

## Centre Bets Big On J&K's Limestone Reserves



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Banking on Jammu and Kashmir's vast limestone reserves to drive industrial expansion and mining-led growth, the Union Government on Tuesday launched the second tranche of e-auction of 12 limestone blocks across the Union Territory.

Officials said the move is aimed at unlocking mineral potential through a transparent auction process while attracting investment from cement and infrastructure sectors.

Speaking during the inaugural session of the auction launch in Srinagar, Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Government of India, Piyush Goyal said several of the identified blocks are resource-rich and expected to witness strong participation from industry players.

"Today, we have started the auction process of the second tranche of 12 limestone blocks in Jammu and Kashmir. Many of these blocks are large and resource-rich. We are hopeful that the process will see strong participation and successful outcomes," he said.

Goyal said the Centre is giving special focus to Jammu and Kashmir's development and is carrying out the auction process in coordination with the Union Territory administration to ensure transparency, fair participation and faster mineral-led growth.

"We are briefing bidders about the entire process and all block-related details to ensure transparency and smooth participation," he added.

The Secretary said the Ministry of Mines has introduced several reforms and amendments in recent years | [More on P6](#)

**IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, 46 AUCTIONS OF CRITICAL MINERAL BLOCKS** have been conducted successfully and 19 blocks are currently under auction."

## Will Chase Every Rupee Of Drug Cartels: LG

» Says, 'Every School, Mosque Must Host Weekly Dialogue Against Drugs' » Launches Two Anti-Drug Programmes Rooted In Family, Community Support

Observer News Service

Srinagar: "We will chase every rupee, every asset and shell company of drug traffickers, ensuring the harshest punishment for those destroying our youth's future," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday while participating in the Drug-Free Jammu and Kashmir campaign padyatra in Baramulla.

During the event, the Lieutenant Governor announced two new initiatives under the anti-drug campaign for the next 69 days, including the "Community Immunization Program Against Drugs" and the "Family Fortress Initiative."



Drawing a parallel with public health campaigns, Sinha said communities must collectively build resistance against narcotics. "Just as we | [More on P6](#)

## 'Border Villages' Distance From Delhi Has Reduced'

Observer News Service

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, border villages' distance from Delhi has reduced. They are connected to the mainstream of development, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Monday while addressing a public gathering at Uran Bowa village in Baramulla. The Lieutenant Governor visited the Vibrant Village in | [More on P6](#)

## NRPC Pulls Up J&K Over Pending Power Dues

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant regulatory rebuke, the Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) has revealed that Jammu and Kashmir has consistently failed to clear deviation and reactive energy charges despite mandatory timelines laid down under the Deviation Settlement Mechanism (DSM) Regulations.

The NRPC said the Northern Regional Load Despatch Centre (NRLDC) is responsible for operating and maintaining the Northern Region Pool Account for deviation charges, reactive energy charges and congestion charges in accordance with provisions under various Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) regulations.

According to the committee, payments to the statutory pool account carry high priority and all concerned utilities are required to clear | [More on P6](#)

## Hailstorm Ravages Orchards Across Kashmir, Growers Fear Losses

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Severe hailstorms accompanied by heavy rainfall caused widespread damage to orchards and standing crops across several parts of Kashmir on Monday, leaving growers worried about heavy financial losses during a crucial stage of the fruit season.

The hailstorm affected multiple areas in south Kashmir as well as north Kashmir's Kupwara, Bandipora and Baramulla districts, where apple orchards, vegetables and other crops suffered | [More on P6](#)



## MeT Warns Of Rain, Gusty Winds

The Meteorological Department on Tuesday forecast more spells of rain and thunder-showers across Jammu and Kashmir over the next 24 hours, while warning of hailstorms, lightning and gusty winds at | [More on P6](#)

## Regularization Outside Constitutional Framework Impermissible: HC

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Tuesday underlined that regularization or permanent absorption cannot be claimed as a matter of right outside the constitutional scheme governing public employment.

A bench of Justice Sanjay Parihar made the observations

while dismissing a plea by a group of seasonal labourers seeking parity with certain workers who had earlier been granted the status of permanent casual labourers in the Irrigation Department.

"It is true law that equality under Article 14 of the Constitution postulates positive equality and not | [More on P6](#)

## Krishna Dhaba Killing Case HC Upholds PSA Detention Of Pulwama Youth

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has upheld the preventive detention of an 18-year-old Pulwama youth under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), observing that allegations against him indicated a potential threat to the security of the Union Territory.

The judgment was delivered by Justice Rahul Bharti in a habeas corpus petition filed by Vilayat Aziz Mir, a resident of Hunipora Wanpora in Pulwama district, through his father Abdul Aziz Mir.

The petitioner had challenged his detention order issued by the District Magistrate Pulwama on April 30, 2025 under the PSA.

According to court records, the detention was based on a dossier submitted by the Senior Superintendent of Police, Pulwama, alleging that the youth was involved in activities prejudicial to the security of the Union Territory.

Authorities alleged that he had links with militants and over-ground workers and remained in contact with one Shakeel Ahmad alias Gazi | [More on P6](#)

## NEET-UG 2026 Cancelled: What Happens Next?

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 has left over 22 lakh medical aspirants and their families anxious about the next steps, including the fresh examination date, admit cards, examination centres and the counselling timeline.

While the National Testing Agency (NTA) is yet to issue detailed guidelines, here is an explainer on what is known so far.

The NTA announced the cancellation of the May 3 examination following allegations of irregularities linked to the test. The matter is being probed by the Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG) and other agencies.

In a statement on X, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said the decision was taken in the interest of maintaining transparency and preserving trust in the national examination system. "On the basis of inputs subsequently examined by NTA in coordination with central agencies and the investigative findings shared by the law enforcement agencies, the National Testing Agency, with the approval of the Government of India, has decided to cancel the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on 3 May 2026, and to re-conduct the examination on dates that will be notified separately,"



the agency said. The agency has maintained that the examination was conducted under a "full security protocol", including GPS-tracked movement of question papers, biometric verification, AI-assisted CCTV monitoring and deployment of 5G jammers.

When will the re-exam be held? The fresh dates have not yet been announced. However, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh has said the schedule for the re-examination of cancelled NEET-UG 2026 will be announced within the "next seven to 10 days".

He also said the agency aims to conduct the exam at the earliest to avoid disruption to the academic calendar and medical college admissions. Will students have to register again? No. The NTA has | [More on P6](#)

## Leading American Strategist Says US Faces Iran 'Checkmate'

Trans Asia News

London: A prominent U.S. foreign policy strategist who long championed American military intervention abroad has warned that Washington may have suffered a major strategic defeat in its conflict with Iran, as Tehran on Tuesday declared a dramatic expansion of its operational control over the Strait of Hormuz and vowed to confront any perceived violation of its territorial waters.

The warning from Robert Kagan, one of the most influential advocates of American



interventionism since the Iraq war era, came in a widely discussed essay published by The Atlantic on May 10 titled "Checkmate in Iran", in which he argued that the United States had entered

a strategic trap from which there was no clear exit.

In the article, Kagan offered a bleak assessment of the war launched against Iran on February 28, writing that "the US suffered a total

defeat" — one that he said had "no precedent in American history" and could "neither be repaired nor ignored".

Kagan wrote that despite a 37-day US-Israeli air campaign that killed senior Iranian leaders and military figures while heavily damaging parts of Iran's military infrastructure, Tehran had neither capitulated nor collapsed.

Instead, Iran had transformed the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most critical oil chokepoint, into a source of strategic leverage, while exposing | [More on P6](#)

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Dated: 12.05.2025

DIPK-NB-452/26

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# 'Wearables, With Location & Surveys, May Capture Exposures, Health Effects'

Press Trust Of India

**W**earable devices, along with location data from smartphones and real-time surveys, could help capture environmental exposures and their immediate physical and emotional effects, a new pilot study has shown.

Tribune Subscription Banner  
"People move through many different environments each day, and this approach lets us capture that in real time," Sameera Ramjan, a doctoral student in The City University of New York Graduate Centre Psychology program, said.

"We were struck by how quickly the data

revealed patterns -- changes in heart rate variability, shifts in mood -- that lined up with where participants had been and what they were exposed to," Ramjan said.

The study, published in the Journal of Medical Internet Research Formative Research, analysed data recorded via participants' Fitbit smartwatches that were worn for roughly a month. The participants also completed mood surveys known as ecological momentary assessments several times a day.

The data was combined with smartphone location tracking to estimate exposure to heat and air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, and sulphur dioxide based on where the participants spent

time throughout the day.

"This study demonstrates that the multimodal integration of wearable devices, GPS tracking, and EMA (ecological momentary assessment) is feasible for capturing real-time environmental exposures and concurrent health outcomes in young adults," the authors wrote.

Analysis revealed that on days with a higher exposure to heat and nitrogen dioxide, the participants showed changes in heart rate variability, an indicator of the body's ability to recover from stress.

A higher exposure to sulphur dioxide was associated with increased feelings of nervousness and hopelessness, while a higher heat exposure was linked to lower self-re-

ported sadness -- a counter intuitive finding that the researchers said may reflect seasonal patterns in outdoor activity and social engagement during warmer weather.

"Even in a small pilot, we could see that the relationship between environmental conditions and people's physiological and emotional responses is more complex than traditional methods can capture," Melissa Blum, a medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, US, said.

"By combining wearable sensors, GPS data, and real-time surveys, we're able to build individualised exposure profiles that move with people throughout their day. That's a real shift from relying on stationary monitors or home addresses," Blum said.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my wards name from (old name) SHAYAN to (New name) SHAYAN OWAIS LALLA. In future he will be known as (new name) SHAYAN OWAIS LALLA.

If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

OWAIS GANI LALLA  
F/O SHAYAN OWAIS LALLA  
R/o H. NO 08 AL KAREEM COLONY HUMHAMA.

MCB

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card of my daughter bearing No 337157384314 the name is entered as Qamrun Nisa while her actual name is Qumroon Nisa. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

Qumroon Nisa  
D/O Ali Mohammad Najar  
R/o Kremshore Budgam

MCB

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from FATA BEGUM to FATIMA BEGUM. Henceforth, I shall be known and recognized by the name FATIMA BEGUM for all purposes and records.

If anybody has any objection regarding the above name change, he/she may file objection before the concerned Passport Office Srinagar within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which, no objection shall be entertained thereafter.

FATIMA BEGUM  
W/O Gh Mohd Bhat  
R/O Chukar Tehsil Pattan

fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the name recorded in the electricity records under Consumer ID No. 020102009881 falling under Sub Division Dalgate, near JK Bank Headquarters, is proposed to be changed from Mohammad Syed Shah to Reyaz Ahmed Malik.

If anybody has any objection regarding the said name change, he/she may file the objection before the concerned office within the stipulated period from the date of publication of this notice.

fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Arshad Iqbal Sheikh, S/o Mohd Sharief Sheikh, R/o Shadab Karewa Shopian, presently working as Teacher in Education Department, hereby inform the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded as Arshid Iqbal Sheikh in my appointment order and my father's name/caste has been wrongly recorded as Mohd Sharief Sheikh in my Service Book instead of the correct particulars as Arshad Iqbal Sheikh S/o Mohd Sharief Sheikh.

Now, I intend to correct the same in my official service records as per my Aadhaar Card and other valid documents.

If anybody has any objection regarding the above-mentioned correction, he/she may file objection before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which, it shall be presumed that nobody has any objection and the necessary correction process shall be initiated accordingly.

Name: Arshad Iqbal Sheikh  
R/o: Shadab Karewa, Shopian

fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Mohd Yousuf Bhat, R/o Yagipora Magam, hereby inform the general public that I have applied for the issuance of Date of Birth certificate in favour of my son MUNTAZIR MEHDI who was born on 12-02-2024.

If anybody has any objection regarding the same, he/she may file objection before the Municipal Committee Beerwah within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which, it shall be presumed that nobody has any objection and further proceedings shall be initiated accordingly.

Mohd Yousuf Bhat F/o Muntazir Mehdi  
Address: Yagipora Magam  
Phone No.: 9797466194

bmj

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that the mother's name in the Birth Certificate of Khaleeqah Shah was inadvertently entered as "Sameena" instead of the correct full name "Sameena Quansar". The matter has been taken up with the office of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation for necessary correction in the official records and issuance of the corrected Birth Certificate.

