd Yousuf Lone, R/o Zooni Pora, Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir, do hereby declare that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Driving Licence bearing No. JK05 20230000340 as Nadeem Yousuf.

That my correct and full name is Nadeem Yousuf Lone. Henceforth, I shall be known as Nadeem Yousuf Lone for all purposes, including official and legal records. If any person has any objection to this name correction, they may file their objection within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice.

ARTO office sopore

fko

International Labour Day Daily Wagers, ASHA Workers Demand Regularization, Wage Enhancement

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Daily wagers, casual labourers, and ASHA workers took to the streets in Srinagar on International Labour Day, demanding regularisation of services, enhancement of wages, and extension of social security benefits.

According to KNO, the main protest was held at Lal Chowk, where workers assembled under the banner of different unions and associations, carrying placards and raising slogans.

Protesting ASHA workers said they serve every day in villages and cities, but their services are still not recognised as regular. They demanded a fixed monthly honorarium and timely payment.

"We are on duty every day, but our services are not recognised as regular. We demand fixed monthly honorarium and timely payment," said one ASHA worker.

Another protester said, "We have been working for years, but there is no job security or future protection. We only want dignity for our work."

ASHA workers, who form a major part of frontline healthcare delivery, said their role in rural and urban health outreach has expanded



significantly, but their employment status remains contractual and under-supported.

Daily wagers and casual labourers said that despite continuous engagement in government departments over long periods, their services remain unregularised. They demanded a structured policy for regularisation and social security cover, including

pension and insurance benefits.

The protesters said repeated assurances over the years have not translated into concrete outcomes, leading to growing frustration among the working classes.

Labour Day events in Srinagar also saw participation from trade union representatives and political leaders. CPI(M) leader

and MLA Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami said Labour Day represents the global struggle of workers and the sacrifices made for securing basic rights such as the eight-hour work system.

He said workers across sectors, including industrial labour, agriculture, informal sector and frontline services, continue to face challenges related to wages, job security and union rights.

"Today, labour rights are under pressure, and workers are facing increasing difficulties," Tarigami said, expressing concern over changes in labour laws and their impact on workers' protections, particularly collective bargaining and working conditions.

The CPI(M) leader further said that a large section of daily wage and casual workers, despite years of service, remain outside the ambit of pensions and social security benefits. He added that ASHA workers and other similar categories continue to demand formal recognition and improved service conditions.

He called for stronger unity among trade unions and stressed the need for addressing workers' concerns in a structured and time-bound manner.

CM Inspects Last Year's Flood Breach Site at Shalina

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah visited Shalina near Lasjan to inspect the site that had developed a breach during the floods in September last year.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti, Shaleen Kabra, and other concerned officers.

During the visit, the

Chief Minister reviewed the ongoing repair and flood mitigation works at the breach site. He directed the concerned departments to ensure strengthening of embankments to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Emphasizing the need for durable and long-term solutions, the Chief Minister instructed officials to expedite the process and ensure that permanent restoration works are completed at the earliest.

ACB Arrests Head Constable for Accepting Bribe

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Anti-Corruption Bureau Jammu and Kashmir on Friday arrested a head constable in Srinagar for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe in connection with an official matter.

The accused was apprehended during a trap operation laid in the Batamaloo area of Srinagar following a complaint by a local resident.

According to officials, the

complainant had alleged that the policeman was seeking illegal gratification. Acting on the complaint, the ACB team set up a trap and caught the accused while allegedly accepting 5,000 in cash along with a cheque of 35,000.

The amount was recovered on the spot in the presence of independent witnesses, officials said.

According to KNT, a case has been registered under relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, and further investigation is underway.

Judicial Employee Arrested in Drug Case, Heroin Recovered

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police on Friday arrested another judicial employee in connection with a drug case in the Alochibagh area, expanding the scope of an ongoing investigation into narcotics activity involving court staff.

A senior police official told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that the arrest was made by Shergarhi Police Station under the supervision of SHO Muhammad Ishaq. The accused has been identified as Zubair Ahmad Bhat, son of Zahoor Ahmad Bhat, an employee affiliated with the court of the 13th Finance Judge at the Lower Court Srinagar.

The official said heroin was re-

covered from his possession at the time of arrest. A case has been registered under FIR No. 22/2026, and further investigation is underway.

The official added that Bhat's arrest followed the questioning of another judicial employee who had been detained earlier in the same case, indicating backward and forward linkages being examined by investigators.

Notably, in the earlier action, Shergarhi Police had arrested a judicial department employee, identified as Arun Kumar, a Junior Assistant, during naka checking at Alochibagh. Police had recovered a heroin-like substance and cash from his possession, registering a case under relevant provisions of law.

Chargesheet Filed in Job Fraud Case

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Special Crime Wing of the Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir has filed a chargesheet in a case involving alleged fraud in the name of government jobs, naming three accused in connection with the scheme.

The chargesheet, filed before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar, relates

to FIR No. 09/2019 registered under multiple sections of the Ranbir Penal Code, including cheating, forgery, and criminal conspiracy.

Those named in the case are Fayaz Ahmad Khan of Maloora Shalteng Srinagar, Showkat Ahmad Shah of Shanzipora Handwara, and Owais Ahmad Rather of Shalteng Khwaja Bagh Srinagar.



26401/26402 Jammu Tawi - Srinagar - Jammu Tawi Vande Bharat Express				
Train No. 26401		STATION	Train No. 26402	
Arrival	Departure		Arrival	Departure
--	06:20	Jammu Tawi	18:50	--
07:37	07:39	Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan	17:25	17:27
08:05	08:10	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	16:55	17:00
08:28	08:30	Reasi	16:34	16:36
09:56	09:58	Banihal	14:58	15:00
11:10	--	Srinagar	--	14:00

Date of Extension:- 26401/26402 from Srinagar and Jammu Tawi from 02.05.2026

26404/26403 Srinagar - Jammu Tawi - Srinagar Vande Bharat Express				
Train No. 26404		STATION	Train No. 26403	
Arrival	Departure		Arrival	Departure
--	08:00	Srinagar	18:05	--
09:00	09:02	Banihal	16:40	16:42
11:05	11:10	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	14:50	14:55
11:35	11:37	Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan	14:16	14:18
12:40	--	Jammu Tawi	--	13:20

Date of Extension:- 26404/26403 from Srinagar and Jammu Tawi from 02.05.2026

Note:- In repercussion to above, timings of the following trains will be revised as per details mentioned below:-

Station	Existing Timings		Revised Timings	
	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure
Jammu Tawi	17:43	17:50	17:43	17:50
Bajalta	--	--	18:10	18:35
Martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan	19:40	--	20:05	--

For detailed information regarding route, stoppages and timings of above trains, please call RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

Northern Railway @RailwayNorthern @Northernrailway.india Northern Railway

- 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
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
14 Zil-Qadah
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR 4:10
ZUHR 12:28
ASR 5:18
Magrib 7:17
ISHA 8:48

This Day In History

- 1335 - Otto the Merry, Duke of Austria, becomes Duke of Carinthia.
- 1345 - "Quaden Maendach" in Ghent: battles between fullers & weavers
- 1497 - John Cabot's expedition departs Bristol searching for new lands across the Atlantic
- 1526 - German evangelical monarchy joins Schmalkaldische League
- 1598 - France & Spain sign Peace of Vervins
- 1776 - France & Spain agreed to give weapons to American rebels
- 1808 - Uprising against French occupation begins in Madrid
- 1833 - Russian Tsar Nicolas I bans public sale of serfs
- 1889 - Abyssinian Emperor Menelik II and Italy sign Treaty of Wichale
- 1905 - French newspapers publish lists of Jules Verne unpublished work
- 1906 - Tsar Nicolas II of Russia dismisses his moderate Prime Minister Witte and appoints Ivan Goremykin, a conservative bureaucrat
- 1911 - French troops occupy Fès El Bali Morocco
- 1924 - Netherlands refuses to recognize USSR
- 1926 - US military intervenes in Nicaragua
- 1927 - Intl Economic Conference (52 countries including USSR) opens
- 1933 - In Germany, Adolf Hitler bans trade unions
- 1942 - Japanese troops occupy Mandalay, Burma
- 1945 - Allies occupy Wismar, Northern Germany

From KO Archives

Love Bug' Computer Virus Wreaks Fresh Havoc

Agencies

NEW YORK - Copycat variants of the "Love Bug" vi-rus labeled "Joke" and "Moth-er's Day" infected computers around the world on Friday, a day after the most widespread cyberattack ever-wreaked havoc on business and govern-ment operations.

