

Kashmir's Liquor Economy Faces A Hard Calculation

Kashmir's ₹260 crore liquor market sits at the center of an increasingly sharp debate over health costs, crime and cultural identity.

Irshad Mushtaq

Srinagar: Near midnight at Srinagar's Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, doctors moved quickly between a young crash victim with a fractured skull and two women waiting after a domestic assault complaint. Attendants standing near the emergency ward spoke in low voices and repeated the same word: sharab.

Hospital workers in Kashmir describe a visible rise in

alcohol-linked emergencies during recent years. Surgeons speak of road accidents involving young men, psychiatrists report growing addiction cases, social workers describe families selling jewelry and land to absorb mounting debt, and economists point toward another number that now sits at the center of a widening debate in Kashmir: 260 crore.

That figure represents the valley's annual contribution to Jammu and Kashmir's liquor revenue,

according to official excise data cited in the Union Territory's 2026-27 budget documents.

Officials project total liquor revenue for Jammu and Kashmir at nearly 3,000 crore this year, placing excise among the government's largest internal revenue streams.

A closer look at the numbers reveals a striking regional divide.

Jammu region hosts more than 220 liquor outlets and generates nearly 2,740 crore, or more than 91 percent of total excise



revenue. Kashmir operates only four licensed liquor shops and contributes roughly 260 crore.

Five districts in the valley, including Pulwama, Shopian, Bandipora, Budgam and Kulgam, function without a single liquor outlet after sustained community opposition.

Jammu district alone contains 153 wine shops and 97 bars, according to excise records. That total exceeds the number of outlets operating in the entire valley many times over.

Those figures now fuel raging debate that reaches far beyond morality. Economists, doctors, religious leaders and business groups increasingly frame the issue through a harder question: Does liquor revenue actually benefit Kashmir economy?

Researchers and public finance analysts examining government data argue that the valley absorbs social and economic losses that vastly exceed the taxes collected through alcohol sales.

"The revenue

PM's Fuel-Saving Push Shrinks VIP Convoys Across India

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation and responsible use of public resources has triggered a wider response across the country, with several senior political leaders, ministers and top police officers beginning to reduce the size of their official convoys and curb unnecessary expenditure amid the ongoing West Asia crisis.

During a recent Union Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister reportedly advised ministers to spend carefully, save fuel and avoid unnecessary expenses in view of global uncertainties and rising pressure on resources.

During a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by the prime minister, Modi is learnt to have told ministers that they must focus on cost-cutting and consciously reduce spending of resources in the wake of the West Asia crisis.

Sources said the prime



minister also urged the ministers to cut down their convoy size and foreign visits, after which several ministers announced steps in this regard.

The Prime Minister himself has already begun implementing the measures by reducing the number of vehicles in his convoy during recent visits to Gujarat and Assam while maintaining all required security arrangements, sources added.

Officials said the Prime Minister also suggested

[Full story on kashmirobserver.net](#)

No Force Can Stop Us: LG Vows Tougher Crackdown On Narco Networks

Says Anti-drug Campaign In J&K Turning Into Revolution Against Narcotics

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said the administration's ongoing anti-drug campaign has dealt a "devastating blow" to the narcotics network in Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that drug smuggling and terrorism are deeply interconnected threats.

Addressing a public gathering after joining the 'Nasha-Mukt Jammu Kashmir Campaign' padyatra in Kupwara, Sinha said the anti-drug drive launched in April has evolved into a mass movement across the Union Territory.

"Over the past 32 days, the civil and police administration has struck a devastating blow to the entire drug smuggling ecosystem and this people's movement is transforming into a revolution against



narcotics," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the administration's action against narcotics networks was simultaneously weakening terror infrastructure.

"Our consistent action is crippling narco-terrorist

networks. Properties worth crores have been seized, assets confiscated, and passports of 15 smugglers have been recommended for cancellation. More than 730 smugglers and peddlers have been arrested," he said.

Sinha said many had

initially doubted whether a people-driven movement against drugs could gain momentum in Jammu and Kashmir.

"At the start of this campaign in April, many underestimated the strength of an awakened public and the impact of determined governance backed by citizen support," he said, adding that the campaign has now spread across villages, urban localities, schools, colleges and public spaces throughout Jammu and Kashmir.

Calling the narcotics problem a long battle, the Lieutenant Governor said drugs and terrorism cannot be viewed separately.

"For decades, people in Jammu and Kashmir saw drugs and terrorism as separate threats. But they are not

[Full story on kashmirobserver.net](#)

LG, DGP, Top Officers Cut Convoy Size By 50%

Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, has decided to reduce the size of his official convoy by half following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeal for fuel conservation and efficient

[Full story on kashmirobserver.net](#)

'Every Border Village Will Script Its Own Story Of Prosperity'

The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, on Tuesday said tourist arrivals in Kupwara district have witnessed a massive rise over the past few years, increasing from 6,900 in 2018-19 to 3.77 lakh in 2024-25, attributing the growth to improving infrastructure and

revival of tourism destinations in border areas. The Lieutenant Governor made these remarks while visiting the Vibrant Village of Trehgam in Kupwara district, where he inaugurated and laid foundation stones for several developmental projects and

[Full story on kashmirobserver.net](#)

Over 64 Lakh Revenue Records Digitised Across J&K

Ramban, Shopian, Ganderbal Achieve 100% Completion

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir has achieved over 93 percent progress in the digitisation of revenue records, with more than 64 lakh khasras approved across the Union Territory under the ongoing land records modernisation programme, official data revealed.

According to the data, out of a total 68,59,915 khasras across Jammu and Kashmir, approvals have been granted for 64,06,641 records, taking the overall completion rate to 93.39 percent.

Officials said the digitisation drive is part of a major reform initiative aimed at bringing greater transparency, accuracy and efficiency to land record management in the Union Territory.

The data revealed that while substantial progress has been achieved, several cases remain pending at different stages of processing. Around 3,04,549 cases are pending at the maker level, 1,10,587 with checkers and 38,138 at the approver stage.