The correct details are as follows:  
Child's Name: Khaleeqah Shah  
Father's Name: Zahoor Ahmad Shah  
Mother's Correct Name: Sameena Quansar  
Address: Bemina Housing Colony, Srinagar  
Contact No: 7006543856

jma

## نمبر پلیٹ کی گمشدگی

میری گاڑی زین نمبر JK04G - 7571 اور پلاٹ نمبر (NUMBER PLATE) کی گمشدگی ہوئی ہے۔ بہت ڈھونڈنے پر نہیں مل سکی۔ اگر کسی نے اٹھائی ہو تو وہ برائے انسانیت سمجھے ہوئے ہوئے نمبر فریون کرے۔ بصورت دیگر اس کی ڈیکلیٹ کرائی جائے۔ اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر ARTO بڈ گام کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بعد ازاں میٹھا کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

سجاد احمد دلچھری سٹ۔  
فون: 9797622593

MCB

## کاغذات کی گمشدگی

میری گاڑی زین نمبر JK04C - 8784 کی گمشدگی ہوئی ہے۔ بہت ڈھونڈنے پر نہیں مل سکی۔ اگر کسی نے اٹھائی ہو تو وہ برائے انسانیت سمجھے ہوئے ہوئے نمبر فریون کرے۔ بصورت دیگر اس کی ڈیکلیٹ کرائی جائے۔ اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر ARTO بڈ گام کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بعد ازاں میٹھا کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

غلام علی الدین بیک دلچھری سٹ۔  
فون: 6006466458

MCB

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from (Old name) Aris Naiem to (New name) Aris Nayeem Ganaie. In future I will be known as (New name) Aris Nayeem Ganaie. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

ab

### NOTICE

I want to correct my name and my father's name in my Driving Licence bearing no JK13 20210002646 from NASIB SINGH To NASEEB SINGH and my father's name from DEDAR SINGH TO DEEDAR SINGH. Now I am applying for correction. In this regard if anybody is having any objection may file the same to Concerned Department/RTO within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

jvd

### Government of Jansreu and Kashmir Department Of Tribal Affairs Office Of The Warden Gujjar And Bakarwal Boys Hostel Kupwara. ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE 2026

Applications on prescribed Performa are invited for students of Gujjar and Bakarwal community of District Kupwara for filling up of vacant vacancies/seats of inmates in Gujjar and Bakarwal Boys Hostel Kupwara. Application can be received and submitted in Gujjar and Bakarwal Boys Hostel Kupwara up to 4 PM of 20/05/2026. The screening test of eligible students will be held on 23/05/2026 at Govt. High School Goose Kupwara. The selection of students will be made purely on merit basis. The application forms for entrance test are available at Gujjar & Bakarwal Boys Hostel Kupwara and should be submitted in the Office of Warden Gujjar & Bakarwal Boys Hostel Kupwara (Goose) in stipulated time, the students will also get an option to fill form for entrance test online. The following vacancies are to be filled.

Class	Vacancy	Remarks
7 <sup>th</sup>	07	
8 <sup>th</sup>	14	
9 <sup>th</sup>	15	
10 <sup>th</sup>	08	
11 <sup>th</sup>	06	

#### 2. Eligibility Conditions :

- The applicant must be the domicile to District Kupwara.
- The applicant must belong to Gujjar and Bakarwal community.
- Only the student belonging to BPL Category shall apply for admission.
- Applicant should not be involved in any criminal or anti-social activities.
- Only the meritorious students on the basis of screening test will get admission in the Hostel on vacant seats
- The Admission of Class 11<sup>th</sup> Students well strictly be made on merit / Marks obtained in Class 10<sup>th</sup>.

DIPK-1224/26  
DATED: 12-05-2026

Warden  
Gujjar and Bakarwal Boys Hostel  
Kupwara

#### OFFICE OF THE WARDEN GUJJAR & BAKERWAL BOYS HOSTEL KUPWARA. SCREENING/ENTRANCE TEST FORM FOR ADMISSION IN CLASS 7<sup>th</sup> TO 11<sup>th</sup> SESSION 2026 (FOR KUPWARA DISTRICT ONLY)

Name of the Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Father's Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Village: \_\_\_\_\_ Tehsil: \_\_\_\_\_  
District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_ WhatsApp No: \_\_\_\_\_

Seal & Signature of  
Headmaster  
Principal.

(i) Class: \_\_\_\_\_ (ii) Admission No: \_\_\_\_\_  
(iii) Date of Admission: \_\_\_\_\_ (iv) Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

#### (V) Educational Details

Class last Passed	Year of Passing	Name of School	Marks Obtained	Board

Sig. of applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Seal & Sig. of the Concerned  
Principal/ Headmaster

#### Documents to be attached.

- Schedule Tribe (Gujjar & Bakarwal) Certificate Issued by Tehsildar Concerned
- Domicile Certificate.
- BPL Certificate.
- Marks Sheet of lost examination passed.

#### Declaration by the Applicant:

I hereby declare that all the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I shall by all the rules and regulations of the Hostel and maintain proper discipline during my stay.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No:- \_\_\_\_\_  
Note:- \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Declaration by parent/Guardian:

I \_\_\_\_\_ father / Guardian of the above applicant, declare that my ward belongs to the ST and BPL Category, and all details furnished above are correct. I undertake to ensure that my ward abides by all hostel rules and regulation.

Signature of parent / Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No:- \_\_\_\_\_  
Note:- \_\_\_\_\_

01.	Issuance of Application Forms for Screening / Entrance Test	13/05/2026
02.	Last date for Submission of Application Forms for Screening/Entrance Test	20/05/2026
03.	Date of Screening /Entrance Test	23/05/2026
04.	Screening/Entrance Test Centre	Govt. High School Goose Kupwara
05.	Reporting Time	10:30 AM
06.	Timing of Screening/Entrance Test	11:00 AM

For further clarification related to Screening/Entrance test 23-05-2026 the candidate can also contact 9697066660 / 7006324349

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUB TRANSMISSION DIVISION BIJBHARA

www.jkpcdd.gov.in Tel No: - 09132-233002 Fax No:- 09132-234397  
e-mail: xen-stdbijbehara@jk.gov.in,

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT NO.STB/14 of 2026-27, Dated: 05/05/2025

For and on behalf of the Lt Governor, Jammu and Kashmir State, e-Tenders (In Two Cover System) are hereby invited from "A" Class Electrical Contractors issued by the Electrical Inspectorate of Govt of Central Inspectorial organization of Govt. of India/ other state Govt. In case bid submitted joint venture firm, any of partner should possess "A" class electrical license for "Stage Contract for Supply of Key materials required for maintenance of 33/11KV receiving stations along with their Lines under the jurisdiction of STD Bijbehara during the year 2026-27", as per terms, conditions, technical specifications and schedules forming part of this tender document. Intending bidders are requested to submit their offer along with terms, conditions, technical specifications and annexure forming part of this tender document. The details are as under:

#	Name of Work	Adv. Cost. (IN Rs.)	Cost of e-Bid/ tender document (Rs)	EMD (Rs)
1.	Stage Contract for Supply of Key materials required for maintenance of 33/11KV receiving stations along with their Lines under the jurisdiction of STD Bijbehara during the year 2026-27	3500000	1000	70000
2.	Publishing Date & Time	05-05-2026 (1700 Hrs)		
3.	Document Download / Sale Start Date & Time	05-05-2026 (1700 Hrs)		
4.	Seek Clarification Start Date & Time	05-05-2026 (1700 Hrs)		
5.	Seek Clarification End Date & Time	25-05-2026 (1700 Hrs)		
6.	Bid Submission Start Date & Time	05-05-2026 (1700 Hrs)		
7.	Bid Submission End Date & Time	26-05-2026 (1500 Hrs)		
8.	Bid opening date & Time	27-05-2026 (1500 Hrs)		
9.	Venue of opening Bids	STD Bijbehara		

#### Please Read Standard Bidding Document Carefully

- The tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification if required and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below.
- There is no need of furnishing of hard copies of bids after submission of e-tenders. The same should be obtained only from the bidder who is declared as L1 after opening of financial bid as per the instructions of Finance Department issued vide O.M No. A/24(2017)-651; Dated: 07-06-2018
- All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of cost of tender document. The cost of tender document should be paid through e- challan/ treasury challan /receipt only.
- All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of EMD in the form of CDR/FDR/Bank Guarantee only, pledged to the Executive Engineer Sub transmission Division Bijbehara. No interest would be payable on Earnest Money deposited with the Department. However the bidder who is declared L1 after opening of financial bid has to submit the original EMD to the office of the Executive Engineer Sub transmission Division Bijbehara through speed post, Courier or by hand.
- The e-Bids will be electronically opened in the presence of bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the venue, date and time mentioned in the above table or any subsequent day to the convenience of the Tender Opening Committee. An authority letter of bidder's/OEM representative will be required to be produced.
- The Department reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids/ the e-Bid process without assigning any reason thereof. The decision of department will be final and binding.
- In the event of date specified for e-Bids opening being declared a holiday for department's office then the due date for opening of e-Bids shall be the following working day at the appointed time and place.
- All the required documents excluding Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded by the e-Bidder electronically in the PDF format, whereas Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded electronically in the same BOQ sheet provided with the SBD.
- To participate in e-bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' class III(b) as per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding.
- The rates shall include costs, if any attracted towards mandatory inspections / testing by the designated agencies and the department will not be required to pay / reimburse anything over and above the price quoted. All the bids must be supported by the instrument of EMD of the exact amount as mentioned in the above table and shall have been issued post tender publication date. Moreover, any deviation in the EMD amount is liable for rejection. In case the bid of the successful bidder is unbalanced, or if the Bid of the successful Bidder is 10%-25% below the advertised cost / estimated cost of the works, the Employer/Contract Awarding Authority shall ask the bidder to furnish additional Security of 5% of the contract value and if the Bid of the successful Bidder is more than 25% below the advertised cost / estimated cost of the works, the Employer/Contract Awarding Authority reserves right to declare the Bid as non-response & as such be cancelled, as per clause 4.3 of the SBD.
- The tender document is available on website. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table above. The Quoted rates shall be Firm, inclusive of all taxes and duties, WCT, freight, transportation up to working sites. The rates shall include costs, if any attracted towards mandatory inspections / testing by the designated agencies and the department will not be required to pay / reimburse anything over and above the price quoted. All the bids must be supported by the instrument of EMD of the exact amount as mentioned in the above table and shall have been issued post tender publication date. Moreover, any deviation in the EMD amount is liable for rejection.

Sd/=

DIPK-NB-451/26  
dated: 12-05-2026

Executive Engineer  
Sub Transmission Division  
Bijbehara

NO:STB/Ts/tender/514-17

## Akashvani Srinagar Celebrates 90 Years of Broadcasting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Akashvani Srinagar organized a grand musical concert at its auditorium hall to commemorate 90 glorious years of broadcasting by Akashvani. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from

Bishnoi, Satish Vimal, and Abdul Rehman Bhat, besides a galaxy of renowned artists, broadcasters, former radio personalities, and admirers of the rich broadcasting heritage of Akashvani Srinagar.

Their presence added further grace and significance to the celebrations marking 90 years of public service broadcasting.



artists, listeners, cultural personalities, and media professionals who gathered to celebrate the enduring legacy of radio broadcasting in the country.

The musical evening featured mesmerizing performances by noted Kashmiri musicians Waheed Jeelani, Manzoor Ahmad Shah, and Shafi Sopori, who enthralled the audience with soulful renditions of traditional and contemporary Kashmiri music. Their performances were warmly appreciated by the audience and added colour to the celebrations.

Among the distinguished guests present on the occasion were Col. Sambit Das, Anil Yadav, Anurag

cance to the celebrations marking 90 years of public service broadcasting.

Speaking on the occasion, Gurbinder Singh, Deputy Director General and Cluster Head, expressed immense pleasure over the successful celebration and highlighted the invaluable contribution of Akashvani towards nation building during the last nine decades. He recalled several important milestones in modern Indian history and observed that Akashvani has not only been a witness to these transformative events but has also played a crucial role in shaping public discourse and strengthening the democratic and cultural fabric of the nation.

## SKIMS Announces Recruitment Relief for Overburdened Nursing Workforce

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Director SKIMS Prof. M. Ashraf Ganie on Tuesday said that nearly 1,200 paramedical posts across different cadres are under consideration for recruitment, including around 500 positions for nursing staff.

Addressing the International Nurses Day celebrations at SKIMS here, Professor Ganie, according to KNO said, "Proposed recruitment process is expected to substantially reduce the shortage of nursing staff at SKIMS within the next three months."

He stated that the move would help bridge nearly 60 percent of the existing deficiency in nursing manpower at the premier healthcare institution.

He expressed gratitude to all stakeholders, including the Lieutenant Governor and Chief Minister's administrations, for facilitating the recruitment process and supporting efforts aimed at strengthening healthcare services in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Director said enhancing the workforce would significantly improve patient care management and reinforce the spirit of this year's International Nurses Day theme, "Our Nurses, Our Future: Empowered Nurses Save Lives."

In another important announcement, Prof. Ganie said SKIMS is also working on introducing a paid nursing internship programme aimed at empowering young nursing professionals and equipping them with valuable clinical exposure and practical experience.

Reaffirming his commitment towards the expansion and modernization of SKIMS, Prof. Ganie said new departments would be established while existing facilities would be upgraded to

meet the growing healthcare demands of the region.

He described nurses as the true pillars of the healthcare system and acknowledged their immense contribution towards patient care. "The word nurse is synonymous with motherhood in terms of compassion, empathy and selfless service," he said.