Tens of millions of the com-puters have been disabled so far as the virus, first detected in Asia, spread around the globe, forcing network admin-istrators to shut down e-mail systems at major companies and penetrating the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency and Britain's Parliament.

Security experts said the vi-rus was far more devastating than last year's Melissa bug, with losses now counting in the billions from damaged data and the distractions of fighting the software scourge, and warned that it could take weeks to stem the invasion.

"There's a potential that anyone who receives this virus can go to the Internet and (nd) tools to change codes within the virus program that can give the e-

mail or the attachment a new name," said Simon Perry, vice president for security products at Computer Associates International Inc. (NYSE : CA - news).

The Islandia, N.Y is a leading maker of anti-Virus software such as inoculateIT.

For the time being, most of the virus variants are only cos-metically different from the original virus. "Based on our research, we believe that the variants are coming from a number of different people," Perry said.

ASIA AND EUROPE TAKE STOCK OF IMPACT: Computer users woke up on Friday to the chilling implications for a world that is now so wired up that quarantining such bugs may prove an endless cat-and-mouse game — with far-reaching financial consequences.

Computer Economics, a market research firm located in Carlsbad, Calif, estimated that the virus already had caused \$2.61 billion dollars in damages worldwide, but most experts said precise figures would be difficult to pin down.

The impact of the bug in Asia on Friday was possibly muted by the fact the markets in four countries-Japan, South Korea, China and Thailand - were closed for pub-lic holidays on Friday.

European Enterprise Com-missioner Erkki Liikanen said: "The Love Bug is a warning to us all that security must be given top priority if consumer and user confidence is to be maintained as we move into the information age."

A German government spokeswoman said the virus had penetrated its foreign, jus-tice, interior and economics min-istries. The spokesman re-ported no serious damage as the interior ministry called in a special task force to advise on coun-ter-measures.

Britain's Consumers Asso-ciation said 30 to 50 percent of UK businesses seemed to be af-fected. "It is spreading very rap-idly. Yesterday we had 10 to 15 percent," said Alan Stevens.

Kit experts warned the full effects of the bug may carry through the weekend.

KASHMIR OBSERVER™

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
Distribution & Advertising: Firdous Ahmad
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 1947969705
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email: editor@kashmirobserver.net

Who Deserves Reservation?

A system built to uplift the excluded now risks rewarding influence, paperwork, and political convenience while thousands of deserving young people in J&K watch opportunity disappear.



Sahil Parry

India's reservation system began with a moral purpose that commanded broad respect.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned it as a constitutional instrument that could repair centuries of exclusion and open doors that caste, poverty, geography, and social discrimination had kept shut.

Reservation emerged as a bridge into public life for communities denied access to education, jobs, and state power. That vision still holds immense value.

Millions of Indians entered universities, government offices, and professional institutions because the Constitution recognized that equality on paper means little when society begins with unequal foundations.

A serious problem now confronts that vision, especially in Jammu and Kashmir.

Reservation increasingly serves people with influence, financial security, institutional access, and political reach while many genuinely disadvantaged students remain trapped at the edge of the system.

Honest discussion on this issue rarely survives beyond slogans because political parties treat reservation as electoral territory rather than public policy.

That silence has produced deep resentment among young people who spent years believing hard work still mattered.

Reservation and merit can work together when the system functions honestly.

A first-generation student from a remote village in Poonch who studies through power cuts, attends a poorly staffed government school, lacks coaching support, and still qualifies for a competitive examination represents both social justice and academic merit.

Such a student deserves institutional support because the playing field began sharply uneven.

The crisis begins when privilege enters the system wearing the mask of disadvantage.

A senior bureaucrat's son raised in a government bungalow, educated in elite schools, coached in Delhi, and surrounded by institutional guidance can still appear in recruitment lists through reserved category certificates.

That reality destroys public faith because every such selection pushes out somebody who genuinely depended on constitutional protection.

This distortion grows sharper in Jammu and Kashmir because government employment remains the main



path to economic stability.

Maharashtra has industries, Bengaluru has technology firms, Gurgaon has corporate employment, while J&K offers very little beyond state recruitment.

A government job here supports entire families, funds education for younger siblings, prevents migration, and provides long-term security in a region with limited private investment.

Every single seat, therefore, holds enormous weight. And that reality makes excessive reservation deeply contentious in J&K.

The Union Territory operates under one of the heaviest reservation structures in India. Categories including SC, ST, OBC, RBA, ALC, PSP, and EWS consume a vast share of government recruitment seats. Open merit candidates often compete for a narrow remainder after quota allocations conclude.

A middle-class student from Jammu or a struggling family in rural Kashmir may spend six or seven years preparing for JKAS or other competitive examinations only to discover that the available open seats barely exist.

Such candidates do not possess business networks, inherited wealth, or alternative career routes. They only possess exam preparation and hope.

Political leadership continues expanding reservation categories because quotas generate votes while structural reform demands courage. Serious investment in schools, libraries, teacher quality, internet access, and coaching support would produce lasting mobility.

That route requires time, accountability, and sustained governance. Expanding quotas simply requires a press conference.

Medical education reveals the danger of reducing standards without fixing inequality at its source.

NEET PG emerged to ensure baseline competence before doctors entered specialist training. During NEET PG 2023, the qualifying percentile fell to zero. Candidates with negative marks entered postgraduate medical programs. Several candidates scoring below zero qualified for admission into MD specializations.

The same controversy resurfaced during NEET PG 2025 when lowered

cutoffs again permitted candidates with negative scores into counselling rounds for clinical specialties.

This issue reaches beyond statistics. A poor family entering a government hospital in Kupwara or Rajouri trusts that the doctor standing before them passed through a system committed to competence. Public health depends upon that trust. Educational reform cannot survive on symbolic compassion while professional standards weaken.

Real justice would produce stronger schools in Handwara, functioning science laboratories in Doda, trained teachers in Ramban, and accessible coaching support in underserved districts. Real justice would prepare disadvantaged students to compete confidently rather than lowering thresholds while calling the outcome empowerment.

Fraud worsens the crisis further. Delhi Police arrested four individuals during 2024, including an Executive Magistrate, for allegedly running a racket that issued fake OBC, SC, and ST certificates to general category applicants. Authorities seized more than a hundred fraudulent certificates. The Ministry of Personnel has acknowledged that more than 1,832 government appointments across India involved fake or fraudulent category certificates.

Those numbers represent stolen futures. Jammu and Kashmir now faces similar allegations that demand transparent investigation. Questions emerged after the JKAS 2023 selection process regarding an RBA certificate allegedly issued to a candidate from a financially secure and socially influential family. Public complaints triggered an inquiry ordered by the Deputy Commissioner. Public trust collapsed when the inquiry reportedly disappeared into bureaucratic silence.

Citizens notice such designs quickly. Powerful families receive procedural protection while ordinary aspirants spend years waiting outside government offices for a single document.

Fresh concerns emerged during the 2026 JKAS selections. Reports indicate that serving government employees secured EWS certificates despite drawing stable salaries and receiving state

benefits. Questions also surround candidates linked to influential officials whose economic status appears inconsistent with EWS eligibility.

Authorities owe the public clear answers.

Economic weakness cannot become a flexible category available to anyone with administrative access. EWS certification exists for financially vulnerable households struggling without inherited institutional advantages. Expanding it into a convenience for already secure families destroys the moral foundation of the policy itself.

Picture a student in Kishtwar preparing for civil services examinations through freezing winters and endless uncertainty. His father survives on daily wage labour, while his mother stitches clothes for neighbours to supplement household income. Coaching remains unaffordable, so he studies borrowed material under dim phone light during power cuts.

He competes honestly because honesty remains the only resource available to him.

Then recruitment results arrive. A serving government employee with salary security enters the list through an EWS certificate while his own name disappears.

That moment changes how citizens see the state.

Governments cannot repair this crisis through speeches alone. J&K needs an independent, time-bound verification of reservation and EWS certificates used in major recruitment processes. Authorities should cross-check salary records, tax filings, land ownership, and asset declarations without political interference.