Officials said the government had issued comprehensive guidelines on December 26, 2025 for rectification of errors, entry of backlog mutations,

[Full story on kashmirobserver.net](#)

BJP Cries Foul Over J&K House Committee Allocation

Agencies

Srinagar: A major controversy erupted over the constitution of House Committees in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, with Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma accusing the Speaker of bias and charging him with preferring ruling alliance MLAs in allocating the chairmanship of the panels.

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather on Wednesday constituted 13 House committees.

The Speaker constituted 13 House committees, including three financial committees. According to notifications, the Speaker will be the ex-officio chairman of four committees, while nine committees will be headed by MLAs from

different parties. Of the nine committees to be headed by MLAs, five will be chaired by legislators belonging to the ruling National Conference, and one each by the BJP, Congress, CPI(M), and an independent supporting the ruling alliance.

According to the notifications, NC's Nazir Gurezi, Mir Saifullah, Justice (Retd.) Hasnain Masoodi, Farooq Ahmad Shah and Ali Muhammad Sagar will helm, respectively, the Estimates Committee, Public Undertakings Committee, Privileges Committee, Petitions Committee, and Assurances Committee.

The notifications further state that BJP's Surjeet Slathia, CPI(M)'s Muhammad Yousuf Tarigami,

Rain, Lightning & Strong Winds Likely Over Next Few Days

Avoid Boating, Shikara Rides During Afternoons: MeT Advisory

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Meteorological Department on Wednesday forecast light rain, thunder-showers and gusty winds across several parts of Jammu and Kashmir over the next few days, while advising people to avoid boating and shikara rides during afternoon hours due to the possibility of strong winds and lightning.

According to the MeT Department, weather conditions are likely to remain partly cloudy with intermittent spells of rain and thundershowers at scattered to



many places across the Union Territory on May 14.

The department said thunderstorms and gusty winds are expected at a few places, particularly during afternoon and late afternoon hours.

"People are advised to suspend boating and shikara riding generally towards afternoon and late afternoon hours," the

Kashmir Mutton Dealers Question Govt's Eid Readiness

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A disagreement has emerged between the Jammu and Kashmir administration and mutton traders ahead of Eid-ul-Adha, with the government asserting that adequate stock and advance preparations are in place while dealers allege lack of consultation and unresolved issues related to livestock movement from Punjab.

Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, said the administration has ensured sufficient availability of essential commodities and strengthened co-ordination mechanisms well ahead of the festival season. Speaking after

Ayushman Bharat-Sehat Scheme

Payment Delays Push J&K Pvt Hospitals Towards Financial Crisis

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Private hospitals and dialysis centres across Jammu and Kashmir are facing mounting financial pressure due to prolonged delays in reimbursements under the Ayushman Bharat-Sehat Scheme, with healthcare providers warning that the current system has pushed several institutions towards a financial crisis.

The Jammu and Kashmir Private Hospitals and Dialysis Centres Association (JKPHDA) has urged the administration to immediately shift the



implementation of the scheme from the existing Trust Mode to an Insurance Mode, saying the present mechanism has resulted in massive payment delays and operational uncertainty.

According to the association, hospitals across the

Union Territory are awaiting clearance of dues amounting to hundreds of crores of rupees, with some claims allegedly pending since 2021.

President of JKPHDA, Mir Faizan, said the prolonged delay in reimbursements has severely affected the functioning of private healthcare institutions, particularly dialysis centres that require uninterrupted funding to continue critical services.

"Under the existing Trust Mode, payments to hospitals remain pending for months and even years. Private hospitals have

Nasha Mukt J&K

Drug Free J&K - 100 Days Campaign

Nasha Khatam, Zindagi Shuru

3.97 Kg
HEROIN SEIZED

33.97Kg
CHARAS SEIZED

230 Kg
GANJA SEIZED

**NO TO DRUGS
YES TO LIFE**

Tele MANAS helpline No.

14416

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DIPK-1273/26 Dated: 13.05.2026

Stray Dog Menace Sparks Panic in Stadium Colony Natipora

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Panic has gripped Stadium Colony, Natipora, Lane No. 7 in Srinagar after a series of stray dog attacks left several residents injured over the past few days, with children and elderly persons reported to be the worst affected.

Locals from the area told KNO that the stray dogs, moving in a pack, have turned increasingly aggressive, making movement through the lane unsafe, particularly during early morning and evening hours.

They said multiple bite incidents have been reported, forcing families to restrict outdoor movement and creating an atmosphere of fear in the locality.

"We are living in constant fear. Children cannot step out to play, and elderly people avoid walking through the lane," said a resident, adding that the situation has worsened in recent days and needs immediate

We are living in constant fear. Children cannot step out to play, and elderly people avoid walking through the lane

attention from authorities. Residents further alleged that despite repeated incidents, no action has been taken so far, resulting in continued risk to pedestrians, school-going children and daily commuters passing through the area.

Locals have urged the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and concerned animal control authorities to immediately capture and relocate the aggressive stray dogs. They have called for preventive measures to avoid further attacks in the area.

One Dead, Two Injured in Separate Electrocution Incidents across City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A laborer died while two other persons sustained injuries in three separate electrocution incidents reported from different parts of Srinagar on Wednesday, officials said.

Police said a police party from Police Station Soura shifted an electrocuted person to SKIMS Soura in an unconscious condition after he accidentally came into contact with a live electric wire while working at Hawal.

The deceased was identified as Noorani Gojar Turk, son of Khameem Ghulam Turk, a resident of Chuntimullah Bandipora, aged around 40 years.

According to officials, he was working as a laborer for a private company identified as "Green Glouse" at Hyderpora and had reportedly been painting an electric pole near Islamia College Hawal when the incident occurred.

According to KNT, doctors at SKIMS declared him

dead after examination. In another incident, an electrocuted burn victim was brought to SMHS Hospital Srinagar from Munawarabad area.