Highlighting the emerging social challenges in Kashmir, the Director also stressed that healthcare workers, especially nurses, can play a vital role in combating the growing drug menace through counselling, awareness, rehabilitation support, and compassionate care.

Dean Medical Faculty SKIMS, Prof. Bashir Ahmad Fomda, said the theme of the event reflected the roadmap for the growth and empowerment of the nursing fraternity. He emphasized the

need for structural support, clinical autonomy, adequate workspace, and greater participation of nurses in decision-making processes.

Additional Director SKIMS, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, congratulated the nursing staff and appreciated their tireless service and unwavering commitment towards patient care despite numerous challenges.

Incharge Principal of Madre Meharban College of Nursing SKIMS, Prof. Maqbool, observed that the increasing participation of men in the nursing profession reflects a positive societal change. However, he noted that women continue to remain closely associated with compassion and caregiving. He also thanked the SKIMS administration for extending support towards addressing issues related to the nursing faculty.

## Minister Sakeena Distributes Appointment Orders among CPWs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo said that Omar Abdullah led Government is committed to ensuring fair opportunities based on merit and transparency to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as merit-based promotions to employees for institutional growth and effective public service delivery.

The Minister stated this while distributing the appointment orders among Twenty-five Contingent Paid Workers (CPWs) of School Education department (SED) regularized as Multi-Tasking Staff (MTS), as well as promotion orders among fourteen Laboratory Assistants promoted as Teachers, at SCERT Auditorium Bemina here today.



torium Bemina here today.

Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani; Chairman JKBOSE, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh; Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani; Joint Director School Education Central Kashmir, Syed Shabir Ahmad; senior officers of school education department and other concerned officers were also present

on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring fair opportunities based on merit and experience. She stated that nearly 3,000 CPWs have been regularized over the past one half years, reflecting sustained efforts to provide employment security and career advancement.

## PSO Dies of Electrocution

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A police personnel posted as Personal Security Officer (PSO) with a social activist died after suffering an electric shock at a temple in Srinagar on Tuesday, officials said.

An official told KNO that the police personnel, posted as PSO with a social activist, received an electric shock at a temple in the Habakadal area of Srinagar.

He said the policeman was immediately shifted to SMHS Hospital Srinagar, where doctors declared him brought dead.

The deceased was later identified as Veerji Koul, a Selection Grade Constable (SGCT).

Meanwhile, police have taken cognisance of the incident.

## Srinagar Police Attaches ₹1.2 Cr Property of Drug Peddler

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police on Tuesday attached a residential house and land worth around 1.2 crore belonging to an alleged drug peddler in the Hazratbal area of the city.

Police said the attached property comprises a double-storeyed residential house along with land situated at Gasoo Hazratbal.

The property belongs to Maqsood Hussain Khan, son of Abdul Majeed Khan, a resident of Bandy Lane, Hazratbal, and presently residing at Gasoo, Hazratbal, officials said. Srinagar Police

carried out the attachment through Police Station Nigeen under Section 68(F)(1) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

According to police, the action is linked to FIR No. 42/2023 registered under Sections 8/20, 21 and 29 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Nigeen and FIR No. 20/2025 registered under Section 8/21 of the NDPS Act at Police Station Ganderbal.

Officials said investigations revealed that the property had allegedly been acquired through proceeds generated from illicit drug trafficking activities.

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited  
Impaired Assets Recovery Branch  
Corporate Headquarters  
M.A.Road, Srinagar - 190 001  
T +91 (0)194 2481930 F +91 (0)194 2481915  
E Iarh.chq@jkbmail.com W www.jkbank.com

### POSSESSION NOTICE Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited of Security under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of he said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated 29.11.2023 thereby calling upon the Borrower's/Mortgagor's namely 1.M/sGhulam Nabi Dar Registered Office Habak Naseem Bagh Srinagar Jammu & Kashmir (Partnership concern) 2.Mr. Ghulam Nabi Dar S/o Abdul Rehman Dar R/o City Berooni Kathi Darwaza Rainawari Guri Pora Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (Mortgagor/Partner) 3. Mrs. Rashida W/o Ghulam Nabi Dar R/o City Berooni Kathi Darwaza Rainawari Guri Pora Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (Mortgagor/Partner) 4.Mrs Saja W/o Abdul Rehman Dar R/o City Berooni Kathi Darwaza Rainawari Guri Pora Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (Mortgagor/Partner) 5.Mrimitiyaz Ahmad Mir S/o Ghulam U Din Mir R/o Nigeen Srinagar Jammu & Kashmir (Mortgagor) 6.Mr.Mushtaq Ahmad Dar S/o Abdul Rehman Dar R/o City Berooni Kathi Darwaza Rainawari Guri Pora Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (Mortgagor) 7.Mrs.Sumaiya W/o Mushtaq Ahmad Dar R/o City Berooni Kathi Darwaza Rainawari Guri Pora Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir (Mortgagor) (to repay an amount of Rs.6,91,11,639.44/- (Rupees Six Crore Ninty one Lacs Eleven Thousand Six Hundred Thirty Nine & Paise Forty Four Only) being the balance outstanding as on 28.11.2023 (Exclusive of Interest w.e.f.01.11.2023) in the accounts of the Borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with of the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized in officer of the J & K Bank Ltd. has taken Physical Possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on this the 11th day of May of 2026

The said borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount aggregating to Rs.9,23,54,605.29/- (Rupees Nine Crore Twenty Three Lakhs Fifty Four Thousand Six Hundred Five and Paise Twenty Nine Only) together with future interest thereon from 01.05.2026 and other charges incurred or to be incurred.

The borrower/s attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**Description of the Immovable Property:-**

- Registered Mortgage of a two storied commercial property/shopping complex alongwith land underneath and appurtenant measuring 3 1/2 Marlas falling under Khasra No 58 Khata No 386 Khewat No 341 Situated in Mouza Habak Khushki Tehsil North Srinagar District Srinagar Standing in the name of Mrs Saja Begum.
- Equitable Mortgage of a commercial plot measuring 10 marlas falling under Khasra No 140 (Old 189) Khata No 282 Khewat No 263 Situated in Mouza HabakKhushki Tehsil North District Srinagar Standing in the name of Mr. Ghulam Nabi Dar.

**Dated: 11.05.2026**  
**Place: Srinagar**  
**(Authorised Officer)**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that I, JAVEED AHMAD WANI S/O. GH MOHI UD DIN WANI R/O: AGAR KALAN, Tehsil Pattan, District Baramulla, UT of J&K, intend to correct my particulars in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 1052.

In my Aadhaar Card, my name, father's name and date of birth have wrongly been recorded as JAVED AHMAD WANI S/O: GHULAM MOHI UD DIN WANI, DOB: 31/12/1985 instead of the correct particulars as JAVEED AHMAD WANI C/O: GH MOHI UD DIN WANI, DOB: 10-12-1982 as per my school records.

Now, I have applied for correction of the said entries with the concerned Aadhaar authorities. If anybody has any objection regarding the same, he/she may contact the concerned Aadhaar Centre/Authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

fko

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to inform that the mother's name in the Birth Certificate of Khaleeqah Shah was inadvertently entered as "Sameena" instead of the correct full name "Sameena Quansar"

The matter has been taken up with the office of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation for necessary correction in the official records and issuance of the corrected Birth Certificate.

The correct details are as follows:  
Child's Name: Khaleeqah Shah  
Father's Name: Zahoor Ahmad Shah  
Mother's Correct Name: Sameena Quansar  
Address: Bemina Housing Colony, Srinagar  
Contact No: 7006543856

ca

TRAFFIC POLICE : 941993745, 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  
PAMPORA: 01933-294132  
PATTAN: 01954-293507  
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

**PRAYERS**

FAJR 3: 56  
ZUHR 12:27  
ASR 5: 21  
Magrib 7:26  
ISHA 8: 59

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
25 Zil-Qadah  
1447

**This Day In History**

- 535- St Agapitus I begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 1110- Crusaders march into Beirut causing a bloodbath
- 1643- Battle of Grantham: English parliamentary armies beat royalists
- 1643- Heavy earthquake strikes Santiago Chile; kills 1/3 of population
- 1648- Construction of the Red Fort at Delhi is completed.
- 1779- War of Bavarian Succession ends
- 1830- Republic of Ecuador is founded, with Juan Jose Flores as president
- 1835- 1st foreign embassy in Hawaii forms
- 1846- US declares war on Mexico, 2 months after fighting begins
- 1861- Queen Victoria announces Britain's position of neutrality
- 1861- The Great Comet of 1861 is discovered by John Tebbutt of Windsor, New South Wales, Australia.
- 1865- Battle of Palmito Ranch, near Brownsville, Texas: final engagement of the American Civil War, Private John Jefferson Williams of B Company, 34th Regiment Indiana Infantry is last man killed
- 1884- Institute for Electrical & Electronics Engineers (IEEE) forms in New York

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Bazila Tariq Bhat, D/o Tariq Ahmad Bhat, to Bazila Tarooq Bhat, D/o Tarooq Ahmed Bhat. Henceforth, I shall be known as Bazila Tarooq Bhat, D/o Tarooq Ahmed Bhat, for all purposes and future records.

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Sabirra Tariq Bhat, D/o Tariq Ahmad Bhat, to Sabirra Tarooq Bhat, D/o Tarooq Ahmed Bhat. Henceforth, I shall be known as Sabirra Tarooq Bhat, D/o Tarooq Ahmed Bhat, for all purposes and future records.

فاتحہ خوانی کی اطلاع  
ابلیہ مرحوم غلام رسول صوفی ابن غلام حسن صوفی کے اچانک انتقال پر پورے علاقے میں گہرے رنج و غم کی لہر دوڑ گئی۔ مرحوم نہایت خوش اخلاق، منشا اور نیک سیرت خاتون تھیں۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جو رحمت میں اعلیٰ مقام عطا فرمائے اور لواحقین کو صبر جمیل عنایت فرمائے۔ آمین۔  
مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی  
13 مئی 2026 بروز بدھ صبح 6 بجے  
مرحوم کے آبائی مقبرہ، حسن آباد سترنگ، متصل آستان عالیہ میں انجام دی جائے گی۔  
بعد ازاں مرحوم کے گھر واقع پک بانج حضرت تیل، سترنگ میں دن بھر مجلس و فاتحہ خوانی جاری رہے گی۔  
صاحبان تعزیت :  
غلام حسین صوفی، محمد شفیع صوفی  
رابطہ نمبر: 7051724809,9906611819

## 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  
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# The Hantavirus Question

A rare but deadly virus has returned to public attention, raising fresh questions about pandemic preparedness and zoonotic threats.



Tasaduk Hussain Itoo

The recent death linked to hantavirus has pushed the little-known disease back into public attention, reviving concerns about how easily dangerous infections can remain ignored until tragedy strikes.

Hantavirus may not spread like Covid-19, but its sudden appearance in the headlines is a reminder that even relatively rare diseases can expose serious gaps in public health preparedness.

Scientists first identified the disease during the Korean War after thousands of United Nations soldiers developed high fever, bleeding complications, and kidney failure near the Hantan River in South Korea.

Decades later, the virus still poses serious medical and scientific questions. Researchers have identified multiple strains throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas, each linked to specific rodent hosts and distinct disease patterns.

Asia and Europe mainly report Haemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome, a condition that attacks the kidneys and blood vessels. North and South America more commonly confront Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome, one of the deadliest respiratory infections known in modern medicine.

Severe cases destroy lung function with terrifying speed. Patients often arrive at hospitals with fever, muscle pain, fatigue, nausea, and headache that resemble ordinary viral illness.

Within days, breathing collapses. Fluid floods the lungs, and intensive care teams scramble to place patients on ventilators. Fatality levels in severe pulmonary disease can reach 35 to 40 percent.

Those numbers demand attention.

Rodents serve as the natural reservoir for the virus. Deer mice in the United States spread the Sin Nombre strain that causes pulmonary disease. Rats and voles in Europe and Asia transmit strains associated with renal failure.

Infected animals continue living normally, which allows the virus to circulate silently through forests, farms, barns, grain storage areas, and abandoned buildings. Human infection usually begins when contaminated urine, saliva, or droppings dry into microscopic particles that enter the air and reach the lungs during cleaning or farming activity.

That mode of transmission explains why hantavirus behaves differently from influenza or COVID-19.

Most strains struggle to move efficiently between people. Direct environmental exposure remains the primary driver of infection. Disease experts therefore place greater pandemic concern on viruses with efficient airborne human spread.

That distinction still leaves room for serious concern.

The Andes virus in South America has already demonstrated limited person-to-person transmission during outbreaks in Argentina and Chile. Those episodes remained contained, though they unsettled virologists who study zoonotic evolution.

Viruses constantly adapt under environmental pressure. History repeatedly shows that microbial threats rarely remain frozen in time.

Climate change intensifies that concern. Warmer temperatures, flooding, erratic rainfall, deforestation, and expanding urban settlement continue pushing humans and wildlife into closer contact.