Fraudulent selections should face cancellation and criminal prosecution. Administrative protection for influential families must end.

Whistleblower mechanisms also deserve swift creation because communities often know exactly who obtained fake certificates. Fear prevents reporting, but protection encourages truth.

Reservation still matters deeply in India. Large sections of society continue battling historical discrimination, poor schooling, social exclusion, and economic deprivation. Constitutional safeguards remain essential. Honest reform strengthens reservation because reform restores credibility.

Dr. Ambedkar never imagined reservation as a permanent shield for the already powerful. He imagined it as a path toward equal citizenship.

That promise survives only when the deserving receive support before the connected capture it.

The author is a student activist from Jammu and Kashmir and heads the Open Merit Students Association. He writes on education policy, reservation, youth unemployment, and institutional fairness in J&K.

KO VIEW

Kashmir's Lost Graduates

Every year, thousands of young people in Kashmir walk out of colleges and universities with degrees in their hands and uncertainty in their minds.

Families celebrate graduation moments, distribute sweets, and speak proudly about higher education. A few months later, many of those same graduates sit at home scrolling through job notifications, preparing endlessly for government exams, or wondering why years of education brought so little direction.

This is no longer a temporary employment problem. Kashmir is slowly entering a degree trap where education continues to expand while meaningful opportunities fail to keep pace.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey and official government figures, unemployment among educated youth in Jammu and Kashmir remains among the highest in India. The problem becomes even sharper among graduates and postgraduates. Colleges produce thousands of degree holders every year in fields like arts, commerce, business administration, engineering, and computer applications, but the local economy cannot absorb them at the same speed.

Government jobs still dominate the imagination of most families. Recruitment drives attract extraordinary numbers. In several recent examinations in J&K, a few hundred vacancies drew applications from lakhs of candidates, including engineers, PhD scholars, and postgraduates competing for clerical posts.

That reality reveals something deeper than competition. It shows a shrinking belief in the private sector and a growing fear of economic instability.

The problem begins inside the education system itself. Many colleges continue to rely on outdated teaching methods, weak industry exposure, and degrees disconnected from real market needs. Students memorize theory, clear exams, and collect certificates without gaining practical skills in communication, technology, management, or problem-solving. Employers often complain that graduates come unprepared for actual work environments.

At the same time, Kashmir economy remains narrow. Tourism, horticulture, handicrafts, and government employment continue to dominate public discourse while sectors like technology, research, manufacturing, design, logistics, and digital services remain underdeveloped. Private investment stays limited, and many educated young people see migration as the only realistic path to professional growth.

This crisis also carries a social cost. Unemployment delays marriage, increases financial dependence on parents, and creates deep frustration inside households already struggling with inflation and rising educational expenses. Coaching centres have become a parallel economy because many graduates spend years preparing for a handful of competitive exams instead of building diverse careers.

Kashmir clearly suffers from a lack of alignment between education and opportunity.

The solution requires more than motivational speeches about entrepreneurship. Colleges need stronger industry partnerships, skill-based learning, internships, and career counselling from an early stage. Policymakers must expand investment beyond tourism slogans and create conditions where private enterprise can genuinely grow.

A degree should open doors to confidence, mobility, and independence. In Kashmir today, it too often opens the door to waiting.

Kashmir's Career Crisis

The absence of structured counselling in schools continues to push students toward careers they neither understand nor enjoy.



Syed Yunis Bukhari

Classrooms across Kashmir and India produce millions of students annually armed with marks, certificates, and rankings.

Schools celebrate toppers, families obsess over percentages, and teachers push students relentlessly toward the next competitive exam.

In the middle of this race for performance and prestige, almost nobody asks the question that matters most: what kind of life does the student actually want to build?

The failure to ask that question is damaging thousands of young people every year.

A student finishes Class 10 and faces immediate pressure to choose a stream. Science receives social prestige, medicine and engineering dominate family talks, commerce comes next, and arts often enters the discussion only after the so-called "better options" disappear.

Many teenagers make life-altering decisions before they fully understand their own strengths, interests, or abilities.

Career counselling could change that. Most schools still treat it as an optional extra rather than a core part of education.

That approach makes little sense in today's world.

Students now enter a job market that changes faster than school textbooks. Artificial intelligence, healthcare technology, environmental science, digital media, biotechnology, animation, public policy, sports management, and entrepreneurship create entirely new professions every few years.

Many students in Kashmir still receive advice rooted in a much older economy, where a small group of professions guaranteed social status and financial stability.

That gap between education and employment grows wider each year.

A common story illustrates the problem clearly. A student with talent in design, literature, or social sciences enters the science stream because relatives associate science with prestige. Physics and chemistry soon become daily sources of stress. Confidence drops gradually, and academic performance weakens.

The student begins to feel inadequate, even though the real problem lies in the mismatch between aptitude and expectation.

Schools witness this trend constantly.

Another student spends years preparing for engineering entrance exams without genuine interest in the field. Graduation comes with disappointment rather than excitement. Many young graduates eventually enter unrelated professions or remain unemployed despite holding expensive degrees. Families often interpret this outcome as failure or lack of effort.

The deeper issue involves guidance that came too late or never at all.

Career counselling addresses this crisis directly. Good counselling helps students un-

“ Good counselling helps students understand their personality, aptitude, interests, communication style, and long-term goals. It replaces confusion with informed decision-making. Aptitude assessments, one-on-one mentoring, career workshops, and exposure to professionals give students a realistic understanding of available opportunities.

derstand their personality, aptitude, interests, communication style, and long-term goals. It replaces confusion with informed decision-making. Aptitude assessments, one-on-one mentoring, career workshops, and exposure to professionals give students a realistic understanding of available opportunities.

That clarity changes academic performance as well. Students perform better when subjects connect with their natural interests and abilities. Motivation improves when learning feels purposeful rather than imposed. Confidence grows when students understand why they study a subject and where it could lead them. Education then becomes a process of growth rather than survival.

Mental health also enters this conversation. Kashmiri students already face intense academic pressure, competitive entrance exams,

financial uncertainty, and social comparison. Many carry the emotional burden of meeting family expectations while suppressing their own aspirations. Career confusion deepens anxiety during the most formative years of adolescence. Structured guidance could ease much of that pressure by helping students make realistic and informed choices.

The consequences extend beyond individual students.

A society benefits when people work in professions suited to their abilities and interests. Hospitals need committed doctors, schools need inspired teachers, businesses need creative thinkers, research institutions need curious minds, while media organizations need strong communicators.

Economies grow stronger when talent enters the right fields instead of moving through systems built on pressure and imitation.

Kashmir especially needs this shift.

The region has a young population filled with ambition and potential. Many students excel academically despite difficult circumstances. Large numbers still lack access to structured guidance about higher education, emerging careers, scholarships, vocational training, or global opportunities. Urban private schools sometimes arrange counselling sessions, while students in government schools and rural areas rarely receive the same support.

That inequality creates another educational divide. Schools must treat career counselling as an essential service rather than an occasional seminar. Every institution up to the 10+2 level should provide trained counsellors, aptitude assessments, mentorship programs, and regular inter-

action with professionals from different sectors. Career awareness should begin early and continue throughout a student's academic journey.

Parents also play a decisive role.

Many families genuinely want success for their children. Love and concern often turn into pressure when career choices revolve around prestige rather than aptitude. Children need conversations built on listening, encouragement, and trust. A student with talent in journalism, research, fine arts, teaching, or digital technology deserves the same respect given to future doctors and engineers.

Education must prepare students for life, rather than merely examinations.

A report card may capture marks earned in a single year. Career decisions influence decades of a person's life. Schools therefore carry a responsibility much larger than completing syllabi and conducting tests. They must help students discover where they belong and how they can contribute meaningfully to society.

Kashmir's young people deserve more than guesswork at the most decisive stage of their lives. They need guidance, clarity, and the freedom to pursue careers that match their abilities and aspirations.

A generation with direction can transform an entire society. And that transformation begins when schools start treating career counselling as a necessity.

The author is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medical Lab Science at ULAHS, Chandigarh University.

A Kashmir Woman Returns to Herself

After years of unpaid labour and emotional abuse inside her marriage, a South Kashmir woman returned home determined to rebuild her life on her own terms.