Officials said the injured person was identified as Ishtiyag Ahmad, son of Ghulam Hassan, a resident of Ganderbal, aged around 45 years. According to attendants, he was working at Hotel Numrooz in Munawarabad when he suffered an electric shock.

Hospital sources said his condition was stated to be stable.

Meanwhile, another electrocution case was reported from the Kursoo Rajbagh area, where a hotel worker allegedly suffered an electric shock while on duty at Hotel Vilasta.

The injured youth was identified as Imran Ahmad Lone, son of Mohammad Maqbool Lone, a resident of Sopore. He was shifted to SMHS Hospital for treatment.

Police have taken cognizance of all the incidents.

Fencing Planned for Budshah, Noor Jehan Bridges to Enhance Public Safety

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Wednesday conducted an onsite review of the proposed fencing along the sides of Budshah Bridge and Noor Jehan Bridge (Cement Kadal) to review measures aimed at enhancing public safety along the bridges.

The DC assessed the planned infrastructure upgradation works to ensure improved safety for pedestrians and commuters using the bridges.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, IAS Probationer, Alfred Thomas, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B, Tatheer Manzoor, Executive Engineer R&B, Khalid Mehmood, Executive Engineer R&B, Arif Hazari, Tehsildar South, Sajad Rasool Shah and other concerned.

While reviewing the plan of fencing of the bridges, the DC was informed that the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) have been formulated for fencing the sides of both these bridges. He was briefed on the status of the works, project timelines and measures being undertaken to ensure public safety.

Emphasizing quality execution, durability and timely completion, the DC directed the concerned executing agency to ensure that the fencing not only strengthens safety measures but also maintains the aesthetics, surrounding visibility and heritage value



of the structures.

The DC further instructed the executing agencies to incorporate all necessary safety measures and complete the works within the stipulated timelines while minimizing inconvenience to commuters.

Speaking on the occasion, the

DC underscored that public safety remains a top priority of the administration and said that the proposed fencing of bridges is being undertaken as a preventive safety measure in view of rising concerns over suicide incidents from bridges, as well as in response to public demand.

KU Screens Documentary on Drug Addiction

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir (KU) organised screenings of the documentary film "Drug Addiction- A Threat to Life" across its various teaching departments and satellite campuses as part of the ongoing 100 Days Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan.

Coordinated by the Department of Students Welfare (DSW), the initiative witnessed participation from students and faculty across the campuses, who viewed the documentary with keen interest.

Vice-Chancellor KU, Prof. Nilofar Khan in her message said, "Awareness and education are essential in preventing substance abuse among young people. Universities must continue to create platforms that encourage informed choices, emotional resilience, and healthy lifestyles among students."

She added that meaningful engagement through educational initiatives



can play an important role in helping students develop confidence, responsibility, and a sense of social awareness.

Produced by Er. Abdul Rasheed, Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMRC) KU, the film presents the social and personal consequences of substance abuse and highlights the need for collective efforts to address the growing problem of drug addiction among youth.

The screenings were organised under the broader campaign launched under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and Chancellor of the University, Shri Manoj Sinha.

The programme aimed to sensitise students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage responsible and positive engagement within society.

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

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BIJBERA: 01932-228243
PAMPOR: 01933-294132
PATTAN: 01954-293507
QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

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

PRAYERS
FAJR 3: 55
ZUHR 12:27
ASR 5: 20
Magrib 7:27
ISHA 9: 01

HIJRI CALENDAR
26 Zil-Qadah
1447

This Day In History

- 1264 - Battle of Lewes, 2nd Barons' War: Simon de Montfort the younger, Earl of Leicester, defeats English King Henry III
- 1509 - Battle of Agnadello, French beat Venetians in Northern Italy
- 1664 - Turkish Grand Vizier Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed attacks 120,000 Donau soldiers
- 1702 - England & Netherlands declare war on France & Spain
- 1702 - Swedish troops under King Charles XII occupy Warsaw
- 1811 - Paraguay gains independence from Spain (National Day)
- 1853 - Gail Borden, land surveyor, newspaper publisher and inventor, patents his process for condensed milk

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice
Sr.DSTE/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders on https://www.ireps.gov.in against Tender Notice No. 433-Sig-T-11-26-27 Closing Date/Time 04.06.2026 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like Net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.

Contract Type	Works
Name of Work	Telecom work for utility shifting and CCTV coverage in c/w various Rail Bhoomi crossing seva works.
Tender Closing Date/Time	04.06.2026 15:00
Date/Time of Uploading Tender	13.05.2026 11:52
Advertised Value (Rs.)	7031882.90
Bidding Start Date as per IREPS	21.05.2026
Earnest Money (Rs.)	140600.00
Period of Completion	04 Months

NOTE: Tenderer should keep himself updated about the Tender amendments, Corrigendum, etc by remaining in touch regularly with the website
Tender Notice No. 433-Sig-T-11-26-27 Dated : 13.05.2026 1605/2026
Serving Customers With A Smile

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Office Of The Chief Executive Officer
Tourism Development Authority Kokernag
E-Bid Document (Auction ID 34157)

Out-sourcing of FOOD KIOSK NO. 2 AT Kokernag (Near Botanical Garden Kokernag) Purely on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" through GeM Portal for a period of 03-Years.

OPEN AUCTION NOTICE No:- 27-CEO/KDA/Outsource/2026-27
Dated:- 13/05/2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory, E-Auction is invited through GeM Portal (Government e-Market-Place) for "Operation/Management & Outsourcing of "Food Kiosk No. 2 at Kokernag (Near Botanical Garden Kokernag)" purely on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", for a period of 03-years. The details are as under:-

S.No	Particulars	Date/Amount	Remarks
1.	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Submission Start Date	15-05-2026 10:00 AM	NIL
2.	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Submission End Date	30-05-2026 04:00 PM	NIL
3.	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Assessment Date	01-06-2026	NIL
4.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Start Date	02-06-2026 10:00 AM	NIL
5.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) End Date	05-06-2026 04:00 PM	NIL
6.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Amount	Rs, 7000/= (Seven Thousand only)	To be pledged in favour of Accounts Officer Kokernag Development Authority
7.	Bid Submission/ Auction Start Date	06-06-2026 10:00 AM	NIL
8.	Bid Submission/ Auction End Date & Time	08-06-2026 01:00 PM	NIL
9.	Minimum Reserve Bid Amount	Rs 67,000/- (Rupees Sixty Seven Thousand only)	Per year with 10% escalation for each successive year.