Rodent populations respond rapidly to changing environmental conditions. Heavy rains increase food availability, which often fuels breeding surges and migration into human spaces.



COVID-19 should have transformed the world's approach to zoonotic disease surveillance. Instead, many health systems continue operating with limited laboratory capacity and weak early-warning infrastructure. Hantavirus exposes those shortcomings clearly.

Public health researchers have documented links between ecological disruption and spikes in rodent-borne illness for years. Hantavirus belongs squarely within that larger story.

COVID-19 should have transformed the world's approach to zoonotic disease surveillance. Instead, many health systems continue operating with limited laboratory capacity and weak early-warning infrastructure. Hantavirus exposes those shortcomings clearly.

Physicians frequently miss early diagnosis because symptoms resemble influenza, dengue, or common respiratory infections. Specialized molecular or serological testing often remains unavailable outside major medical centers. Delayed recognition

slows treatment and complicates outbreak response.

Treatment options also remain limited. Medicine currently lacks a universally approved antiviral drug that directly targets hantavirus infection. Survival often depends on rapid supportive care, careful oxygen management, fluid monitoring, and advanced intensive care support. Early hospitalization substantially improves outcomes, though many patients reach hospitals after severe lung injury has already developed.

Research efforts continue pushing forward. Experimental vaccines in parts of Asia have produced encouraging findings, especially against strains linked to renal disease. Scientists also study the immune response carefully because some patients develop catastrophic inflammation while others experience milder illness.

Genomic surveillance now allows researchers to track viral evolution with greater precision than ever before.

Public health measures remain straightforward and effective. Ventilating enclosed spaces before cleaning reduces exposure risk. Disinfectants work better than dry sweeping, which sends contaminated particles into the air. Protective gloves and masks help shield people cleaning barns, sheds, or abandoned structures. Strong pest control, safe food storage, and proper waste disposal reduce opportunities for rodent infestation.

Those recommendations sound simple because prevention usually begins long before a hospital admission.

Hantavirus ultimately reveals something larger than one dangerous virus.

Modern civilization continues altering ecosystems at extraordinary speed while public health systems struggle to keep pace. International travel compresses distance between outbreaks and major population centers. Expanding cities push deeper into wildlife habitats. Extreme weather events destabilize environments that once kept animal reservoirs separate from human life.

A virus does not need worldwide transmission to expose global vulnerability. Hantavirus already demonstrates how quickly environmental disruption, delayed diagnosis, and weak preparedness can converge into deadly consequences.

Scientists understand that reality clearly. Governments should act with the same seriousness.

The author is a physician and Global Public Health Fellow. He can be reached at [artasadukitoo@gmail.com](mailto:artasadukitoo@gmail.com).

### KO VIEW

## Valley Venture Gap

Government conferences in Kashmir now speak the language of innovation with remarkable enthusiasm.

Startup festivals fill hotel halls in Srinagar. Officials celebrate incubation centres, investment summits, and entrepreneurship drives with polished presentations and ambitious slogans. Social media pages showcase smiling founders beside banners carrying words like disruption and innovation. A modern economy appears close at hand.

Reality tells a different story.

Most young entrepreneurs in Kashmir spend less time building companies and more time wrestling with weak infrastructure, shrinking markets, expensive logistics, and thin financial support. Public discourse celebrates startups as symbols of progress, while the ecosystem beneath them struggles to stand upright.

A software founder in Srinagar competes with firms based in Bengaluru or Gurgaon while dealing with unreliable business networks and limited investor access. An artisan trying to sell products online faces steep shipping costs that eat into already narrow margins. A small food venture survives one tourist season and waits anxiously for the next. Business plans often begin with excitement and end with exhaustion.

Kashmir's startup discussion depends heavily on symbolism. Conferences produce headlines, competitions distribute certificates, and influencers upload motivational clips beside decorated stages.

Serious economic systems need something much larger.

Strong internet infrastructure, dependable banking support, legal clarity, affordable workspaces, and access to wider national markets determine whether businesses survive beyond their first year.

Several young founders already understand this gap intimately. Many operate through personal savings because institutional funding remains scarce. Banks continue to favour conventional lending patterns that suit established businesses rather than first-generation entrepreneurs. Private investors maintain distance because Kashmir lacks a deep startup network capable of generating long-term confidence.

Geography adds another burden, as transport delays increase costs for local manufacturers and online sellers. Harsh winters slow physical movement and disrupt supply chains. Smaller districts remain disconnected from mentorship networks and business opportunities concentrated in Srinagar. Talent exists in every corner of the valley, though opportunity gathers inside a few urban pockets.

Education systems also contribute to the problem. Colleges produce graduates trained to chase government employment while entrepreneurship receives ceremonial encouragement. Students rarely encounter practical business training, market research skills, or financial literacy inside classrooms. Ambition grows rapidly through social media exposure, though institutional preparation remains painfully limited.

Tourism dominates nearly every economic engagement in Kashmir. Cafes, guest houses, travel services, and photography ventures continue multiplying because tourism appears accessible and familiar. A healthy economy requires greater diversity.

Technology services, local manufacturing, food processing, renewable energy, and agricultural innovation deserve equal attention and serious investment.

Kashmir possesses intelligence, creativity, and extraordinary human capital. Young people continue building businesses despite uncertainty because they believe economic independence can change their future.

Public policy now needs depth, consistency, and practical thinking instead of celebratory optics.

A startup ecosystem grows through patient institution-building, reliable infrastructure, and sustained financial trust.

Kashmir needs that foundation far more than another conference backdrop filled with ambitious slogans.

### CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

## Market Skills

The digital economy rewards young workers who can create, communicate, and adapt quickly.

Irshad Mushtaq

Kashmir's young people hear one message too often: wait a little longer, for recruitment, exams, and another government list.

That message belongs to another era. The modern economy moves faster than public systems, and young people who spend years waiting fall behind people who spend months learning.

Artificial intelligence, remote work, digital payments, online services, and global freelancing have already changed the meaning of employment. Degrees still matter, though markets now reward people who learn quickly, solve problems, communicate well, and use digital tools with confidence.

Policy makers in Kashmir still speak mainly through the language of vacancies. A stronger approach would focus on capability. India's policy discourse already centers on AI readiness, digital skilling, and platform-based employment. Kashmir needs the same shift immediately.

Successful states built stronger digital ecosystems, better internet access, and wider skill training. Those investments connected young people to markets instead of trapping them inside one narrow career dream. Reports from NITI Aayog and the OECD also point toward the same conclusion: digital and platform work now create real employment at scale.

AI also deserves a more intelligent public discussion. Fear dominates many talks, even though AI rewards workers who know how to use it well. A student who learns AI-assisted research, presentation design, video editing, spreadsheet work, social media management, and customer communication already enters the market with usable economic value.

Social media management alone has become serious work for restaurants, clinics, schools, boutiques, travel operators, and local businesses. Remote work has also changed geography itself. A skilled young person in Srinagar can now work with clients in Delhi, Dubai, or London from a laptop at home.

Kashmir's future depends on one cultural change above all else: skills first. Skill creates income, income builds savings, and savings create stability.

A generation trained for the digital economy will spend less time waiting and far more time building.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial educator.

### Letter to Editor

## NEET-UG 2026 Has Become a National Test of Trust

India speaks constantly about its youth as the country's greatest strength. Political speeches celebrate students as future doctors, scientists, and innovators who will drive national progress. That vision suffered serious damage after the cancellation of NEET-UG 2026, one of the country's most important competitive examinations.

More than 22 lakh students appeared for the exam on May 3. Days later, allegations of a paper leak forced the National Testing Agency to cancel the test and announce a fresh examination. Reports revealed that question papers circulated through WhatsApp and Telegram groups before the exam. Rajasthan's Special Operations Group detained several suspects, while the investigation soon moved to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Public debate has focused heavily on corruption and criminal networks. Students and parents understand the larger tragedy. NEET preparation consumes years of a young person's life. Teenagers begin preparing during Class 11 and spend entire school years buried under coaching classes, mock tests, and impossible expectations. Cities such as Kota, Delhi, Hyderabad, Patna, and Srinagar

have become crowded centers of examination culture where students build their lives around one test.

Parents make enormous sacrifices as well. Families spend lakhs on tuition fees, hostels, travel, and study material. Many take loans because they believe education remains the strongest path toward stability and opportunity. Their faith deserves honesty from institutions trusted with such enormous responsibility.

Preparation for NEET involves far more than academic study. Students live under constant psychological pressure while managing fear, exhaustion, and isolation. Many spend twelve to sixteen hours daily solving papers and memorizing concepts while postponing friendships, celebrations, and ordinary teenage experiences. They accept that burden because they believe hard work will receive fair treatment.

That belief suffers deep damage when leaked papers enter the system before the examination even begins.

Thousands of students now face another exhausting cycle of preparation before the re-exam. Many fear losing concentration and confidence after months of intense effort. Parents fear

another season of stress that has already consumed an entire year. Emotional exhaustion rarely appears in official press conferences, though students carry it into classrooms, homes, and examination halls every day.

NEET-UG 2026 also exposes a wider crisis within India's examination structure. Competitive exams such as CUET, SSC, CTET, and railway recruitment tests have faced controversies involving leaks, technical failures, cheating allegations, and poor administration. These incidents point toward institutional weakness that extends far beyond one examination.

Commercial coaching centers now operate as massive industries built around desperation and competition. Criminal rackets exploit that pressure and profit directly from students' ambitions. Honest candidates suffer while corruption circulates through encrypted groups and backdoor networks.

India's single-exam culture intensifies the damage further. One examination often determines the direction of an entire career in a country filled with limited seats and enormous competition. Several hours inside an examination hall should never hold such overwhelming

power over a student's future.

Repeated failures create something even more dangerous than disappointment. They create distrust, and students begin questioning whether merit still matters when corruption enters the process so easily. A country that weakens faith in education weakens faith in fairness itself.

Authorities now face a serious test of credibility. Investigators must prosecute everyone connected to the leak network. Examination systems require stronger security, transparent monitoring, and strict accountability. Policymakers must also treat student mental health as a central public concern rather than a neglected side issue.

Students are human beings with ambitions, emotional limits, and immense pressure resting on their shoulders. India's future depends on whether their honesty and hard work still hold value inside the classroom and the examination hall.

Sincerely,

Mohammad Arfat Wani  
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# Plastic on the Dastarkhwan

Kashmiri kitchens once guarded public health. Ultra-processed food now drives a metabolic crisis through the valley.



Dr. Waseem Ahmad

Kashmir once understood food as medicine long before nutrition science entered medical journals.

A traditional Kashmiri kitchen built health through habit, season, and memory. Families cooked haakh fresh from nearby fields, dried vegetables for winter months, fermented pickles in clay jars, and simmered pulses over slow fires that filled homes with warmth.

Those meals emerged from physical labour, local soil, and practical knowledge passed through generations.

That system sustained metabolic health in a harsh climate that demanded stamina and endurance. Villages depended on foods that strengthened the body through winter and supported long days in orchards, paddy fields, and mountain terrain.

Kashmiri cuisine grew through necessity, though it carried remarkable nutritional intelligence within it.

Today, that inheritance faces destruction from an industry that sells convenience as progress.

Plastic wrappers now crowd the Kashmiri dastarkhwan. Supermarket shelves in Srinagar and Anantnag display instant noodles, processed meats, frozen snacks, sugary drinks, and brightly packaged chips that dominate household spending.

Kitchens that once relied on fresh produce and whole grains now depend heavily on ready-to-cook mixes and industrial snacks engineered for speed and repetition.

This shift moved rapidly through

the valley during the last three decades. Processed food spending has surged while household investment in vegetables, fruits, and pulses has weakened. Aggressive advertising campaigns drove this transformation with remarkable precision.

Food corporations linked packaged snacks to status, freedom, and urban sophistication. Teenagers now view branded drinks and imported junk food as symbols of modern life rather than occasional indulgences.

That marketing strategy succeeds because ultra-processed foods target biology as much as desire.

These products contain little resemblance to actual food. Manufacturers build them from refined starches, processed fats, chemical flavouring agents, emulsifiers, added sugars, and synthetic additives designed to intensify craving.

Scientists increasingly describe ultra-processed foods as industrial formulations rather than meals. Every ingredient serves a commercial purpose tied to shelf life, hyper-palatability, and repeat consumption.

Packaging deepens the deception. Labels filled with words like "multigrain," "baked," and "zero cholesterol" create a false impression of wellness. Consumers scanning supermarket aisles assume these products support healthy living. Most contain excessive sodium, refined carbohydrates, and inflammatory fats that gradually damage metabolic function.

Kashmiris face this assault with a particular biological vulnerability.

South Asians possess a well-documented tendency toward visceral fat accumulation and insulin resistance even at relatively low body weight. Doctors often describe this as the Asian Phenotype. A slim appearance therefore provides little protection against metabolic disease. Fat builds silently around internal organs while blood sugar regulation steadily deteriorates.

Ultra-processed food accelerates this process dramatically.