Gowher Bhat

The road leading to Shaheena Bashir's parents' home cuts through orchards and paddy fields in South Kashmir, where spring mornings arrive with the smell of damp earth and wood smoke.

Inside the modest house, copper utensils line the kitchen wall in careful order while nun chai simmers gently on an ageing stove. Shaheena moves through the rooms, halting now and then beside the window overlooking the village lane.

Life inside this home feels markedly different from the one she left behind.

"At least here, I can breathe," she said, her voice calm after a long silence.

Shaheena, 35, returned to her parents' house months ago after years spent inside a marriage that demanded relentless physical labour and gave little companionship in return.

Her story has become familiar in many parts of Kashmir, where women often shoulder exhausting domestic and agricultural work while remaining financially dependent and socially constrained.

Villagers still remember her daily routine in her marital home. Dawn usually came before she finished preparing tea and breakfast for the family.

Hours later, she would stand in almond orchards or vegetable fields

under harsh weather, working beside labourers through the afternoon.

Evening brought another cycle of cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and tending to household chores that continued late into the night.

"She worked more than anyone there," said a neighbour who requested anonymity to avoid tension within the community. "People in the village could see her condition every day."

Another resident described her as educated and soft-spoken, someone who rarely complained publicly despite visible exhaustion.

"She had qualifications and dreams," the neighbour said. "Her life became only work."

Shaheena earned a master's degree in Urdu, completed a Bachelor of Education degree and trained in computer applications before marriage. Family members and former classmates believed she would eventually become a teacher. Marriage altered that path quickly.

"They never allowed me to work outside," she said. "My education slowly lost meaning."

Large parts of rural Kashmir still depend on women's labour inside orchards, farms and homes, especially in lower and middle-income households.

Economists and social researchers in the region say much of this work remains invisible because it rarely appears in formal employment records or financial calculations.

Women frequently contribute long hours to family economies while major decisions remain concentrated in male hands.

Social expectations deepen that imbalance.

Married women often face pressure to maintain family harmony regardless of emotional strain or physical hardship. Discussions about mental health, domestic violence and emotional neglect usually remain confined within households.



A SUPPORT FROM HER FAMILY STRENGTHENED HER DECISION TO PURSUE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST HER HUSBAND. Court proceedings remain ongoing. Shaheena said she faces repeated attempts to discourage her from continuing the case, though she insists she will see it through.

Shaheena described her marriage as emotionally barren long before it became physically violent.

"After working the whole day, I only wanted conversation," she said. "I wanted someone to sit with me for a few minutes."

Her husband usually remained distant, she said, absorbed in his own routines and increasingly attached to his phone. Nights passed

with little communication, and isolation gradually hardened into despair.

Pressure accumulated slowly over several years. Shaheena said the emotional strain eventually damaged her mental health so severely that she harmed herself and required hospital treatment.

"It built inside me over time," she said. "Everything kept gathering."

The breaking point arrived late one evening when she woke and saw her husband speaking affectionately to another woman during a video call. Anger quickly escalated into violence after she confronted him.

"He beat me badly," she recalled. "My finger broke. He kicked me."

Medical treatment followed, though she still returned to the same household hoping the marriage could survive.

Many women in Kashmir continue trying to preserve marriages despite abuse because separation often brings financial insecurity, social scrutiny and emotional pressure from extended families.

Shaheena eventually reached a point where continuation felt impossible. Another confrontation led to her expulsion from the house.

"I had given everything there," she said. "Nothing remained for me."

Her parents welcomed her back without hesitation. Inside their

small home, recovery began gradually through ordinary routines. She now spends time reading religious texts, helping her elderly mother and occasionally tutoring children in the neighbourhood.

Support from her family strengthened her decision to pursue legal action against her husband. Court proceedings remain ongoing.

Shaheena said she faces repeated attempts to discourage her from continuing the case, though she insists she will see it through.

"I believe truth matters," she said. Women's rights advocates in Kashmir say such cases rarely reach courts because social pressure frequently pushes families toward silence or informal compromise. Legal battles also demand financial resources and emotional endurance that many women lack after leaving troubled marriages.

Shaheena speaks carefully about the future, though her plans reveal a determination that survived years of suppression.

She hopes to perform Hajj one day and continue her education through doctoral studies. Another ambition occupies her thoughts even more strongly.

"I want to teach underprivileged children free of cost," she said. "I want to open a small school here in the village."

Afternoon sunlight faded behind the orchards as children passed her parents' gate, returning home with schoolbags slung over their shoulders. Shaheena watched them silently for a moment before stepping back inside.

Years of labour consumed much of her adult life. Silence governed large parts of her marriage. Home now means something different.

Inside this house in South Kashmir, amid ageing parents and unfinished dreams, Shaheena Bashir has begun building a future that finally belongs to her.

— The author is a Pulwama-based educator.

Living Inside the Mind

A generation raised on self-analysis and emotional suppression searches for human warmth in a culture that prizes endurance over healing.



Faizaan Bashir

Kashmir's young people speak through analysis. They study their fears with clinical precision, trace emotional patterns to childhood memories, and explain every tremor of the mind with startling clarity.

Discussions drift toward attachment wounds, emotional triggers, abandonment fears, and nervous exhaustion.

Social media feeds pulse with psychological jargon. Therapy terms enter tea-shop discussions with ease.

A strange contradiction emerges from this culture of constant introspection: people understand themselves deeply and still remain trapped inside the same pain.

Self-awareness promises freedom, but experience tells a harsher story.

Many young men and women spend years examining every emotional reaction. They replay discussions before sleep, inspect each failed relationship, and dissect every social interaction until memory itself begins to feel distorted.

Minds remain active long after midnight. Bodies absorb the damage through racing hearts, sleeplessness, headaches, stomach pain, and sudden panic. Daily life continues on the surface while inner life descends into confusion and exhaustion.

Kashmir already asks immense emotional labour from its people.



Families survive political uncertainty, economic strain, social pressure, and generational grief with remarkable endurance. Children grow inside homes where silence often replaces emotional exchange.

Fathers rarely discuss fear, mothers absorb suffering through routine and duty, sons inherit emotional distance disguised as masculinity, while daughters learn early how deeply social approval governs their choices.

Such environments produce adults who sense emotional injury long before they possess language for it.

Once language arrives, another problem emerges.

Analysis slowly transforms into obsession. Every emotion demands interpretation, while each relationship becomes a psychological case study.

Every painful memory invites another excavation into the past, and clarity begins to resemble paralysis.

Human beings need action, movement, affection, conversation, and rest. Endless introspection traps people inside their own heads while ordinary life drifts beyond reach.

Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky understood this condition with terrifying precision. His novels explored guilt, fear, shame, compulsion, and spiritual exhaustion through characters who understood themselves completely and still destroyed their lives.

Intelligence sharpened their suffering instead of easing it.

Kashmir's young generation lives close to that same emotional terrain. Education expands awareness, inter-

net culture multiplies comparison, and private suffering grows more articulate with each passing year.

A young man falls deeply attached after receiving small amounts of affection. His mind immediately prepares for rejection. He studies his behaviour carefully and connects it to childhood instability. Insight comes instantly, while relief never arrives with it.

Another young woman dreams of success and spends hours imagining future achievement. Fantasy creates temporary comfort while real work remains untouched. Exhaustion follows soon afterward.

Thousands live through variations of these emotional cycles every day.

Modern self-help culture contributes little to this condition because it treats emotional pain like a pro-

ductivity issue. Motivational motifs celebrate discipline and mental toughness while ignoring how deeply the body stores fear. Emotional injury rarely disappears through logic alone. Human beings respond physically to memory.

A familiar tone of voice tightens the chest. A delayed text message stirs panic. A small disagreement awakens old insecurity. Rational thought enters later, usually after damage already spreads through the nervous system.

Kashmir's social culture intensifies this problem through performance. People present composure even during severe emotional strain. Weddings stay crowded, markets remain full, and college campuses buzz with conversation and ambition.

Beneath that surface, many people survive through emotional suppression. Genuine vulnerability still feels dangerous in much of public life. Men especially receive applause for endurance and emotional restraint. Such expectations produce adults who struggle deeply with intimacy, trust, and self-worth.