The e-auction has been finalized by the Outsourcing Committee under the Chairmanship of Director Tourism, Kashmir. The reliable/reputable and experienced agencies/persons, who fulfill the ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (Pre-Qualification) detailed as under shall only be eligible to participate in the E - Auction process.

PRE - QUALIFICATION (PQ) CRITERIA
THE FOLLOWING (PQ) DOCUMENTS TO BE UPLOADED ON GEM-PORTAL BY THE BIDDER.

- A valid GST Registration Certificate.
- A copy of PAN Card and Aadhaar Card.
- A valid Character Certificate duly certified by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) or the concerned Police Station. The Character Certificate must be within the prescribed validity period.
- The Certificate of Registration for Hotel or Restaurant duly issued by the Tourism Department under J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act, if any.
- The relevant qualification (Degree/Diploma/Certificate Course) in the Hospitality sector And / Or documentary proof of experience in the Hospitality sector.
- The self-attested complete details, including name, parentage, address and contact number on a plain paper.
- For further details it is advised to regularly visit the GeM Portal.

Sd/= (Mohammad Rouf Rahman) JKAS
Chief Executive Officer
Tourism Development Authority
Kokernag

No: CEO/KDA/Outsource/2026-27/468-71
DIPK-NB-476/26 Dated:-13/05/2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Nasreena Akhter D/O Gh Rasool Bhat Resident of Badakot Machipora have Married at Khaiepora Zachaldara and Changed my name to Nusrat Begum W/O Mohamad Shafi Wani R/O Khaiepora Zachaldara Henceforth I shall be known as Nusrat Begum in all records. any objection to this change may be reported to the passport office srinagar within seven (7) days of this notice. INF

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby notified for the information of the general public that the electricity connection bearing Consumer ID No. 0203010007102 and Installation No. 74000-RI, presently standing in the name of Mohammad Shafi S/o Mohd Najar, R/o Abubakar Colony Bemina, is proposed to be transferred in favour of Showkat Ahmad Panzra S/o Late Mohd Ahmad Panzra, R/o Abubakar Colony Bemina. Any person having any objection with regard to the said transfer may file his/her objection in the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), Electric Sub Division Watal Kadal, within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. In case no objection is received within the stipulated period, the said connection shall be transferred accordingly without any further notice. Showkat Ahmad Panzra S/o Late Mohd Ahmad Panzra R/o Abubakar Colony Bemina INF

ازنیابت بوٹی
عنوان :- درخواست منجانب غلام نبی نیجار ولد عبدل عزیز نیجار ساکن ہرون ہنبراد عطا علی OBC تحت SRO 176 بحق خیران افراہمی وسمعی
اشتہار ہرخاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن اسانکے ایک درخواست بغرض EWS سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ ریگروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن/اسانکے واقعی تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساکن/اسانکے ہرون میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور وہ بھی ترقی یافتہ طبقہ میں کی ہے ساکن/اسانکے ذیلی افراد پر مشتمل ہے غلام نبی نیجار ولد عبدل عزیز نیجار 55 سال گھر پلوکام 50 سال افراہمی خیران 19 سال بسمعی -- 18 سال نیلوفر بیبی -- 15 سال مومن بی بی پسر 13 سال
ساکن مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کہیں کی بہواری مدنی 8500 روپے تک سے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر دیا عذر خواہ ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخبار سراسر دن کے اندر اندر اپنے عذر یا عذر خد کو دفتر کی اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے سے یہ عطا کوئی قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
تائب تحصیلدار FKO

ازنیابت بوٹی
عنوان :- درخواست منجانب شعیب احمد ولد عبدل نبی تیلی ساکن نوپورہ تہجر ہنبراد عطا علی OBC تحت SRO 176 بحق خود
اشتہار ہرخاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن اسانکے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ ریگروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن/اسانکے واقعی تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساکن/اسانکے نوپورہ تہجر میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور وہ بھی ترقی یافتہ طبقہ میں کی ہے ساکن/اسانکے ذیلی افراد پر مشتمل ہے عبدل نبی تیلی ولد غلام رسول تیلی 8500 سال مزدوری 58 سال سارہ بیگم زوجہ عبدل نبی گھر پلوکام 57 سال ساکن بانو دختر 27 سال شعیب احمد پسر 25 سال غلام رسول تیلی عمر سیدہ 85 سال چاند بیگم -- 80 سال
ساکن مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کہیں کی بہواری مدنی 8500 روپے تک سے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر دیا عذر خواہ ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخبار سراسر دن کے اندر اندر اپنے عذر یا عذر خد کو دفتر کی اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے سے یہ عطا کوئی قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
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عنوان :- درخواست منجانب شعیب احمد ولد عبدل نبی تیلی ساکن نوپورہ تہجر ہنبراد عطا علی OBC تحت SRO 176 بحق خود
اشتہار ہرخاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں ساکن اسانکے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ ریگروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن/اسانکے واقعی تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساکن/اسانکے نوپورہ تہجر میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور وہ بھی ترقی یافتہ طبقہ میں کی ہے ساکن/اسانکے ذیلی افراد پر مشتمل ہے عبدل نبی تیلی ولد غلام رسول تیلی 8500 سال مزدوری 58 سال سارہ بیگم زوجہ عبدل نبی گھر پلوکام 57 سال ساکن بانو دختر 27 سال شعیب احمد پسر 25 سال غلام رسول تیلی عمر سیدہ 85 سال چاند بیگم -- 80 سال
ساکن مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کہیں کی بہواری مدنی 8500 روپے تک سے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر دیا عذر خواہ ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخبار سراسر دن کے اندر اندر اپنے عذر یا عذر خد کو دفتر کی اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے سے یہ عطا کوئی قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
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Can Kashmir Reverse Brain Drain?