Hospitals throughout Kashmir now report growing numbers of younger patients with fatty liver disease, metabolic syndrome, hypertension, and early diabetes. Cases once asso-



**HOSPITALS THROUGHOUT KASHMIR NOW REPORT GROWING NUMBERS OF YOUNGER PATIENTS WITH FATTY LIVER DISEASE, METABOLIC SYNDROME, HYPERTENSION, AND EARLY DIABETES. Cases once associated with middle age increasingly appear among people in their twenties and thirties. Kidney disorders linked to processed fats and excessive sugar consumption have also climbed sharply.**

ciated with middle age increasingly appear among people in their twenties and thirties. Kidney disorders linked to processed fats and excessive sugar consumption have also climbed sharply.

Physicians throughout the valley witness the same trend every day: damaged dieters producing damaged bodies at younger ages.

Children face the gravest consequences because exposure now begins early.

Sugary drinks and bakery products

dominate school canteens, birthday parties, and neighbourhood shops. Dentists increasingly treat severe tooth decay among children who consume sweetened beverages daily. Pediatricians encounter rising signs of insulin resistance long before adulthood begins. Digital marketing intensifies the crisis by targeting adolescents through gaming apps, influencers, and social media campaigns that glamorize junk food consumption.

Mental health specialists also re-

port troubling connections between highly processed diets and rising anxiety, poor concentration, and cognitive decline among young people. Food choices influence brain chemistry as directly as they influence waistlines. A generation raised on sugar spikes and chemical additives enters adulthood with metabolic systems under enormous strain.

Urban working families face another trap disguised as efficiency.

Long work hours and changing lifestyles push many households toward instant meals and food delivery applications. Quick consumption replaces communal cooking. Dining tables once centered on conversation, preparation, and family participation now revolve around screens and packaged containers. A traditional meal needed time and cooperation. Ultra-processed food thrives through isolation and speed.

That cultural loss matters deeply. Kashmiri cuisine preserved knowledge about agriculture, weather, preservation, and nutrition through ordinary domestic routines. Grandmothers taught children how to dry vegetables for winter, prepare traditional breads, ferment pickles, and balance seasonal ingredients.

Each recipe connected families to land and climate. Packaged food severs that relationship completely.

Children raised on factory-made meals grow distant from farming traditions and disconnected from local ingredients.

Agriculture suffers alongside public health. Industrial food production depends heavily on refined wheat, sugar, and palm oil monocultures that enrich large corporations while sidelining local grains and diverse crops.

Traditional staples such as ragi, bajra, and jowar once supported ecological balance and dietary diversity. Current food systems reward uniformity instead of nourishment.

Kashmir therefore confronts more than a nutrition problem. The valley faces a public health emergency tied directly to culture, economics, and identity.

Diabetes projections for the coming decade paint a grim picture for

family finances and healthcare systems already under pressure.

Chronic illness drains household savings, weakens productivity, and places lifelong burdens on younger generations. Public institutions cannot solve this crisis through medical treatment alone. Prevention must become central policy.

Front-of-pack warning labels should identify products high in sugar, sodium, and harmful fats with clear visual markers consumers immediately understand. Sugary beverages deserve higher taxation similar to tobacco control strategies that successfully reduced smoking rates in many countries. Advertising directed at children needs strict oversight, especially through digital platforms designed to influence young consumers continuously.

Schools should teach nutrition as a practical life skill rather than a decorative chapter in textbooks. Community cooking programs, local food festivals, and school gardens can reconnect younger Kashmiris with traditional ingredients and culinary knowledge rooted in the valley's own history.

Kashmir stands at a decisive moment. Every household now chooses between two futures. One leads toward chronic disease, mounting medical costs, and cultural amnesia packaged in bright colours and plastic foil. The other restores value to food that nourishes the body while sustaining memory, land, and community.

The Kashmiri dastarkhwan once defended public health with remarkable wisdom. That wisdom still exists in village kitchens, family recipes, and seasonal traditions waiting to regain their place at the center of daily life.

The valley's fate may depend on whether Kashmir chooses the packet or the hearth.

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# Dal Lake's Last Inheritors

Kashmir's famed houseboats face mounting debt, ecological decline and a younger generation seeking lives beyond the lake.



Mohammad Anamul Haque Ahangar

A cold mist drifted over Dal Lake one November afternoon as an elderly couple walked slowly along Srinagar's boulevard carrying the last belongings rescued from their sinking houseboat.

The woman gripped a plastic bag holding a samovar and a folded prayer mat. Water dripped from the hem of the man's wool pheran. Several meters behind them, their wooden houseboat leaned heavily into the lake, its carved balcony submerged beneath dark green water.

"Son, can you make a phone call on this number?" the man asked, handing over a creased piece of paper.

His voice weakened during the call. "Please tell our son the boat has failed," he said.

The talk ended within moments. The couple settled near the embankment and stared toward the collapsing structure while tourists passed nearby in brightly painted shikaras.

Scenes like this have become increasingly common along Dal Lake, Nigeen Lake and parts of the Jhelum River, where Kashmir's houseboat industry faces mounting pressure from ecological decline, rising maintenance costs, changing tourism patterns and a growing generational divide.

Owners, environmental researchers

and tourism officials describe a slow deterioration that has gathered force over decades.

Kashmir's houseboats once stood at the center of the valley's tourism identity. Travellers from Europe and North America spent weeks living on the lakes during the 1970s and 1980s. Guidebooks celebrated hand-carved cedar interiors, floating flower markets and evening gatherings on wooden decks overlooking the water.

Several visitors returned year after year, forming long relationships with the families who operated the boats.

Houseboat owners estimate that Kashmir had between 1,500 and 2,000 operational boats during that period. Figures from the Jammu and Kashmir Houseboat Owners Association place the current number near 750.

Several stretches of the Jhelum River reveal an even sharper decline. More than 200 houseboats once operated there. Roughly 60 to 70 remain today.

Tschoont Koul, a historic cluster of houseboats in Srinagar, shows the scale of the contraction clearly. Empty moorings line large sections of the waterway where brightly painted vessels once stood side by side during peak tourism seasons.

Economic pressure sits at the center of the crisis. Owners estimate annual maintenance expenses between ₹5 lakh and ₹8 lakh for a single boat. Construction costs for a new houseboat exceed ₹3 crore. Winter occupancy often falls below 15 percent, leaving many operators dependent on a brief summer tourism window.

Physical decay appears everywhere on the lake. Wooden planks bend under years of water exposure. Moss spreads through aging cedar panels. Traditional wooden shingles have given way to tin-sheet roofing on several boats because owners struggle to afford extensive repairs.

Rising water levels have accelerated the deterioration, according to resi-



dents and environmental observers. Concrete structures and illegal construction around Dal Lake narrowed natural drainage channels over time, reducing the lake's capacity to absorb seasonal inflow.

Older boats remain partially submerged during wetter months, speeding up rot in century-old timber foundations.

"When I was a child, the water reached my waist," said Ghulam Mohammad, a longtime owner near Rainawari. "Today it reaches my chest. Every year brings more damage."

Environmental decline has altered daily life on the lake in profound ways.

Dal Lake functioned as a disposal channel for untreated sewage from nearby settlements for decades, damaging water quality and accelerating weed growth. Government agencies introduced sewage treatment systems in recent years, and officials say nearly 95 percent of houseboats now connect to shore-based treatment infrastructure.

Lake conditions continue to worsen during warmer months. Large sections of Dal Lake turned visibly green

earlier this year because of algal blooms linked to rising temperatures and changing water conditions. Environmental researchers point toward climate change, declining snowmelt and warmer summers as major contributors to the lake's growing ecological stress.

"The water looks cleaner in some places," one owner said while clearing weeds beside his boat. "Warmer temperatures bring faster weed growth, and the fish keep disappearing."

Older residents speak about the transformation with visible sadness. Families once swam freely in the lake and relied on fishing for daily income. Several residents now avoid direct contact with the water because of pollution and weed accumulation.

Tourism trends have also shifted sharply during recent years. Younger travellers increasingly seek heated rooms, uninterrupted internet access and curated travel experiences suited to social media culture. Resorts in Gulmarg and Pahalgam now attract much of that demand.

Several houseboat owners upgraded interiors with modern bathrooms,

air-conditioning systems and internet connectivity. Many operators lacked the financial resources required for extensive renovations. Regulatory restrictions surrounding construction and restoration added another layer of uncertainty.

"We see hotels filling quickly during tourist season," said Yousuf Ahmad, whose family has operated a houseboat for three generations. "Several boats here remain empty for weeks."

Security incidents continue to hit Kashmir's tourism economy with exceptional speed. The deadly April 2025 attack in Pahalgam triggered cancellations throughout the valley within days. Hotel operators, taxi drivers, houseboat owners and daily-wage labourers all faced immediate losses during what many expected would become a profitable tourism season.

Several owners had borrowed heavily to renovate boats before spring arrivals began. Empty bookings and rising debt followed soon afterward.

"One incident changes the entire season," said a younger owner near Nigeen Lake. "Visitors cancel immediately because they see Kashmir as one destination."

A deeper rupture now runs through many houseboat families themselves.

Younger Kashmiris increasingly seek careers in Delhi, Bengaluru and Dubai rather than continue work on the lake. Salaried employment gives predictable income and long-term financial stability that tourism rarely provides. Elderly owners often remain alone aboard boats built by fathers and grandfathers while younger relatives establish lives elsewhere.

Repair work gets postponed repeatedly because timber costs continue to climb. Restrictions on new construction have also limited expansion in the name of environmental protection. Owners describe mounting uncertainty surrounding permits, restoration work and future investment.

Several operators spoke openly about the fate awaiting abandoned boats. Scrap dealers already dismantle damaged vessels for timber and metal. Entire sections of Srinagar's waterways could lose their floating communities within the next decade if present conditions continue.

Government officials and tourism groups have proposed several measures aimed at slowing the decline.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah discussed loan deferrals and financial assistance for tourism sectors affected after the Pahalgam attack. Industry groups also seek transparent digital systems for permits and registration renewals because current procedures involve lengthy delays and rising unofficial expenses.

Cultural advocates increasingly argue that Kashmir's houseboats deserve recognition as a form of intangible heritage. Tourism planners and younger entrepreneurs have also begun discussing broader commercial possibilities tied to the lakes. Floating cafés, bookstores, cultural spaces and heritage experiences could create new revenue streams while attracting younger visitors.

Several operators have already started experimenting with those ideas. Refurbished boats now host private dinners, small art exhibitions and cultural gatherings during peak tourism months.

Kashmir's houseboats survived floods, political upheaval and economic downturns for more than a century. Rising costs, warming waters and a fading inheritance now place that floating civilization at one of the most consequential moments in its history.

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## J&K Govt Orders Major Reshuffle In Health Deptt, 22 Doctors Transferred

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Health and Medical Education Department on Monday ordered a major reshuffle in the health sector by transferring and posting 22 doctors across various districts and health institutions in the Union Territory.

According to Government Order No. 411-JK(HME) of 2026 dated May 12, the transfers have been made "in the interest of administration and patient care" with immediate effect.

Among the key transfers, Dr. Sanjay Arora has been posted as I/C State Malariologist, while Dr. Rashmi Sharma has been assigned as I/C Epidemiologist. Dr. Sunil Kailu and Dr. Bashir Ahmad Malik have been posted as I/C Assistant Directors for Family Welfare, MCH & Immunization in Jammu and Kashmir divisions respectively.

Dr. Vinod Sharma has been posted as I/C CMO Doda, while

Dr. Sanjay Kumar Bhat has been assigned the charge of I/C CMO Kishtwar. Dr. Bhajan Kour has been transferred as I/C CMO Bandipora and Dr. Monika Kotwal as I/C Medical Superintendent, Government Hospital Sarwal Jammu.

The order further states that several doctors have been appointed as Medical Superintendents and Block Medical Officers in districts including Shopian, Reasi, Pattan, Kupwara, Beerwah, Khansahib, Bijbehara, Mendhar and Bishnah.

The government clarified that these assignments are temporary and subject to the outcome of any pending court cases. All transferred doctors have been deemed relieved from their previous postings and directed to immediately join their new places of posting.

The order was issued by Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Health and Medical Education Department, M. Raju (IAS).

## Will Ban Alcohol If Centre Compensates Revenue Losses: Dr Farooq

KO WEB DESK

Srinagar: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday said the Jammu and Kashmir government would not waste any time in banning alcohol if the Centre compensates the Union Territory for the revenue losses such a move would cause.

Speaking to reporters, Abdullah said the administration was open to considering a ban but financial implications remained a major concern.

"The government will not waste any time in banning alcohol if the Centre provides some relief to Jammu and Kashmir for the revenue losses that will be incurred due to such a step," he said.

The former chief minister was responding to questions regarding the Peoples Democratic Party's demand



for a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah criticised the PDP over the issue, accusing the party of raising the demand only for political reasons.

"I want to ask them why they were quiet when the liquor shops were being opened. We know who is pulling their strings," he said without naming any particular party or leader.