Professional mental health support needs serious public attention within this climate. Therapy still holds social hesitation in many Kashmiri households, although suffering already fills countless homes.

Psychological care should stand beside physical healthcare as an ordinary part of life. Emotional trauma influences relationships, work, sleep, concentration, and self-perception for years. Timely intervention changes lives before despair hardens into permanent isolation.

Human connection remains equally important. Warmth from another person often reaches places where analysis fails completely. Honest friendship, patient listening, affection without manipulation, and emotional consistency provide a sense of stability that intellectual dissection rarely achieves.

People heal more fully through relationships grounded in trust and

A YOUNG MAN FALLS DEEPLY ATTACHED AFTER RECEIVING SMALL AMOUNTS OF AFFECTION. His mind immediately prepares for rejection. He studies his behaviour carefully and connects it to childhood instability. Insight comes instantly, while relief never arrives with it.

tenderness than through endless self-monitoring.

But self-awareness still matters. Knowledge of one's inner life creates understanding and maturity. Human beings also require release from constant examination. Life asks for presence as much as interpretation.

A mind trapped in permanent self-analysis eventually turns inward with such force that even hope begins to feel exhausting.

Kashmir already knows enough about suffering. Its people deserve ways of living that allow the heart to rest.

— The author holds a Master's degree in History and can be reached at peerfaizanbashir@gmail.com.

Petrol, Diesel Price Hike In Near Future Not Ruled Out: Govt Sources

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: An increase in petrol and diesel prices in the near future is not ruled out, government sources said on Friday, as losses mount from a four-year-old freeze in retail rates despite the sharp rise in global crude oil prices.

International crude oil prices this week climbed to a four-year high of USD 126 per barrel before cooling down slightly, but remained above USD 110 a barrel as ship transits through the Strait of Hormuz remained restricted and US and Iranian leaders traded barbs amid stalled peace talks.

Government sources said the possibility of a petrol and diesel price hike in the near future is not ruled out.

Earlier in the day, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), making a statement on behalf of the industry, said petrol and diesel price as also domestic LPG rates are not being increased despite a surge in international energy cost.

State-owned oil firms hiked prices of commercial LPG, industrial diesel, 5-kg LPG and jet fuel sold to international airlines in keeping with the cost.

Analysts had earlier flagged the possibility of price increases of Rs 25-28 per litre after the end of polling for assembly elections in West Bengal on

April 29.

International oil prices spiked after the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, and Tehran's sweeping retaliation that effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most critical energy arteries, linking the Persian Gulf to global markets and handling roughly a fifth of global oil trade along with significant volumes of liquefied natural gas.

Last week, a senior oil ministry official told a news briefing that state-owned fuel retailers were incurring losses of about Rs 20 per litre on petrol and roughly Rs 100 per litre on diesel as pump prices remained frozen for nearly four years despite a surge in global oil prices. Yet there is no plan to increase prices, she had said.

Crude, which was USD 70 per barrel last year, averaged over USD 114 this month. Retail petrol and diesel prices have remained frozen since early April 2022 — a period during which oil prices rose in some months and fell in other times.

When prices fell, state-owned oil firms made handsome profits, which they used to set off losses when rates rose.

Petrol is currently priced at Rs 94.77 a litre in Delhi, and diesel comes for Rs 87.67.

If SIR Changes Political Future In West Bengal Polls, It Could Set A Dangerous Trend: CM

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday warned of a "dangerous trend" in the electoral process, saying that if the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls affects the outcome of the West Bengal assembly elections, it would set a treacherous precedent against which the political parties need to safeguard themselves.

Responding to questions about the ongoing West Bengal assembly elections and recent tensions outside a strong room in Kolkata, he emphasised that safeguarding EVMs after the vote remains a critical responsibility for any party. Drawing a parallel with the era of physical ballot boxes, he noted that maintaining a presence outside strong rooms is a long-standing practice for ensuring security.

"We used to do the same when ballot boxes were there. We used to keep our people outside the strong room," Abdullah said while defending the right of leaders like Mamata Banerjee to maintain such vigilance.



He maintained that while EVMs themselves may not be the primary tool for rigging, the integrity of the voter list remains the most vulnerable point in the system.

"Today, stealing (of votes) is not happening through the EVMs, but via the SIR unfortunately through the Election Commission," Abdullah told reporters after inaugurating flats built for government personnel here.

He warned that if the SIR successfully influences the election outcome in West Bengal, it would set a "very dangerous" precedent for all political parties.

The chief minister characterised the SIR process as a

"huge challenge" for the opposition and alleged that the current method of "stealing" votes involved the deletion of names from voter lists.

On exit polls, Abdullah said they would be proven wrong when the results come out on Monday.

"Which exit poll has been right till now? Five years ago, when the elections took place in West Bengal, all the exit polls had given the government to the BJP. But what was the result? We do not have to wait for long; the results will be out on Monday," he said.

On the increase in airfares for the annual Haj pilgrimage, Abdullah said there would be a hike in everything as the

assembly elections were over now.

"Now that the elections are over, you see what else would be hiked. There is a hike in the (prices of) commercial gas cylinders. Fuel prices would increase, everything will increase," he said.

Referring to an 18 per cent increase in the public transport fare, he said his government was compelled to impose the hike.

"When fuel prices increase, wouldn't the passenger fare increase? These people were anyway taking this fare from under the table, and people were giving it, but it became our compulsion to increase the fare. The solution is that this (Iran) war should end. This war should not have started. There was no basis or reason for this war," he said.

Abdullah called for an immediate end to global conflicts to provide "respite" to the people.

He expressed hope for a swift conclusion to the war involving Iran, stating that "better sense" must prevail in the United States to bring an end to the violence.

"The sooner better sense prevails upon the US, the

better. It will not prevail on Israel as they do not have a sense, so leave them," Abdullah said.

The chief minister was speaking after inaugurating two new blocks of Estate Quarters at Sempora, located on the outskirts of Srinagar. The facility is designed to house government employees, a move Abdullah described as a core responsibility of the administration.

Abdullah proposed developing the Sempora area into a premier residential colony for employees, senior officials and legislators, modelled after New Delhi's Baba Kharak Singh Marg or New Moti Bagh.

He said that by relocating officials to the outskirts, the government plans to decongest the city and monetise prime central areas currently occupied by the MLA Hostel or Jawahar Nagar.

Responding to concerns over the lack of jobs, Abdullah acknowledged that unemployment remains a "huge issue" for Jammu and Kashmir but cautioned that government recruitment alone is not a sustainable solution.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Unity, Heritage

Shivaji Maharaj, Peshwa Bajirao, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, noting their contributions to national unity and identity.

He also recalled the legacy of Ahilyabai Holkar, whose efforts helped revitalise spiritual traditions across the country.

Sinha said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has witnessed a transformation driven by a renewed sense of purpose.

"Over the past years, citizens have been inspired to transform resolve into action, reshaping the nation's landscape with development and determination," he said.

He added that India's global standing has strengthened, with the Indian diaspora reflecting a renewed sense of pride and confidence.

The Lieutenant Governor said the country is moving steadily towards the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, with a shared vision uniting all sections of society.

He said the journey ahead would continue to be guided by the principles of unity, inclusiveness and sustained development, drawing strength from India's rich cultural heritage.

Sinha said the celebrations of Gujarat and Maharashtra Foundation Day serve as a reminder of the nation's collective legacy and the enduring values that continue to shape its future trajectory.

Ladakh A Model

"historic reunion". He called Ladakh a "living land of dharma" that preserved Buddhist knowledge through centuries and stressed that the message of peace and compassion remains highly relevant today.

"Amid conflict and unrest, only the path of peace can provide solutions," he said.

Dairy Sector Growth, Local Push

Addressing another gathering, Shah said India's dairy sector has seen a major transformation since 2014, with milk production rising by nearly 70 per cent.

He laid the foundation stone of a 10,000 litres-per-day dairy plant in Kargil and launched several initiatives aimed at boosting milk production and rural livelihoods.

He said cooperative-based development, along with sectors like organic farming and honey production, would strengthen Ladakh's rural economy.

Tribute to People of Ladakh

Praising the people of Ladakh and Kargil, Shah said they have played a crucial role in safeguarding the country's borders.

"Whenever danger came, the people of Ladakh stood in defence of the nation even before the Army reached," he said, adding that their contribution is recognised across the country.