Young professionals see ambition, stability and growth somewhere else. Jammu and Kashmir now faces the harder task of changing that calculation.



Khalid Mustafa



Jammu and Kashmir's startup surge has generated excitement inside government offices, university campuses, and business circles. More than a thousand ventures now stand registered in the Union Territory, marking a sharp departure from the years when entrepreneurship remained limited to small family businesses and conventional commerce.

Investors talk about innovation, policymakers mention growth, and young founders speak the language of scale, technology, and disruption.

A harder reality sits beneath that optimism.

Large numbers of educated young people still leave the region every year for Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Dubai, and Doha. Engineering graduates prepare for coding interviews outside the valley long before convocation day arrives. Management students search LinkedIn for openings in metropolitan firms instead of local companies. Families continue to view migration as the clearest route toward professional stability and financial mobility.

This contradiction now sits at the center of Kashmir's economic transition. Startup numbers are rising quickly while talent continues to flow outward with equal speed.

Salary differences explain part of the story, though the deeper issue runs much wider. Young professionals make decisions through long-term calculation. They compare career progression, workplace culture, industry exposure, networking opportunities, technical learning, and job stability before deciding where to build a future.

Metropolitan cities present structured corporate ladders and internationally connected industries. Gulf economies attract workers with tax-free earnings and stronger saving potential. Local firms in Jammu and Kashmir still struggle to present a similarly convincing professional ecosystem.

Public discussion frequently reduces the brain drain debate to income gaps alone. That explanation misses the larger structural weakness. The central challenge lies in confidence.

Graduates want assurance that local opportunities can support serious careers rather than temporary experiments.

Several trends already reveal the pressure building inside the labour market. Educated unemployment remains high despite economic growth and expanding startup registrations.

Thousands of degree holders continue to register as unemployed every year.

Startup closures linked to weak business planning and funding shortages have also strengthened perceptions of instability.

A graduate supporting parents or managing educational debt rarely views uncertainty with enthusiasm. Large companies in metropolitan India project continuity, systems, and predictability. Young professionals naturally gravitate toward environments that appear professionally secure.

Local companies therefore need a completely different strategy for attracting and retaining skilled workers.

Direct salary competition with Bengaluru or Mumbai would place enormous pressure on most startups in the region. Firms can still compete successfully through a broader understanding of value. Living expenses in India's major cities have climbed sharply during the past decade. Rent, transportation, food, and daily urban costs consume substantial portions of salaries that initially appear attractive on paper.

Srinagar and Jammu provide lower living costs, stronger family support systems, and shorter commuting distances. Local firms rarely communicate this advantage with clarity or evidence. Graduates need transparent comparisons showing actual savings potential and disposable income rather than headline compensation figures.

Compensation itself also requires fresh thinking.

Employee Stock Option Plans can create a stronger sense of ownership inside emerging companies. Equity changes the relationship between employees and startups. Workers begin investing emotionally and financially in long-term growth instead of treating jobs as temporary stepping stones before relocation.

This approach holds particular importance in a young startup ecosystem where institutional trust still remains under construction.

Work quality matters just as much as compensation. Many local technology roles revolve around repetitive outsourcing assignments or low-value service work. Skilled engineers and developers seek intellectually demanding projects that strengthen expertise and create visible impact.

Ambitious professionals want expo-

sure to innovation.

Jammu and Kashmir already possesses sectors capable of generating exactly that kind of work. Agriculture, horticulture, saffron cultivation, tourism, handicrafts, and logistics all present major opportunities for technology-driven solutions. Artificial intelligence can support precision farming and crop forecasting. Data analytics can improve orchard management and export planning. Blockchain systems can authenticate handicrafts and strengthen international market trust.

Such projects create globally relevant work rooted in local realities. Engineers and developers gain a stronger sense of purpose when their skills contribute to industries connected directly to the region's economy and identity.

Remote work has also changed the geography of employment in important ways. The pandemic dismantled old assumptions about where serious technology work could happen. Companies now manage distributed teams routinely. Professionals work for international firms without relocating permanently to metropolitan centers.

Jammu and Kashmir can use this shift intelligently. Reliable internet connectivity, uninterrupted electricity, secure communication systems, and strong digital infrastructure now carry economic importance equal to roads and industrial estates. Remote-first companies can enable professionals to remain physically present in the region while participating in national and global projects.

Smaller districts also need greater attention in this transition. Economic activity still concentrates heavily around Srinagar and Jammu. Technology hubs, co-working spaces, startup incubators, and training centers in smaller towns could widen access to opportunity while reducing pressure on major urban centers.

Educational institutions must become far more connected to industry as well. Colleges and universities produce thousands of graduates each year, though the transition from classrooms into employment still remains fragmented and uncertain for many students.

Structured internships, industry-led projects, mentorship programs, apprenticeships, and pre-placement hiring

pipelines can reduce that uncertainty significantly. Students make different choices when they see visible professional pathways inside their own region during the final years of education.

Future-ready skills will also determine which firms attract ambitious talent. Artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud infrastructure, and quantum technologies already influence hiring decisions globally. Companies that invest seriously in training and technical upskilling immediately strengthen their appeal among highly skilled graduates seeking advanced exposure.

Labour reforms need equal attention in this conversation. India's consolidation of labour laws into four broader codes aims to simplify compliance while strengthening social security protections. Transparent contracts, provident fund coverage, insurance benefits, workplace safeguards, and timely wage payments help build confidence between employers and employees.

Professional trust matters deeply in emerging economies.