During the interaction, the NC president also expressed

concern over the economic situation in the country amid the ongoing Iran-US tensions.

"A crisis is coming upon us, fuel crisis, gas crisis. We are heading towards destruction," he said.

Referring to discussions around online classes to save fuel, Abdullah said access to digital infrastructure remained unequal.

"However, everyone does not have the online facility. We will have to think and do something about it because education is very important," he said.

Calling the economic situation worrying, Abdullah said prolonged conflict in West Asia could have serious consequences for India.

"Yes, the economy is definitely finished. If this Iran-US conflict does not end soon, God knows what is in fate for us," he added.

## QR Code Verification Introduced For Census 2027 Enumerators Amid Fraud Concerns

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Amid a rise in cyber fraud cases involving impersonation and fake government officials, authorities have implemented a QR code-based verification mechanism for enumerators and supervisors visiting households for Census 2027 in the capital.

This move aims to make the door-to-door enumeration in Municipal Corporation of Delhi areas, beginning May 16, more secure and effective.

Officials of the Office of the Registrar General and Census told PTI that all enumerators and supervisors (E&S) deployed for the exercise will carry an appointment letter and an identity card issued by the charge officer. Both documents will have embedded QR codes that residents can scan to verify their authenticity.

"If there is any doubt or suspicion, household members can verify the visiting personnel by checking their appointment letter and identity card. They can also scan the QR code printed on these documents to confirm authenticity," officials said.

The safeguard comes when several cyber fraud cases have surfaced across the country.

Fraudsters pose as law enforcement or government officials to dupe people using fake documents, impersonation and digital verification requests.

Officials said recent "digital arrest" scams and fake census-related messages circulated online have heightened concerns over impersonation-based fraud.

Officials reported that

under the ongoing self-enumeration exercise, 93,521 self-enumerations were recorded on Monday, including 77,372 completed cases and 16,149 initiated cases, resulting in an overall completion rate of 82.73 per cent. Officials said most entries were registered by residents of the North East, South West, and North West Delhi districts.

According to officials, if a household cannot geo-tag its location with exact precision, it may tag a nearby location instead. In such cases, the enumerator will download the map of the concerned HLB (House listing and Housing Phase) and all self-enumeration IDs linked to that block for verification during field visits.

During door-to-door House Listing Operations (HLO), enumerators will ask households to provide their self-enumeration IDs and match them with the tagged households in the HLB.

If the self-enumeration ID does not correspond to any listed house or building in the block, the enumerator will collect the household details afresh. To strengthen oversight, one supervisor will monitor the HLO for every six HLBs.

According to officials, the layered verification system is expected to make the census process smoother and more reliable, while helping households navigate the exercise with greater confidence when concerns over digital fraud remain high.

Officials said the QR-based verification system has been designed to reassure households and build public confidence in the enumeration process.

## Seminary Fires Across Kashmir Trigger Calls For Fire Safety Audit

Agencies

Srinagar: A series of fire incidents reported at Darul Uloom and religious seminaries across Kashmir over the recent past and present has triggered growing concern over fire safety preparedness, infrastructure vulnerability and the absence of emergency response mechanisms in many residential institutions housing students.

The concern deepened this week after a midnight fire at

Faizan Baba Hyder Rishi Darul Uloom near Old Mattan Adda in south Kashmir's Anantnag district left a 12-year-old student dead and three others injured.

Officials identified the deceased as Bilal Ahmad, son of Mohammad Akbar, a resident of Wadwan. The fire broke out while dozens of students were present inside the seminary building during the night, leading to panic and chaos as flames engulfed the upper portion of the structure.

The tragedy has once again shifted public attention toward a pattern of recurring fire incidents involving seminaries across multiple districts of Kashmir, many of which function in aging structures with wooden interiors, congested dormitories and limited fire-fighting infrastructure.

In Srinagar, a massive blaze damaged a Darul Uloom in the Hyderpora area recently, prompting a large-scale response from firefighters,

police and local residents who prevented the flames from spreading to nearby residential houses.

Another fire incident was reported at Darul Uloom Imdadiya in Naik Bagh Nowgam area of Srinagar, where significant damage was caused to the seminary building.

In Noorbagh area of Srinagar, a separate overnight blaze gutted another Darul Uloom, damaging rooms and property stored inside the institution.

South Kashmir has witnessed multiple such incidents. In Tral area of Pulwama district, Shah-i-Hamdan Darul Uloom was gutted in a fire incident, with preliminary reports attributing the blaze to a possible short circuit.

Another seminary building in Parrypora area of Pulwama district sustained damage after a fire broke out inside the premises before being brought under control by Fire and Emergency Services personnel.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Centre Bets Big

to simplify procedures, strengthen transparency and improve ease of doing business in the mining sector.

Highlighting national performance, he said India recorded a major jump in mineral block auctions during 2025-26.

"India achieved a record 212 mineral blocks auctioned during 2025-26, compared to around 100 blocks annually in earlier years," he said.

He also said operationalisation of mines has improved significantly in recent years.

"From 2015 to 2024, only 58 mineral blocks became operational in ten years. But in 2025-26 alone, 36 blocks were operationalised in a year," he said.

Goyal said the mining sector is also witnessing a shift towards greenfield projects.

"Out of the earlier 58 operationalised blocks, only 20 were greenfield mining projects. But out of the 36 operationalised this year, 28 are greenfield blocks," he said.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

#### Will Chase Every

have taught communities to vaccinate against bacteria or viruses, we will partner with religious leaders and social groups to create Community Immunization initiative against drugs in 5-10 high-risk hotspot areas per district," he said.

He urged schools, mosques, temples, gurdwaras and NGOs to dedicate one hour every week for awareness activities under the initiative.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

#### 'Border Villages'

Uri sector, reviewed ongoing schemes and inaugurated several development projects under the Centre's Vibrant Villages Programme.

Calling border residents partners in nation-building, Sinha said farmers, youth and women living in frontier areas shoulder an "extraordinary responsibility" in serving the country.

"It is the commitment of the Government of India to ensure that border villages become symbols of inclusive development," he said.

Under the Vibrant Villages Programme, the Government of India has launched a structured initiative aimed at inclusive development in selected border villages, focusing on road connectivity, electrification, telecom access and television connectivity.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

#### NRPC Pulls Up

dues within 10 days of issuance of the weekly energy account by the NRPC Secretariat.

"In this regard, it is submitted that J&K has not been making regular payments of Distribution Charges and Reactive Energy Charges in accordance with the Deviation Settlement Mechanism (DSM) Regulations," the NRPC observed.

The remarks come even as officials from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh informed the committee that the Union Territory is unlikely to face any power shortage during the summer months due to increased hydel power generation and comparatively lower demand.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

#### Regularization Outside

negative equality. Merely because some benefit may have been extended in favour of

another set of employees, the same by itself does not confer an enforceable right upon the petitioners to claim identical relief contrary to the governing statutory framework," the court said.

The petitioners claimed that they had been working as seasonal labourers since 1998 and were similarly situated to four persons, who were brought within the cadre of permanent casual labourers through an order issued in 2014. They argued that denial of the same treatment violated Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

#### Hailstorm Ravages

damage, locals said. Farmers said large hailstones lashed orchards during the afternoon, damaging apple blossoms and tender fruit at a critical stage of growth.

"This is the most sensitive time for apple growers. The blossoms were healthy, but the hailstorm damaged a large portion of the crop within minutes," said Ghulam Mohammad Dar, an orchardist.

Several videos from affected areas showed orchards blanketed in hailstones while strong winds and heavy rain battered trees and standing crops.

Growers said they had already been struggling with erratic weather conditions over the past few years and feared that repeated climate-related disruptions were making farming increasingly uncertain.

"We spend lakhs every year on pesticides, labour and maintenance. If the weather continues like this, it will become impossible for small farmers to survive," said Fayaz Ahmad, a grower from Baramulla.

In Kupwara district, vegetable growers also reported extensive damage to their crops due to heavy rain and hail.

"The vegetable fields were badly hit. Waterlogging and hail damaged the crops, and we fear major financial losses," said Abdul Rashid, a farmer from the district.

Residents in affected areas urged the administration to immediately conduct damage assessment surveys and provide compensation to affected growers.

"We request the government to send teams for damage assessment. Farmers are already under financial stress, and such losses cannot be borne without support," a group of orchardists from Shopian said.

Officials said reports regarding the extent of damage were being collected from different districts.

Kashmir's horticulture sector forms a major part of the Valley's economy and supports the livelihood of lakhs of families, particularly in rural areas where apple cultivation remains the primary source of income.

However, apple farming in the region has repeatedly suffered setbacks in recent years due to unseasonal weather events, including hailstorms, heavy rainfall and untimely snowfall.

#### MeT Warns Of

isolated places.

According to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, generally cloudy weather accompanied by intermittent rain and thundershowers was witnessed across several areas of both Kashmir and Jammu divisions during the day.

Officials said that a few places are likely to witness hailstorms and thundershowers along with gusty winds reaching speeds of 50 to 60

kilometres per hour.

In view of the weather conditions, authorities have advised people to suspend boating and shikara rides during afternoon and late afternoon hours due to the possibility of strong winds and thundershowers.

Farmers have also been advised to halt farm operations till May 13 as a precautionary measure.

The MeT department said the weather is expected to remain partly to generally cloudy with brief spells of rain and thundershowers from May 13 to May 17. Scattered areas may receive light rain or thundershowers on May 18, while similar partly cloudy conditions are likely to continue till May 21.

Meanwhile, several parts of Jammu and Kashmir recorded rainfall and below-normal temperatures during the past 24 hours.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 24.4 degrees Celsius, slightly above normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 12.5 degrees Celsius. The city received 1.9 mm rainfall during the period.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum temperature of 8.4 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg settled at 4.8 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 33 degrees Celsius, over four degrees below normal, while the minimum settled at 21.9 degrees Celsius.

Among rainfall figures, Batote received 10.8 mm rainfall while Baderwah recorded 13.8 mm during the last 24 hours, according to MeT data.

The weather office urged people, especially those living in vulnerable areas, to remain cautious during thundershowers and avoid unnecessary movement during periods of intense weather activity.

#### HC Upholds PSA

through Facebook and WhatsApp. The dossier also referred to the February 17, 2021 attack on Krishna Dhaba owner Akash Mehra in Srinagar. Mehra was shot by militants and later succumbed to injuries. The case was registered under FIR No. 11/2021 at Police Station Ram Munshi Bagh under provisions of the IPC, Arms Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The court observed that although the petitioner was a juvenile at the time of the alleged offence, the accusations against him were serious in nature and linked to militancy activities.

"The age of the petitioner which is shown to be 18 years cannot count as an element of leniency to weigh in favour of the petitioner when the alleged state of activities of the petitioner are potential risk to the security of UT of JK," the court observed.

Rejecting the challenge to the detention, Justice Bharti held that the grounds for preventive detention could not be faulted in view of the seriousness of the allegations.

"This Court is convinced that the basis for ordering the preventive detention of the petitioner cannot be faulted with," the judgment stated while dismissing the petition as meritless.

The petitioner had argued that the detention was based only on an old FIR registered in 2021 and that there was no fresh material justifying preventive detention in 2025.

It was also contended that all relevant documents had not been supplied to him, thereby affecting his constitutional right to make an effective representation against the detention order.

The petitioner had additionally sought

compensation of Rs 2 lakh for alleged illegal detention.

However, the court noted that the petitioner had failed to deny his alleged association with militants named in the dossier, including Riyaz Ahmad Dar alias Khalid alias Sheeraz and Shakeel Ahmad alias Gazi.

The judgment also referred to an earlier order passed by the Fast Track Court for PCO cases in Srinagar while granting him bail under the Juvenile Justice Act in June 2024.

That order had described the Krishna Dhaba incident as a "terror attack" allegedly carried out as part of a conspiracy involving Pakistan-based handlers and local associates.

Subsequently, the High Court dismissed the habeas corpus petition and upheld the continued detention of the petitioner under the PSA.

#### NEET-UG 2026

clarified that the registration data and candidature from the May 2026 cycle will be carried forward to the reconducted examination.

Will candidates have to pay the examination fee again?

No additional examination fee will be charged. The NTA has also said that fees already paid by students will be refunded.

Will fresh admit cards be issued? Yes. The NTA has said the "re-issued admit-card schedule" will be communicated through official channels.

Will students get the same examination centres?

The NTA has said the examination centres opted for in the May 2026 cycle will be carried forward to the reconducted examination. However, the agency has not yet clarified whether there could be any changes in centre allotment.

Will the examination be conducted again using external agencies?

The NTA has said the examination will be reconducted using its "internal resources".

What has the government decided?

The government has decided to refer the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a comprehensive inquiry.

"NTA will extend full cooperation to the Bureau and will provide all materials, records, and assistance the inquiry requires," the agency said.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

#### Leading American

what Kagan described as growing limits to American military power and credibility.

"Far from demonstrating American prowess," Kagan wrote, the conflict had revealed "an America that is unreliable and incapable of finishing what it started."