He expressed confidence that continued focus on infrastructure, welfare and cooperative development would drive Ladakh towards sustained growth and stability.

Lt Gen Balbir Is New

foundation of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

He exhorted all sections of society to join hands with the security forces in overcoming the persistent challenges, the statement said.

Lt Gen Srivastava relinquished the command and handed over the reins of the Chinar Corps after 19 months. During his tenure, the valley witnessed the terror attack in Pahalgam's Baisaran meadow, where 26 people were killed by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists.

"His eventful and challenging tenure was characterised by meticulous execution of OP SINDOOR & OP MAHADEV, which brought the perpetrators of the dastardly 'Pahalgam Attack' to justice, incident-free conduct of the Amarnath Yatra 2025 and multiple initiatives in nation building," the statement said.

In a post on X, the Chinar Corps said that on relinquishing the command, Lt Gen Srivastava paid homage at the Chinar War Memorial, honouring the bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice in service of the nation.

"In his farewell message, he thanked all

ranks of Chinar Corps, @JmuKmrPolice, Central Armed Police Forces, Civil Administration and the Awaam of #Kashmir for their steadfast support in fostering peace and harmony," the post said.

Chinar Corps is responsible for guarding the Line of Control with Pakistan, besides countering terrorism in the Kashmir valley.

No Move To

removal of Urdu. Taking a swipe at PDP leader Iltija Mufti, Omar said the controversy stemmed from a misunderstanding of administrative processes.

Launching a sharp attack, Omar alleged that the PDP was using the Urdu issue as a "magic trick" to distract from its political conduct.

"They helped the BJP in the Rajya Sabha elections and now want to divert attention by creating an unnecessary controversy," he said.

He further accused the PDP of historically enabling the BJP's political presence in Jammu and Kashmir while continuing to claim opposition.

"Whatever we are suffering today is because they brought the BJP here," he added.

On elections, Omar said exit polls often fail to reflect actual results, referring to past trends in West Bengal.

"Exit polls showed one picture, but results were different. This time too, they will be proved wrong," he said.

He also raised concerns over electoral integrity, stating that the real issue was not electronic voting machines but voter list management.

"The concern today is not EVMs. It is the deletion of voters from the voter list, which is a serious threat to democracy," he said.

The Chief Minister said rising fuel prices were contributing to inflation and higher transport fares, adding that global conflicts were worsening the situation.

"When oil prices rise, everything increases. We were forced to revise fares," he said.

He stressed that easing international tensions would be key to stabilising prices. "This war should not have started. When tensions reduce, oil prices will come down," he added.

Employee Welfare

quarters for government employees at Sempora in Pampore, describing the project as a significant step toward strengthening staff welfare and addressing long-standing accommodation constraints in the Kashmir Valley.

Developed by the Estates Department at an estimated cost of 90.65 crore, the housing complex comprises 23 blocks with a mix of 2BHK and 3BHK units, alongside essential facilities including a canteen and mess. The Chief Minister inspected the flats and reviewed the amenities during his visit, while officials briefed him on ongoing and proposed housing projects across Jammu and Kashmir.

With its completion, the project is expected to substantially augment the availability of government accommodation and reduce dependence on private housing, particularly for employees affected by frequent transfers. The initiative assumes added importance in the backdrop of the restoration of the annual Darbar Move, which has revived the demand for adequate residential facilities for staff relocating between Jammu and Srinagar.

Officials said the new quarters would benefit a large number of Darbar Move employees who have, over the years, struggled to secure suitable housing for their families. The availability of dedicated residential units is expected to provide greater stability, improve living conditions, and enhance overall work efficiency.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister reiterated that employee welfare remains a core priority of his government. He underlined that access to quality residential accommodation directly impacts productivity and morale, and said efforts are underway to expand such infrastructure in a phased manner across the Union Territory.

He also stressed the importance of timely execution of public projects and called for strict adherence to quality standards. Directing the concerned departments to ensure proper upkeep of the newly created facilities, the Chief Minister said sustained maintenance would be key to ensuring their long-term utility for employees.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Pampore Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief Secretary Shaleen Kabra, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Basharat Qayoom, Director Estates Ashwini Khajuria, senior officers, engineers and other officials were present on the occasion.

Pulwama Family

Jammu and Kashmir Police and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

Despite difficult terrain and strong currents, the teams continued round-the-clock efforts. Specialised equipment was deployed to scan deeper sections of the stream, while additional manpower was mobilised to widen the search area.

Authorities also brought in expert civilian rescuers, including a volunteer from Doda, to assist in locating the missing child.

As news of the recovery reached Tiken village, grief spread across the area, with thousands gathering to attend the boy's last rites.

The incident has left the community shaken, with residents expressing anguish over the tragic loss.

LG, CM Express

the incident "heartbreaking" and extended condolences to the bereaved family, praying for strength and solace in their moment of grief.

Lieutenant Governor Sinha said the incident had caused deep shock, particularly as the search operation continued for six days, and joined people across Kashmir in mourning the loss, praying for peace to the departed soul.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also expressed grief and conveyed condolences to the family of the deceased child.

The minor went missing on April 27 after slipping into the Rambhara stream near the Dubjan area, triggering a large-scale rescue operation involving police, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and other agencies. His body was recovered on Friday morning, bringing the search to a tragic conclusion. Officials said the prolonged search operation ended with the recovery of the child's body.



29th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets. Kashmir Observer, with 29 years of experience in news gathering is now available 24x7 on all digital platforms like laptops, cell phones or via Bluetooth on your smart TV's across the world.

Kashmir Observer is a one stop information bank for you. Watch live debates, talk shows and documentaries on critical issues facing Kashmir on KO youtube channel.

OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

THE OTHER SIDE

INKISHAF

VOX POP

UNRAVEL KASHMIR

VISIT

<https://www.youtube.com/c/kobserver>

OR SCAN



Bridge Portion Collapses on Jammu Outskirts



Observer News Service

JAMMU: A portion of a small bridge collapsed in the Bantab area on the outskirts of Jammu city on Friday, trapping at least three to four labourers under the debris, while one injured worker was rescued, official sources said.

Authorities have closed the road link following the collapse of the portion of the bridge.

The incident occurred when labourers were carrying out repair work on a retaining wall near the bridge that was damaged in last year's flash floods, the sources said.

According to PTI, a section of the bridge suddenly gave way, burying workers engaged at the site under the rubble.

Police, Army and State Disaster Response Force

(SDRF) teams launched rescue operations to extricate those buried under the debris. They pulled out one injured labourer and shifted him to a hospital, the sources said.

Family members of the labourers present at the site said around six workers engaged at the site at the time of the incident came under the debris when the structure collapsed. The family members said while two of the labourers managed to escape, four got trapped.

The sources said those trapped included the husband of a woman labourer, a mason, an unmarried labourer and a relative of the contractor.

There was no official confirmation on the exact number of persons trapped under the debris till the filing of this report. The rescue operations are ongoing.

NIFT Srinagar Kicks Off 'Spectrum 2026' Festival

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Srinagar commenced its Annual Sports & Cultural Festival, Spectrum 2026, on April 29, 2026 at its Ompora Campus, Budgam. The two-day event is themed "Vismay – The Escape of Imagination," reflecting the institute's commitment to creativity, innovation, and holistic development.

The event was inaugurated by Chief Guest Sh. Athar Aamir Ul Shafi Khan, IAS, Deputy Commissioner Budgam, in the presence of Sh. Hari Prasad K. K., IPS, SSP Budgam (Guest Of Honour) and Dr. Monika Gupta, Director NIFT Srinagar. Addressing the gathering,

the dignitaries appreciated the initiative of NIFT Srinagar in providing a vibrant platform for youth engagement, inter-institutional collaboration, and cultural exchange. The Director NIFT Srinagar, Dr. Monika Gupta, highlighted the importance of extracurricular activities in fostering creativity, discipline, and unity among students.

The festival has witnessed participation from various schools and colleges across Kashmir and features a range of sports, cultural, and literary events aimed at promoting talent and strengthening social cohesion among the youth.

Spectrum 2026 reflects NIFT Srinagar's continued efforts towards inclusivity, and cultural integration in the region.