Young workers pay close attention to workplace culture, legal protections, and institutional reliability before committing themselves to long-term careers. Clear systems create stronger confidence in local opportunities.

Government policy still plays a major role, though the responsibility extends much further. Private firms, educational institutions, investors, and workers themselves all influence the direction of the regional economy. Employers need to view talent as a long-term investment tied directly to business growth. Young professionals also need stronger reasons to see local entrepreneurship as a credible professional path rather than a temporary compromise before relocation.

Startup growth has already changed the narrative in Jammu and Kashmir. A generation earlier, large sections of educated youth viewed entrepreneurship with hesitation. That mindset has shifted considerably. Young founders now launch technology ventures, logistics companies, digital platforms, and service businesses with visible confidence.

The next stage needs something harder than startup registrations and investment summits. It requires companies capable of building careers that people genuinely want to grow inside.

A meaningful economic transition begins when talented young professionals stop viewing departure as the default option. That shift develops gradually through stable institutions, serious opportunities, stronger workplaces, and companies willing to invest patiently in people.

Jammu and Kashmir has already joined that debate. The challenge now lies in turning early momentum into something lasting enough that fewer young people feel compelled to search for their future somewhere else.

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KO VIEW

The Changing City

Morning traffic now crawls through Srinagar with the impatience of a much larger city. Cars jam roads that once held bicycles, handcarts and pedestrian footfall. New hotels rise beside old neighbourhoods. Glass-fronted cafes crowd streets where bakeries and bookstores once drew families through long afternoons.

Srinagar still looks beautiful from a distance, but residents increasingly struggle to recognize the city they grew up in.

Construction has become the dominant language of modern Srinagar. Apartment blocks climb upward without coherent planning. Commercial complexes consume open land once used for orchards, playgrounds and community gatherings. Bulldozers move faster than public policy.

Every season brings another row of shops, another cluster of concrete homes and another road widened after traffic chaos reaches a breaking point.

Many residents welcomed development after decades of instability. Better roads, rising tourism and stronger business activity created jobs and movement in the local economy. Families gained new incomes through restaurants, transport services and short-term rentals. Young people found spaces that felt modern and connected to the outside world.

Growth, however, demands discipline. Srinagar today functions like a city expanding without a long-term civic vision. Footpaths disappear beneath parked vehicles. Drainage systems struggle during heavy rain. Public transport remains weak even as car ownership rises sharply. Entire neighborhoods sit trapped in hours of congestion during peak movement.

Dal Lake tells part of this story with painful clarity. This water body once represented openness and calm at the center of city life. Commercial pressure now surrounds large sections of the lake. Hotels, waste, traffic and unchecked urban growth continue to place immense pressure on its ecosystem. Environmental damage no longer sits at the edge of Srinagar's expansion. It sits at the center of it.

Cultural change has come just as quickly. Shopping culture now dominates large sections of urban life. Social status increasingly revolves around cars, branded clothing and expensive cafes. Traditional social spaces have lost ground to commercial ones. Younger residents spend more time inside malls and less time in shared neighbourhood life. Many older Kashmiris describe a city that feels emotionally distant despite physical familiarity.

Tourism brings its own twist to this transformation. Visitors bring money and employment, though tourism-driven development often prioritizes short-term demand over civic balance. Entire stretches of Srinagar now function primarily for visitors. Local identity gradually becomes a performance packaged for consumption.

Srinagar needs growth, investment and modern infrastructure. Citizens also need a city built with care, memory and public purpose. Roads alone cannot define urban progress. Glass buildings alone cannot create civic life. Srinagar needs planning that protects public spaces, regulates construction and preserves the human character that once gave the city its distinct soul.

Residents still search for that Srinagar in fading gardens, old wooden homes and morning walks beside the Jhelum. Time remains to protect it.

The End of Corporate Comfort

AI-driven disruption is exposing how quickly once-dominant business models can lose their edge.



Faisal Kawoosa

after Claude announced an AI tool capable of upgrading Cobol programs, an area long viewed as part of IBM's enterprise stronghold.

Those market reactions reveal something deeper than investor anxiety. They expose the collapse of the business principles that built the modern corporate world.

First-mover advantage once defined success. Companies that entered markets early enjoyed years, sometimes decades, of dominance. Intel built leadership in processors through scale and technological lead time. Apple transformed smartphones into a premium ecosystem competitors struggled to match. Google turned search into one of the most powerful monopolies in business history.

AI compresses those timelines dramatically. A startup can launch a product today and face capable rivals within days. Generative AI systems allow competitors to reproduce interfaces, automate development and mimic features at extraordinary speed. Market categories that once matured over years now evolve by the hour. Investors who once chased aggressive expansion now fund survival, adaptability and continuous reinvention.

This shift destroys another sacred idea in business strategy: defensible differentiation.

Corporate leaders spent decades building unique selling propositions around specialized

features, proprietary workflows and product exclusivity. AI systems now replicate many of those distinctions almost instantly.

Software firms release AI upgrades in rapid succession because every competitor understands the danger of standing still even briefly.

Execution speed now matters more than originality alone.

That reality creates enormous pressure on large corporations. Massive enterprises traditionally relied on hierarchy, process and centralized decision-making. AI rewards the opposite approach.

Lean organizations with faster communication and rapid product cycles move more effectively because they adapt before larger rivals finish internal reviews and committee discussions.

The numbers tell the story clearly.

Anthropic reached roughly \$14 billion in revenue with slightly more than 2,500 employees. IBM crossed \$62 billion in revenue in 2024 with a workforce exceeding 270,000 people. IBM required 114 years to build that scale. Anthropic, founded more than a century later, reached extraordinary revenue levels within four years.

AI breaks the old connection between headcount and output.

A small team equipped with advanced AI systems can now perform work that once required thousands of employees. Productivity

gains no longer arrive incrementally. They arrive exponentially. Corporate structures designed during the industrial era struggle to function effectively inside this environment.