While acknowledging previous US military failures in Vietnam and Afghanistan, Kagan argued that the Iran conflict represented a fundamentally different kind of geopolitical setback.

"The defeats in Vietnam and Afghanistan were costly but did not do lasting damage to America's overall position in the world," he wrote. "Defeat in the present confrontation with Iran will be of an entirely different character."

The comments have drawn significant attention in Washington because of Kagan's longstanding role within the US foreign policy establishment. A co-founder of the Project for the New American Century and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, Kagan was among the most prominent intellectual supporters of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and has spent decades advocating assertive US global

leadership backed by military force.

The article comes as ceasefire negotiations between Washington and Tehran remain stalled more than two months after war broke out following US and Israeli strikes launched on Feb. 28.

Iranian officials say the Strait of Hormuz remains effectively closed to what they describe as hostile shipping traffic, despite a fragile ceasefire brokered through regional mediation efforts led by Pakistan.

Roughly one-fifth of global oil and gas supplies normally transit through the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman.

In a new development, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy announced on Tuesday that Tehran had fundamentally redefined the operational boundaries of the Strait.

"In the past, the Strait of Hormuz was defined as a limited area around islands such as Hormuz and Hengam, but today this has changed," Rear Admiral Mohammad Akbarzadeh, head of the political department of the IRGC, was quoted as saying by Iranian media.

"What Iran considers the operational scope of the Strait of Hormuz has now been significantly expanded," he said, adding that the zone had grown "from a narrow corridor of 20 to 30 miles in the past to a vast strategic area spanning more than 200 to 300 miles — roughly 500 kilometres — stretching from Iran's Jask and Sirik to beyond Qeshm and the Greater Tunb Islands. This now forms a complete crescent."

"The Strait of Hormuz is no longer a limited passageway," he added. "It has evolved into a vast operational theatre."

The IRGC said Iran was closely monitoring all regional movements and would not tolerate "any kind of encroachment upon its waters and interests".

It has also warned that vessels operating outside routes designated by Iran could face a "decisive response", according to Iranian state-linked media.

At the heart of Kagan's analysis is the argument that Iran has succeeded in converting military pressure into long-term geopolitical leverage through its control over Hormuz.

"Iran will be able not only to demand tolls for passage but also to limit transit to those nations with which it has good relations," Kagan wrote, arguing that Tehran no longer had any incentive to return to the pre-war regional order.

"The United States will have proved itself a paper tiger, forcing the Gulf and other Arab states to accommodate Iran," he added.

Kagan also rejected suggestions that allied naval coalitions could restore freedom of navigation if Washington failed to do so itself.

"If the United States with its mighty Navy can't or won't open the strait, no coalition of forces with just a fraction of the Americans' capability will be able to, either," he wrote.

Some Iranian officials appear increasingly convinced that time favours Tehran as energy disruptions deepen and Western political pressure intensifies. At the same time, some US security officials continue arguing that additional military pressure could still force concessions from Iran.

Critics of further escalation warn that such assumptions mirror the strategic calculations that preceded the war itself.

Kagan argued that the consequences of the conflict extended far beyond the Gulf region and threatened broader confidence in American global power.

Full story on [Kashmirobservers.net](#)

# J&K Records Massive Utilisation of PM-JAY SEHAT Healthcare Services

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Tuesday chaired the Governing Council Meeting of the State Health Agency (SHA), during which a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) and AB PM-JAY SEHAT scheme across Jammu and Kashmir was undertaken.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Commissioner Secretary, Planning; Secretary, Information Technology; Director, SKIMS; Principal, Government Medical College, Srinagar/Jammu besides other concerned officers.

During the meeting, Chief Executive Officer, State Health Agency, Ananth Dwivedi, delivered a detailed presentation highlighting the achievements registered under the scheme, its financial performance during the



current policy period and the proposed modalities for ensuring its continued and sustainable implementation across the Union Territory in the months to come.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary observed that Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as one of the leading regions in extending universal healthcare coverage under the PM-JAY SEHAT scheme, significantly improving access to quality and

cashless healthcare services for the people.

He remarked that the scheme has enabled lakhs of beneficiaries, particularly from economically weaker and vulnerable sections of society, to avail specialized treatment free of cost in both public and empanelled private healthcare institutions, thereby providing substantial economic relief along with quality medical care.

Emphasizing the importance of

the scheme in protecting households against catastrophic healthcare expenditure, the Chief Secretary stressed the need for maintaining transparency, ensuring timely settlement of claims and strengthening monitoring mechanisms.

He called for sustained efforts to further reinforce public healthcare institutions, improve beneficiary outreach and ensure seamless delivery of healthcare services under the PM-JAY SEHAT

framework.

The presentation revealed that during the current Policy Period-8, spanning from April 17, 2025 to April 16, 2026, more than 4.08 lakh pre-authorizations were approved under the scheme involving a financial outgo of nearly Rs 775 Cr. It was informed that over 3.86 lakh claims were submitted under the programme, reflecting the extensive utilization of healthcare services by beneficiaries across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Governing Council was also apprised that public sector hospitals continue to play a dominant role in implementation of the scheme, accounting for a major share of treatments and financial transactions. It was added that more than Rs 515 Cr worth of pre-authorizations were approved in public hospitals during the ongoing policy period, demonstrating the growing capacity and strengthening of government healthcare institutions in delivering advanced treatment under the flagship health

## EOW Kashmir Registers 3 Cases against Job Fraudster

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir has registered three cases against a Kupwara man for allegedly duping several people on the pretext of providing government jobs, officials said on Monday.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a spokesperson said the Economic Offences Wing Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K has registered three separate cases against accused Abdul Majeed Mir S/o Abdul Rahim Mir R/o Lastiyal Kalaroo, Kupwara for allegedly cheating several persons on the pretext of providing government jobs in different departments and financial institutions.

He said preliminary investigations conducted by this investigation agency revealed that the accused had collected huge amounts of money from victims by

falsely assuring them of government employment.

"The accused had prepared and supplied fake and forged appointment orders purportedly issued by government agencies and J&K Bank in order to deceive the victims and gain their trust. The acts committed by the accused prima facie attract offences punishable under relevant sections of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), the erstwhile Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)," said the spokesperson.

The spokesperson said the accused Abdul Majeed Mir is a notorious offender against whom Crime Branch Kashmir has already challaned two cases in the past. The general public is advised to remain vigilant against economic fraudsters and report any such incidents directly to SSP EOW Kashmir (Crime Branch J&K) Abdul Waheed Shah.

## MLA Urges LG to Enhance Compensation for Pak Shelling Victims

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Stating that the border population had suffered heavily during the difficult periods, MLA Uri Sajad Shafi on Tuesday urged Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to enhance compensation for families whose houses were damaged in Pakistan shelling last year.

Addressing the Lieutenant Governor during his visit to Uranbua in Boniyar after a mega padyatra in Baramulla, MLA, as per KNO said at least 500 houses were damaged in Uri in Pakistan shelling, while over 100 structures were completely destroyed.

"Border villages have always suffered and last year's shelling from across LoC was one of the toughest periods wherein people faced a lot of hardships. The compensation given to those whose houses were damaged was very low. I urge you to look into it and enhance the compensation amount," the MLA told LG

Sinha. MLA Shafi also sought a special police recruitment drive for Uri, saying the youth of the border area have always served and sacrificed for the country and the region.

"This is a borderline area and special police recruitments were happening here earlier. I, on behalf of the people of Uri, urge for such a special recruitment drive again as the Home Department comes under you," he said.

He demanded ST2 status for the Uri sub division, citing its topography and ethnic characteristics. He referred to similar provisions extended to areas like Rajouri, Poonch and Tangdar.

Responding to the demand, the Lieutenant Governor said the proposal would be looked into.

Uri MLA also thanked the Lieutenant Governor for standing with the people of Uri during difficult times and prioritising the border area during challenges.

## 86% Qualify 11th Exams in Jammu Division

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) Tuesday announced annual regular results of 11th standard in summer zone areas of Jammu division with at least 86 percent qualifying the exams.

According to KNO, JKBOSE has informed that a total of 85.83 percent of students qualify the exams.

The board official also said that the pass percentage of girls is 89 percent and 83 percent among the male students.

It also said that 43,950 students appeared in the exams out of which 37,726 successfully qualified the exams.

Earlier on April-22, JKBOSE announced annual regular results of 12th standard in summer zone areas of Jammu division with at least 89 percent qualifying the exams. JKBOSE has informed that a total of 89.80 percent students qualify the exams.

It had also said that there has been a notable improvement in 12th class results in comparison pass percentage of previous year that stood at 75.95 percent.

## CAT Sets 8-Week Deadline In Forest Worker Regularization Case

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Srinagar Bench, has directed the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department to take a final decision within eight weeks on the regularization claim of a retired daily wager who alleged that he continued in service for more than three decades without being regularized despite fulfilling eligibility conditions.

The direction was passed by CAT Member (Judicial) M.S. Latif while disposing of O.A. No. 492/2024 filed by Mohammad Maqbool Hajam, a resident of Pazzalpora Bandipora, against the Union Territory of J&K and

other Forest Department authorities.

According to the petition, the applicant was engaged as a daily wager in the Forest Department on November 30, 1993, and completed seven years of continuous service on November 30, 2000, which, he argued, made him eligible for regularization under the applicable service policy.

The petitioner who was represented by Advocate Bashir Ahmad Tak submitted before the Tribunal that despite rendering continuous service and repeatedly approaching the authorities for regularization, no final decision was taken in his case, whereas similarly

placed employees had earlier been regularized following judicial intervention.

He sought retrospective regularization from November 30, 2000, along with pensionary benefits, consequential service benefits and arrears, contending that denial of regularization adversely affected his retirement entitlements after he superannuated on March 30, 2024.

The petition further referred to an inter-departmental communication dated September 18, 2018, indicating that posts of Helpers had been created for regularization of left-out daily rated workers and that the applicant's name figured in the list prepared

for consideration.

The Tribunal observed that despite several opportunities granted earlier, the respondents had failed to file a reply in the matter. During the hearing, Conservator of Forests Working Plan Circle Srinagar Vivek Verma appeared through virtual mode and informed the court that the applicant's case would be considered in accordance with entitlement and merit.

According to KNT, taking note of the submission, the Tribunal disposed of the plea with a direction to the respondents to examine and decide the applicant's claim strictly in accordance with law by passing a speaking order within eight weeks.

## J&K Bank Commissions New ATMs at ILBS Delhi, Rakiban Rajouri

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Reinforcing its commitment towards expanding accessible digital banking infrastructure, J&K Bank today commissioned two new ATMs at prominent locations in New Delhi and Rajouri to enhance customer convenience and strengthen banking outreach.

In New Delhi, the Bank commissioned a new ATM at the prestigious Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), Vasant Kunj - one of India's leading super-specialty liver hospitals. The ATM was formally inaugurated by Founding Director & Chancellor, ILBS, Dr. Shiv Kumar Sarin in presence of General Manager/Divisional Head (Rol)



Riaz Ahmad Wani, Zonal Head (Delhi) Rozy Tickoo and other senior officers of the Bank.

Speaking on the occasion, Divisional Head (Rol) Riaz Ahmad Wani said, "J&K Bank remains committed to expanding its customer-centric digital banking infrastructure at premier institutions and key locations across the country. The commissioning

of this ATM at ILBS reflects our endeavour to provide convenient, secure and seamless banking services to patients, attendants, healthcare professionals and the general public besides strengthening the Bank's visibility and outreach beyond the region."

Meanwhile in J&K's Rajouri district, the Bank commissioned another onsite ATM at Rakiban, taking the total

number of ATMs in Zone Rajouri, comprising Rajouri and Poonch districts, to 86.

The ATM was inaugurated by Zonal Head (Rajouri) Rajeev Kumar Digra in presence of valued customers, elected public representatives, senior Bank officials, Branch Head, and local residents.

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head Rajeev Kumar Digra said, "J&K Bank is continuously working towards strengthening digital banking infrastructure and ensuring greater financial accessibility for people in remote and semi-urban areas. The commissioning of this ATM at Rakiban is another step towards bringing convenient and secure banking services closer to the people."

## Speaker Rather Set to Reconstitute House Committees for 2026-27

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant move, the Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will soon reconstitute House committees, sources disclosed.

Sources told KNO that Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather is expected to constitute House committees, including three financial committees, for the year 2026-27. "The constitution of the committees is expected to be finalized within the next few days," sources said, adding that the three financial committees - the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), the Estimates Committee, and the Public Undertakings Committee (PUC) - will be among those to be constituted. The terms all committees, except Committee Jal Jeevan Mission, had come to end on March 31, 2026.

On April 02, the Legislative Assembly had granted two months' extension to the House Committee on Jal Jeevan Mission to submit its report. For the financial year 2025-26, the Speaker constituted the House Committee on May 28, 2025. (Observer News Service)

## LoP Sharma attends Swearing-In Ceremony of Assam CM

**SRINAGAR:** Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma on Tuesday attended the swearing-in ceremony of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati.