Labour Dept J&K marks Labour Day with Outreach, Awareness



Observer News Service

JAMMU: On the occasion of Labour Day, the Labour Department J&K organized a series of impactful programmes in Jammu, reaffirming its commitment towards the welfare, dignity, and empowerment of workers.

This year's observance was aligned with the theme "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment," emphasizing the importance of mental well-being, safe and supportive workplaces, and the need to address emerging challenges affecting workers' overall health and productivity.

Labour Commissioner J&K Charandeep Singh joined workers at Labour Chowk, Gangyal, where he interacted with them and highlighted various labour welfare schemes aimed at improving their socio-economic conditions. Workers were sensitized about government initiatives, refreshments were distributed, and it was assured that a special outreach camp would soon be organized to enhance access to these schemes.

As part of the celebrations, a webinar on the theme "Ensuring a Healthy Psychosocial Working Environment" was organized, bringing together officers, experts, and stakeholders from across the Union Territory. The session

commenced with a welcome address by Deputy Labour Commissioner, Jammu, Sukhpal Singh, followed by opening remarks by the Labour Commissioner.

The webinar featured insightful deliberations by eminent speakers including Prof. Renu Nanda, Prof. Hema Gandotra, Ms. Nimisha Rajput, and Dr. Ritika, who discussed critical issues such as child labour prevention, gender pay disparities, and the working conditions of women employees. The session concluded with remarks by the Labour Commissioner, while the vote of thanks was presented by ALC Central Roopali Gandotra.

In another programme held at Shram Bhawan, Jammu, workers were felicitated for their invaluable contribution to society. The event was attended by FA/CAO Nimisha Anand, Inspector of Factories Ravinder Krundoo, AMO JKE-SIS Dr Jyoti Jolly, and Dr Neeru Khajuria, among others.

Similar programmes were organized across various districts of Jammu and Kashmir, where officers of the Labour Department actively engaged with workers and stakeholders. These events focused on awareness generation, facilitation of welfare schemes, and strengthening coordination with stakeholders to ensure maximum outreach

7 Drug Peddlers Arrested in Multiple Operations: Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a sustained anti-narcotics traffickers, Police achieved significant success by arresting seven drug peddlers and registering several cases under the NDPS Act. The operations conducted in Anantnag, Handwara and Sopore resulted in the recovery of a substantial quantity of contraband substances.

According to a statement issued to KNO, in Anantnag, police registered 04 NDPS cases and arrested 05 accused persons during naka checking and routine patrolling at different locations. At Sagam Kokernag, a naka party intercepted a suspicious vehicle and apprehended two individuals. They have been identified as Aqib Nissar Rangraze resident of Anantnag and Umar Yousuf Mahroo resident of Kishtwar. During the search, 13.36 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered from their possession.

At Mehmoobad Bridge, another individual was apprehended during naka checking. He has been identified as Rameez Bashir Bhat resident of Tilwangund, from whose possession 2.65 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered. During patrolling at Gutligund, police apprehended one more suspect. He has been identified as Sabzar Ahmed Sofi, resident of Hallan Verinag. During the search, 92 grams of charas powder and 20 grams of charas were recovered.

In a separate action at Khrety Lovlupora, one individual was intercepted and subsequently arrested. He has been identified as Adil Ahmad Sheikh resident of Larnoo. Police recovered 2.300 kilograms of ganja along with 18 grams of charas from his possession.



In Handwara, acting on heightened surveillance during naka checking at Utingroo Badchatri, a police team apprehended a suspect who attempted to flee. He has been identified as Bilal Ahmad Bhat son of Mohd Maqbool Bhat resident of Drusu Jagir, Baramulla. A charas-like contraband substance was recovered from his possession.

Similarly, in Sopore, a police party arrested a drug peddler during naka checking at Sidiq Colony. He has been identified as Imran Ahmad Kana son of Abdul Salam Kana resident of Sidiq

Colony Sopore. During the search, charas-like substances along with habit-forming drugs including Buscopan, Vernor, and Prochlorperazine Maleate tablets were recovered.

All accused persons have been taken into custody, and further investigations are underway to uncover backward and forward linkages of the narcotics networks.

J&K Police have reiterated their firm resolve to eradicate the drug menace and urged the public to cooperate by sharing credible information to support ongoing anti-drug efforts.

Hepatitis Outbreak among Children in Srinagar's Zadibal

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Health authorities in Srinagar have reported a suspected outbreak of acute viral hepatitis, commonly associated with jaundice, in the Reshipora locality of Khimber in the Zadibal zone, triggering swift intervention and surveillance measures.

An official from the District Surveillance Unit (DSU) Srinagar informed KNO that a total of 18 cases have been identified, predominantly among school-going children aged between 7 and 17 years. Of the affected, 12 are girls, and six are boys, pointing to a cluster concentrated within a specific age group and locality.

The cases were reported in a clustered pattern on April 30, prompting an immediate field investigation by health teams. "The epidemiological pattern suggests a common source outbreak, with most patients presenting symptoms such as jaundice, loss of appetite, fatigue, fever, and vomiting," an official associated with the surveillance team said.

Preliminary findings indicate that the outbreak may be due to consumption of contaminated spring water used by the local population. The area relies significantly on this community



water source.

"Initial assessment points toward a waterborne transmission, likely through the faecal-oral route, which is typical in Hepatitis A and E infections," the official added.

To ascertain the exact cause, water samples from both tap and spring sources have been collected and sent for Most Probable Number (MPN) testing, while blood samples from five patients have been forwarded for serological analysis to detect Hepatitis A and E markers. All samples are currently under examination at the District Public Health Laboratory (DPHL) at JLNH Hospital, with results awaited.

In response to the suspected contamination, authorities have sealed the identified spring water source in

coordination with the local Masjid Committee to prevent further usage. The Jal Shakti Department has been notified to carry out a comprehensive water quality assessment and initiate corrective measures.

Health teams have also launched active surveillance in the area to track any new cases and ensure early detection. "So far, no sharp spike in fresh cases has been observed, and the situation appears to be under control," officials said.

Community awareness campaigns have been intensified, focusing on the importance of boiling drinking water, maintaining hand hygiene, and improving sanitation practices. Residents have been advised to use only safe and treated water until further notice.

Officials called for sustained monitoring and coordination between departments to prevent recurrence. "Ensuring a safe alternative water supply, regular chlorination, and continuous surveillance will be critical in containing the outbreak," a health official stated.

The health department is also awaiting laboratory confirmation to classify the outbreak definitively and guide further response strategies.

Indian Army Successfully Conducts 'Op Netra 1.0'



Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: In a landmark achievement in high-altitude medical care and humanitarian outreach, the Indian Army successfully conducted a four-day Advanced Surgical Eye Camp, 'Op Netra 1.0,' at 153 General Hospital, Leh from April 27-30, 2026. The camp was inaugurated by GOC 14 Corps, Lt Gen Hitesh Bhalla.

A testament to seamless civil-military cooperation, the camp facilitated screening of a total 950 patients from across seven districts of Ladakh, including remote areas of Chushul, Hanle, Durbuk, Demchok, Fukche, Drass, Zaskar, Batalik, Chumathang, and Turtuk. The surgical team, led by Brigadier (Dr.) Sanjay Kumar Mishra successfully performed 214 specialized procedures, including 197 complex cataract surgeries and 10 vitreo-retinal interventions, along with advanced procedures such as Glued Intraocular Lens Implantation, Minimally Invasive Glaucoma Surgery, vitrectomy, pterygium excision, and intraocular lens repositioning and restored vision of 15 complete visually impaired patients.

A key highlight of the operation was the launch of the indigenously developed Op Netra App by 153 General Hospital. It helps

in streamlining patient management by enabling end-to-end digitization of records, enhancing diagnostic accuracy, and automating surgical scheduling through QR code-based identification, thereby ensuring patient safety and operational efficiency in a high-volume, high-altitude setting.

This initiative contributes to the ongoing nationwide effort that has delivered over 2,500 sight-restoring surgeries since November 2025, following similar camps conducted in Udhampur, Dehradun, Jaipur, Bagdogra, and Gorakhpur. The mission was further enabled by the Indian Air Force through the airlift of advanced medical equipment, ensuring that the standard of care matched the highest benchmarks.