Many legacy firms still operate through governance models built for slower markets. Decision-making moves upward through multiple layers of approval. Product development follows lengthy cycles. Risk management departments frequently overpower experimentation. Those structures made sense when market leadership lasted decades. Modern AI markets punish delay immediately.

Large companies now need decentralization more than control. Middle management requires real authority, direct accountability and operational freedom. Teams closest to customers and product development need power to act quickly without waiting for executive bottlenecks. Fast execution now determines survival.

The transformation extends beyond technology. A younger workforce entering management already expects flexibility, autonomy and rapid iteration. Gen Z professionals value speed, experimentation and direct impact more than rigid corporate structures. AI intensifies those expectations because the technology itself rewards constant adaptation.

Business schools and corporate leadership programs still teach frameworks developed for a slower industrial-digital economy. Many of

those theories now feel outdated.

Five-year planning cycles look increasingly detached from markets that can transform within a single quarter. Static organizational charts struggle inside industries where products evolve weekly.

Executives who continue relying on twentieth-century management assumptions face a dangerous mismatch between strategy and reality.

AI does not function merely as another productivity tool. It changes the DNA of competition itself. Scale, capital and brand recognition still matter, but in today's market, speed matters more.

Companies that embrace agility, decentralized authority and relentless execution stand a strong chance of leading the next economic era. Companies that cling to bureaucratic habits and legacy structures risk irrelevance, even if they once appeared untouchable.

The age of AI has already arrived. Business strategy finally needs to catch up.

— The author is the chief analyst and co-founder of Techarc, and a leading voice on India's technology industry. He advises businesses and policymakers on emerging trends, and serves on the jury of the GLOMO Awards at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

Kashmir's Dirty Secret

A journey through Gulmarg, Verinag and Pahalgam exposed how pollution, encroachment and official indifference are pushing Kashmir's famed beauty toward collapse.



Mohammad Ilyas Bhat

Two years ago, I invited an elderly friend and his wife to visit Kashmir. He spends part of the year in Bangalore and the rest in the United States, and he had always spoken about Kashmir with a kind of longing.

He wanted to see the mountains, the lakes, the springs and the famous meadows that generations of poets and travellers celebrated. I wanted him to experience the valley I grew up loving.

But that journey turned into something else entirely.

Dal Lake stood as our first stop. My friend noticed plastic bottles floating near the banks, though he brushed it aside at first. Dal sits in the middle of a busy city. Heavy tourism, traffic and dense neighbourhoods place enormous pressure on the lake every day.

My friend still believed the mountains would feel different. Gulmarg, he said, would surely restore the image he carried in his mind.

An hour after reaching Gulmarg, he wanted to leave.

Plastic waste covered parts of the meadows. Water bottles, food wrappers and discarded packaging lay scattered near walking trails and open spaces. Tourists walked past it with complete indifference, shopkeepers continued business as usual, and authorities seemed absent.

My friend stood silently for several minutes, staring at the litter spread beneath towering pine trees and snow-covered slopes.

"This is the world's highest golf course," he told me. "People come here for clean air and beauty."

His disappointment hit me harder because I could see he genuinely cared.

We picked up a few plastic bottles

and wrappers ourselves and threw them into a nearby dustbin. He took photographs and later posted them on social media, perhaps hoping images might push people into action more effectively than speeches ever could.

That scene repeated itself through the rest of our journey.

Verinag greeted us with the same carelessness. The historic garden once drew visitors through its symmetry, flowing water and carefully maintained pathways. Several sections now resembled neglected dumping grounds. Garbage piled up near corners and edges where tourists rarely looked closely.

Outside the garden, makeshift shops and roadside encroachments had swallowed much of the approach road. Vehicles squeezed through narrow spaces while vendors occupied every available patch of land.

The experience felt exhausting rather than welcoming.

My friend searched for a clean place to sit near the spring. We walked around for several minutes before giving up. Families continued eating snacks and throwing waste nearby. Plastic cups floated near water channels. A heritage site that once inspired awe now struggled under disorder and neglect.

Sonamarg presented another painful contradiction.

Snow peaks still rose magnificently above the valley, and rivers still rushed through the mountains with immense force. But plastic waste still appeared wherever tourists gathered.

Kashmir continues to possess astonishing natural beauty. Human behaviour now competes against it every single day.

Kokernag and Pahalgam pushed me toward anger.

We once again cleaned a small patch ourselves before sitting down. That simple act revealed the scale of the larger collapse.

Visitors now arrive with the expectation that someone else will clean up after them. Government agencies announce campaigns and issue statements, but ground reality tells a very different story.

Pahalgam disturbed me the most because the Lidder river has started suffering openly. Areas near the water now function almost like open toilets during the Yatra season. Pil-



MY FRIEND CAME TO KASHMIR EXPECTING PARADISE. He left carrying photographs of garbage beneath mountains that still possess breathtaking beauty. His disappointment forced me to confront my own growing discomfort with what we have allowed to happen.

grims bathe, wash and dump waste into the river with complete freedom. Local authorities watch passively. Environmental rules seem to disappear whenever large crowds arrive.

People speak constantly about protecting Kashmir's tourism economy. Very few people speak honestly about protecting Kashmir itself.

Plastic waste now sits at the center of this crisis. Bottles at least possess some resale value, which encourages collection. Plastic wrappers hold almost none. Scrap dealers ignore them completely because they generate little income.

Those wrappers then pile up in forests, meadows, springs and streams until entire landscapes begin looking abused and exhausted.

Public awareness campaigns remain almost invisible. Signboards rarely appear where they matter most. Dustbins stay either insufficient or overflowing. Enforcement arrives occasionally for symbolic gestures rather than systematic change.

Badamwari Garden presents a strange example of this confusion.

Authorities there sometimes stop visitors from carrying thermos flasks or food items into the garden. That strictness shows intent, though

it also exposes inconsistency.

Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg require much stronger enforcement because those destinations face greater environmental pressure.

Pollution in Kashmir now extends far beyond plastic.