According to KNO, Sunil Kumar Sharma was present at the oath-taking ceremony.

Sharma, who served as co-incharge of the BJP for the Assam elections, had spent considerable time devising strategy and campaigning for the party in the state. He also played a crucial role in securing eight additional votes for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha elections held in J&K in October 2025.

## Alcohol Remarks Misconstrued, Govt not supporting it: Minister Javed

**BARAMULLA:** Cabinet Minister Javed Ahmad Dar on Tuesday clarified that the government is not supporting alcohol consumption and said recent remarks on the issue were being misconstrued.

Talking to reporters here, Minister Dar, as per KNO maintained that an alcohol ban is desired in the Union Territory. "The government's stand on alcohol remains clear and efforts are underway to address the issue," he said.

"Statements are being misled. We are not supporting alcohol consumption. We want it to get banned," the Minister said. He said alcohol is prohibited in Islam and stressed that Jammu and Kashmir, being a Muslim majority region, should work towards distancing society from alcohol consumption.

"Alcohol is prohibited in Islam, but we are in a Union Territory and cannot directly take decisions on few of the issues," he said. The Minister said discussions are underway, but added that the government does not want to disclose details at this stage. Reiterating the government's position, the Minister said they are not in favour of alcohol and are exploring ways to curb its use in Jammu and Kashmir. "We should find ways to get rid of it and stay away from it," he added.

On ongoing "Nasha Mukht Abhiyan", he said the initiative is gaining momentum across the Union Territory and stressed that collective public participation is essential to eradicate the drug menace from society.

The Minister said the anti-drug campaign has turned into a common cause and expressed hope that sustained efforts by the administration, police, health institutions and the public would yield positive results. (Observer News Service)

## Boy Killed, 3 Injured as Fire Damages Darul Uloom

**SRINAGAR:** A 12-year-old boy was killed and three others were injured after a massive fire broke out at a Darul Uloom in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday, officials said.

An official told KNO that the fire erupted at Faizan Baba Hyder Rishi Darul Uloom in Old Mattan Adda, leaving four boys with burn injuries, following which a rescue operation was launched.

He said the injured were shifted to GMC Anantnag, where one of them succumbed to his injuries.

"The deceased has been identified as Bilal Ahmad (12), son of Mohammad Akbar and a resident of Wadwan, while the injured have been identified as Sabit Fayaz and Sahil Ahmad, both residents of Sangaldan, and Irfan Ahmad of Pahalgam," the official said.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident.

## GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, SRINAGAR 10-KARAN NAGAR, SRINAGAR KASHMIR, 190010 (ACADEMIC SECTION)

**Subject:** Selection of Dr. Asgar Aziz (In-service doctor) as Senior Resident in the Department of General Surgery, Government Medical College, Srinagar.

**Reference:** i) This office Advertisement No. 03 of 2026 Dated. 04.02.2026.  
ii) Character and Antecedent verification report received from CID, J&K vide Form No. 155926 Dated. 07.05.2026.

**OFFICE ORDER No: 527-RA of 2026.**

**DATED: 12-05-2026.**

Pursuant to the Examination Cell Notification No. 09-EC of 2026 Dated. 09.04.2026 and No Objection Certificate issued by Administrative Department, Health and Medical Education Department vide No. HD-Gaz0Gen/690/2025-02 (E-7689572) Dated. 10.02.2025 and on the basis of Satisfactory verification report of Character & Antecedents received from Criminal Investigation Department (CID), J&K, Dr. Asgar Aziz, MS, In-service doctor, is provisionally appointed as Senior Resident in the Discipline of General Surgery, Government Medical College, Srinagar in accordance with the Government Order No. 383-JK(HME) of 2024 Dated. 20.06.2024, for a period of (18) months only in order to complete remaining portion of Senior Residency, as the doctor has sworn on affidavit viz a viz experience certificate that he has earlier completed (01) year & (06) months of Senior Residency from Govt. Medical College, Srinagar.

The appointment of the aforementioned doctor is further subject to the following terms and conditions: -

- The selected candidate is supposed to submit his joining report alongwith an affidavit in the office of the undersigned duly attested by the Judicial Magistrate to the effect that: -
  - He will not participate in any kind of strike during the period of his tenure engagement. In the event he proceeds on strike, his tenure engagement shall be terminated without any notice as this service is covered under ESMA Act.
  - He shall remain disciplined during the whole tenure; any kind of misconduct shall make him liable for termination without any prior notice.
  - He is not involved in any criminal activity or there is no FIR pending or registered in any criminal department or police station against him.
  - He shall not claim any experience certificate, in case he leaves Senior Residency before completion at least of six months.
  - He will not indulge in any private practice. In case he is found doing private practice his appointment shall be liable for termination without any further notice.
- The appointee is required to join within (21) days from the date of issuance of this order; failing which the order shall be deemed to have been cancelled.
- The appointee shall be paid as per his Last Pay Certificate issued by the parent department.

No: GMCS/RA/SR/Surg/1462-67/MC  
Dated: 12.05.2026.

DIPK-1223-26  
DT: 12/05/2026

Principal/Dean  
Govt. Medical College  
Srinagar.

# US Envoy Says Israel Sent Men & Equipment to Defend UAE

Agencies

**TEL AVIV** – Israel sent Iron Dome anti-missile batteries and personnel to operate them to the United Arab Emirates to defend the country during the Iran war, the US ambassador to Israel said on Tuesday.

The comments by Mike Huckabee underline the growing defence relationship between Israel and the UAE, countries long suspicious of Iran, as a shaky ceasefire still holds in the Iran war. It represents the first publicly acknowledged deployment of Israel's military to the Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

However, the narrow Strait of Hormuz remains in Tehran's chokehold, and negotiations between the US and Iran appear at a standstill for the moment – raising the risk of the conflict

breaking out again.

Huckabee, a Baptist minister, former governor of Arkansas and one-time presidential candidate, made the comment on stage at an event in Tel Aviv, Israel.

"I'd like to say a word of appreciation for the United Arab Emirates, the first Abraham Accord member," Huckabee said at the Tel Aviv Conference. "Just look at the benefits. Israel just sent them Iron Dome batteries and personnel to help operate them."

The United Arab Emirates diplomatically recognised Israel in 2020. That drew immediate criticism from Iran, long Israel's main regional enemy. Iran did not immediately respond to Huckabee's remarks, though it has repeatedly suggested over the years that Israel maintained a military and intelligence presence in the Emirates.

Israeli deployment comes as



the UAE signals strength

The UAE and Israel did not immediately respond to a request for comment over the acknowledgement by Huckabee. However, Huckabee's remarks came after the US ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, was quoted as saying the same during an event at the Israeli mission there on Monday

night – suggesting this was an intentional release of the information, likely with the Emiratis' and Israelis' blessing.

It comes as the UAE has faced Iranian missile and drone fire even after the ceasefire was reached in the war and has been trying to signal to nervous investors and the public that it remains open for business and

safe. The UAE has also closed down Iranian government-linked sites in the country since the war began. The Emirates has long been used by both the Iranian government and average Iranians as a place to safely do business offshore from the Islamic Republic.

On Thursday, during a visit to the Emirates by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan accompanied him to an airbase where Egyptian pilots and Rafal fighter jets were stationed – the first acknowledgement of a detachment operating in the UAE. Sheikh Mohammed and the UAE strongly backed el-Sissi as he rose to power in 2013 and in the years since.

Huckabee urges other Gulf states to recognise Israel

Huckabee added that he was

"very optimistic" that additional countries in the region will soon join the Abraham Accords, the 2020 diplomatic recognition deal that also included the Gulf Arab kingdom of Bahrain, for formal relations with Israel.

However, many Arab states remain incensed by Israel's wide-ranging military campaigns after Hamas' 2023 attack on the country, which has seen the Gaza Strip levelled and Iran's allies attacked across the wider Middle East. Israel now controls territory in Lebanon and Syria as well.

Huckabee, in his remarks, also sought to shore up US support for the recent war, suggesting that "Israel is the appetiser; America has always been the entrée" for Iran's theocracy.

"The Gulf states now understand they will have to make a choice – is it more likely they will be attacked by Iran or Israel?" Huckabee asked. "They see

that Israel helped us and Iran attacked us. Israel is not trying to take over your land and is not sending missiles to you."

UAE conducted covert attacks on Iran: WSJ

The United Arab Emirates conducted a series of "covert" attacks against Iran during the latest bout of US-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic, according to The Wall Street Journal.

The Journal carried the report on Monday, citing anonymous sources familiar with the matter.

According to the newspaper, one of the attacks targeted a refinery on Iran's Lavan Island in early April. The strike occurred around the time US President Donald Trump was preparing to announce a ceasefire with Iran. The attack reportedly caused a large fire and forced the refinery offline. –AP

## India Has 2-Month Fuel Stock, OMC Losses May Hit Rs 1 Lakh Cr: Puri

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI** – With two months of fuel stockpiles, India faces no supply concerns despite disruptions to global energy flows, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday said, while warning that state-run fuel retailers face losses of as much as Rs 1 lakh crore in a single quarter if elevated crude prices persist and retail fuel prices remain unchanged.

He said that at some stage an assessment needs to be made on how long retailers can sustain losses from selling petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG below cost, but refused to speculate if rates would be raised anytime soon.

"We have no supply-side problems," the minister said at CII's Annual Business Summit here, adding that India began the crisis with "more than enough" crude oil and LPG invento-



ries and had since ramped up domestic LPG production to 54,000 tonnes per day from about 36,000 tonnes previously.

At the same time, the minister acknowledged growing fiscal stress from keeping retail fuel prices unchanged.

"My oil companies are losing Rs 1,000 crore a day," he said, adding that cumulative under-recoveries had climbed to nearly Rs 1.98 lakh crore and that a single quarter of losses of Rs 1 lakh crore could wipe out the sector's annual profits.

Since the war broke out in West Asia 10 weeks ago,

state-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) have ensured uninterrupted supplies of petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG at rates that are way below the cost, unlike many global energy systems that imposed rationing or passed through steep price increases.

This has resulted in the three OMCs – Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) – running record-high under-recoveries (the difference between benchmark international cost and retail selling price).

Puri said the combined under-recovery on petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG is about Rs 1.98 lakh crore for the current quarter, while the actual loss is about Rs 1 lakh crore.

The losses in one quarter, he said, are enough to wipe out profits that oil companies earn in the entire year.

## Tamil Nadu CM Acts on Public Demand, Closes Liquor Shops

KO Web Desk

**SRINAGAR** – In a major crackdown on liquor access across Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has ordered the closure of 717 TASMAL outlets located near places of worship, schools and bus stands, signalling one of the state's biggest moves yet in response to growing public anger over alcohol sales.

Vijay was sworn in as the CM of Tamil Nadu after his party, TVK, won the April 23 Assembly polls and secured outside support to cross the majority mark of 118 seats.

Considering the welfare of the public, Vijay issued orders to shut down the retail liquor outlets located within a 500m radius of places of worship, educational institutions, and bus stations within two weeks, an official release said.

Accordingly, 276 outlets near places of worship, 186



shops near educational institutions, and 255 outlets near bus stands will be closed within the next two weeks, it said.

There has been widespread demand, especially from women and a few political parties in the state, that all the liquor shops in the state should be closed.

The Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (Tasmac) operates 4,765 retail liquor outlets across the state.

Unveils free power, women's safety, anti-drug schemes

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister also introduced three schemes related to

electricity, women's safety and drug eradication as part of his poll promises.

After assuming office, Vijay signed a government order providing 200 free units of electricity to domestic consumers who use up to 500 units per two-month billing cycle.

To instil confidence among women and enhance their safety, a 'Singa Pen Special Action Force' equipped with adequate personnel and state-of-the-art facilities will be established across the state.

'Singa Pen' literally means 'lioness' but is commonly used to describe a brave woman.

## Study: Employers See Childless Women as Ideal Workers

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI** – Childless women are perceived as a perfect fit to be ideal workers by organisations because of their image of middle-class, professionally educated, career-oriented women who can negotiate well with gender roles, a research by Goa Institute of Management (GIM) has found.

The research published in the prestigious international journal "Equity, Diversity and Inclusion" is a study on workplace microaggressions, revealing new insights into how underlying gender norms shape the everyday experiences of childless women professionals.

The study revealed that workplace interactions with colleagues can reinforce exclusion. By challenging the general equation of womanhood with motherhood, the study positioned childlessness as a valid yet over-

looked identity in organisational discourse.

According to Shelly Pandey, Assistant Professor at GIM, the research found that many times, organisational cultures operate on unspoken assumptions linking femininity with motherhood.

"We found that these cultures often lead to marginalisation of women who do not conform to this expectation, be it by choice or circumstance. The team applied the concept of microaggression to document and analyse the experiences of 45 middle-class, professionally engaged childless women from different cities in India," she told PTI.

Through the qualitative study, the researchers found that, at the organisational level, childless women are perceived as a perfect fit for ideal workers, yet their ideal worker image is loaded with various expressions of microaggression.

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