The camp concluded with a closing ceremony attended by the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, VK Saxena and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command Lt Gen Pratik Sharma. The successful conduct of Op Netra 1.0 under the leadership of Director General Armed Forces Medical Services, Vice Admiral Arti Sarin, reinforces the Government's unwavering commitment to the principle of "Nation First" and to ensuring that no citizen, regardless of geography, is deprived of essential healthcare services.

Kashmiri Pandit Community Celebrates Ganesh Chaturthi in Sogam

Observer News Service

KUPWARA: Kashmiri Pandit community celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi in Sogam, Lolab Valley, after more than 35 years marking a significant step in the restoration of religious and cultural practices in the region.

The programme was organized by Sanatan Sabha Sogam with active support from the District Administration, Kupwara and Kupwara Police.

Several hundred devotees visited the temple complex Sogam and performed puja with deep devotion and sanctity, creating a spiritually charged and festive atmosphere.

The Sub-divisional Administration headed by SDM Lolab ensured adequate arrangements for Ganesh Chaturthi. Local residents supported the event by assisting in arrangements, reflecting a renewed sense of communal harmony.

Deputy Commissioner Kupwara termed the revival of the Ganesh Chaturthi Mela an important step. He visited Sogam Temple and interacted with the community. Necessary steps being taken by administration to improve sanitation and renovation of temple area.

Members of the Pandit community described the occasion as emotional and symbolic of reconnecting with their ancestral roots and expressed appreciation for support given by Administration and police for smooth conduct of Ganesh Chaturthi Mela.

Hideout Busted in Chhatroo Sector

KISHTWAR: Security forces on Friday busted a terrorist hideout and recovered arms and explosives in the Chhatroo sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district.

The recovery was made in the Dharbi Bajmandoo forest area of Sigi Bhata during an ongoing search operation that has been underway since March 31 across areas including Dalgam, Janseer, and Kandwar.

The operation was carried out jointly by Army's 11 Rashtriya Rifles and the Special Operations Group Kishtwar.

Officials said the recovered items include a carbine gun with magazine, a pistol with magazine, under-barrel grenade launcher ammunition, four electric detonators, and approximately one kilogram of explosive substance.

In addition, 97 rounds of 9mm ammunition and 18 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition were seized along with communication equipment, including one Kenwood radio set and two Motorola radio sets. A sling and a pull-through were also among the items recovered from the hideout.

According to KNT, search operations in the area were continuing, and a formal case has been registered in this regard. (Observer News Service)

House Catches Fire after Lightning in Rajouri

RAJOURI: A double-storey kacha house was gutted in a fire after being struck by lightning in Azmatabad village of Thanamandi sub-division in Rajouri district on Friday.

The house, belonging to Gaur Khan, was extensively damaged in the blaze that broke out shortly after the lightning strike, leaving the structure completely destroyed.

Locals said the fire spread rapidly through the house, and despite efforts, the structure could not be saved.

People of the area appealed to the administration to provide immediate assistance to the affected family, stating that the owner is economically weak and had constructed the house with considerable difficulty. According to KNT, no loss of life or injury was reported in the incident. (Observer News Service)

Farooq Abdullah Rejects Exit Polls

SRINAGAR: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Friday dismissed exit polls, questioning the People's Democratic Party over its Rajya Sabha voting stance, and commented on issues ranging from price rise to the status of Urdu.

Speaking to reporters at Hazratbal Srinagar, Abdullah said he has never trusted exit polls, asserting that such projections have repeatedly failed in the past. "Exit polls have proved wrong in the past and I hope they will prove wrong this time also," he said. On the registration of an FIR reportedly linked to a video involving Iltija Mufti, Abdullah said he was not aware of the details.

"I don't know why the FIR has been lodged. Only Iltija Mufti can explain that," he said. Addressing inflation, Abdullah attributed the rise in prices to the ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

"Price rise is because of the war in the Middle East. We can only pray that peace prevails. We cannot do much about it," he said, adding that Haj pilgrims should pray for peace.

Referring to the recent Rajya Sabha elections, Abdullah said his earlier congratulatory message to the People's Democratic Party was made without full information.

"I did not know everything at that time. Now things have become clear. You should ask the PDP whom they voted for," he said. He also welcomed the bail granted to Engineer Rashid and expressed hope for his father's recovery. "It is good that he has got bail. I hope his ailing father recovers soon," Abdullah said.

According to KNT, on the ongoing debate around Urdu, Abdullah said only opinions had been sought on the subject and no decision had been taken. "Only opinions were sought about Urdu. You know the attitude of Delhi towards Urdu, but Urdu will not finish," he said. (Observer News Service)

SDA Orders Ban on Pony Movement Along Highway, Footpaths

GANDERBAL: The Sonamarg Development Authority has directed strict prohibition on the movement of ponies along footpaths, the National Highway, and roadside areas in Sonamarg, citing damage to public infrastructure and inconvenience to pedestrians.

The order follows a communication from the Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal highlighting misuse of footpaths and roadside stretches along the highway, where pony movement was found to be causing damage to public assets and disrupting commuter movement. Authorities said the issue has been viewed seriously as it impacts public safety, cleanliness, and the overall environment of the tourist destination.

As per the directions, pony operators have been confined to a designated pony stand at Shukhadi, and any movement beyond the notified area has been prohibited. Officials said any deviation will be treated as a violation and attract strict action.

The authority has also instructed daily monitoring and enforcement on the ground, with teams to be deployed for regular patrolling to ensure compliance.

In addition, vehicles have been directed to use designated routes, including the Old Truck Yard and bypass routes, with restrictions imposed on the use of certain stretches of the highway and adjoining areas.

According to KNT, officials have termed the matter urgent and sought strict compliance, directing that action taken reports be submitted without delay. (Observer News Service)

13 Lakh Pellets Used on People during PDP Govt: Sakina Itoo

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Peoples Democratic Party, accusing it of raising "immaterial issues" and attempting to divert attention from its past record.

Speaking to reporters, Itoo said the PDP was "issueless" and had resorted to raising what she termed as "irrelevant matters," including the ongoing debate around Urdu.

"Nobody can touch Urdu or any other language. It is our spirit," she said. Referring to the recent Rajya Sabha elections, Itoo alleged that the PDP had supported the Bharatiya Janata Party, adding that the issue was now being used to deflect attention.

"They voted for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha. To hide their failures and wrongdoings, they are raising such issues," she said. The minister also referred to the 2016 unrest, accusing the PDP-led government of using force against civilians.

"During their rule, youth were killed, pellets were used on people, and many were blinded and disabled. Around 13 lakh pellets were used during that period," she said.

According to KNT, Itoo further blamed the PDP for the current political situation in Jammu and Kashmir, including its status as a Union Territory.

"We do not have powers today, and that is because of the PDP," she said. (Observer News Service)



EXPERIENCE TAILORED COVERAGE TO FIT YOUR NEEDS



Bajaj General My Health Care Plan that gives you the power to tailor your coverage to align with your specific requirements, providing you with the flexibility and freedom you deserve.

Coverages:


OPD Benefits Of 2x
(twice the premium)


Sum Insured Options
Upto Rs.5 Crore


Inbuilt Home
Nursing Cover


Unlimited Sum
Insured Reinstatement


Inbuilt Maternity
And Baby Care Cover


Consumable Expenses Covered
Upto Sum Insured


Option To Add International
Cover(Emergency Only)


Option To Add Major Illness And
Accident Multiplier


Up to 50% Cumulative Bonus For Each
Claim Free Year; Maximum 100%


Inbuilt Cover For Prescribed
External Medical Aid

To Know More Contact your J & K Bank Relationship Manager

Bajaj General Insurance Limited (Formerly known as Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd.) Bajaj Insurance House, Airport Road, Yerawada, Pune - 411006. IRDAI Reg No.: 113. | CIN: U66010PN2000PLC015329 | My Health Care Plan UIN:BAJHLIP23143V012223 | web: www.bajajgeneralinsurance.com | Toll free: 1800-209-5858 / 1800-209-0144 | careforyou@bajajgeneral.com For more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale. | BGI-0-JK-002/18-12-2025

J & K Bank is licensed corporate Agent [bearing License No.: CA0029] of Bajaj General Insurance Limited [IRDA registration No. 113]. The benefits/features of products are indicative and for more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions please read sales brochure before concluding a sale.