Several springs that once existed between Nishat and Harwan have disappeared during the past two decades. Older residents remember natural water sources flowing through areas where concrete structures now dominate. Urban expansion swallowed many of them entirely.

Air pollution in Srinagar has also entered dangerous territory. Winter months bring particularly severe conditions. Cold air traps pollutants close to the ground because Kashmir's bowl-shaped geography prevents proper circulation. Fine particulate matter, especially PM2.5, regularly rises far above safe limits. The Air Quality Index frequently enters unhealthy categories during winter.

People still imagine Kashmir as a place filled with fresh mountain air and clean water. Current reality tells another story. Many mornings in Srinagar now begin under a haze thick enough to sting the eyes and throat.

Small clean-up drives will never solve a crisis of this scale.

Kashmir needs hard enforcement and practical systems that function daily. Authorities should impose a complete ban on carrying disposable plastic into major tourist destinations. Entry points should provide cloth or paper alternatives at affordable prices so visitors face convenience rather than confusion.

A deposit-return system for plastic bottles could also change public behaviour rapidly. Even a fifty-paisa reward per bottle would encourage collection.

Small food incentives or exchange counters could create participation among tourists, workers and local residents alike. Several countries already use such systems successfully.

Visible fines matter too, as people change behaviour when consequences become real and unavoidable.

Dustbins need regular maintenance instead of ceremonial installation. Local youth groups could work as eco-guards during peak tourist seasons, creating employment while protecting vulnerable areas.

Awareness alone changes very little, but accountability does change behaviour.

That truth stayed with me throughout our journey. My friend came to Kashmir expecting paradise. He left carrying photographs of garbage beneath mountains that still possess breathtaking beauty.

His disappointment forced me to confront my own growing discomfort with what we have allowed to happen.

Kashmir continues to inspire visitors. Rivers carve through valleys of astonishing beauty. Meadows bloom every summer, while winter snow turns the mountains into something almost unreal.

People often say paradise survives forever, but human neglect tells a different story.

Kashmir stands at a decisive moment now. Serious action could still protect this place. Continued indifference will leave future generations with photographs, memories and regret.

— The author works in agricultural seed production and is currently writing his first short story collection in Kashmir.

The Antenna Days

Long before streaming platforms and endless channels, one television set, one weekly film and a few cherished serials were enough to fill Kashmiri homes with warmth and connection.



Syed Majid Gilani

There was a time in Kashmir when watching a film on television was an event that brought everyone together.

I remember how Hindi films from the late '70s to the '90s had a simple charm that felt close to home. Those stories spoke gently but deeply, with grace and emotion that touched the heart.

Films like Anand, Bawarchi, Chupke Chupke, Masoom, and Sparsh felt like reflections of real life, told with dignity and respect for the audience. Watching them, you learned about kindness, patience, and love, all without anything that felt forced or exaggerated.

Even as the '90s brought new hits like Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, Maine Pyar Kiya, Hum Aapke Hain Koun, and Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, these stories stayed true to their roots.

Families in Kashmir could watch together without discomfort. There were no bold or crass scenes, no unnecessary glamour or cheap tricks. Actors wore modest clothes, and the romances were tender, not explicit. It was entertainment that respected our values and spoke to the heart.

The songs from those films still echo in our memories. Whether from

Masoom, Saath Saath, Ram Teri Ganga Maali, or Sajan, those melodies carried feelings that never faded.

Every week, shows like Chitrahaar and Rangoli brought those songs into our homes, making them part of our routine. Even today, many young singers on reality shows pick these timeless tunes, proving their lasting beauty.

I recall how the dialogues were simple, yet they stuck with us. They didn't need to be pretentious to become part of our daily conversations. This was a connection built on emotion, not hype.

Back then, we had only one television channel: Doordarshan. Most homes had black-and-white sets, sometimes old and small, but it was enough.

We never felt shortchanged. Whatever was on that one channel was enough to bring meaning into our evenings.

I remember those moments when the broadcast would suddenly stop, and the screen would show the message: "Rukawat ke liye khed hai..." Sorry for the interruption.

Sometimes, strong winds would misalign the rooftop antenna. Someone would climb up, while the rest of us shouted from below, "Haan, thoda aur... bas, wahi rakhi!"

When the picture finally returned, it felt like a small victory. The family would gather close again, grateful for those flickering images that united us.

Sunday evenings at 5:30 were sacred. The whole family would wait eagerly for the film to start. Sometimes the movies were slow, artistic, or symbolic, not always easy for young minds to grasp. Yet, we watched patiently, giving respect to whatever was on screen.

Weekday evenings had their own rhythm. The regional telecast began with Butraat, a programme full of useful advice on farming and horticulture, vital for many families in Kashmir



countryside. Then came the news: the Kashmiri bulletin at 7:30, followed by the Urdu bulletin at 7:45. Beyond updates, they were part of our daily life, watched and trusted.

We also had weekly serials in Kashmiri and Urdu: Aalav, Harud, Hazar Daastan, Jum German.

Those stories echoed our culture and language. Missing an episode was a small setback, but thankfully there was often a morning repeat.

Electricity was never certain. Frequent power cuts meant a sudden blackout during a film or serial was a moment of real frustration. We hadn't grown addicted. Rather,

we had waited an entire week for that one show. Losing it to the dark felt like losing a precious moment.

National TV serials had a special place too. Shows like Udaan, Fauji, Circus, Nukkad, Yeh Jo Hai Zindagi, Wagle Ki Duniya, Dekh Bhai Dekh, Shriman Shrimati, and Gul Gulshan Gulfam gave us characters who felt familiar. They lived simple lives, faced everyday challenges, and taught lessons about honesty, patience, love, and sacrifice.

Those stories never overwhelmed with loud music or exaggerated drama. Children and elders could watch side by side without awkwardness. The absence of obscenity mattered.

Those stories had boundaries and stayed within them. Decency was respected, and that gave the shows a kind of gentle strength.

Looking back, the technology was limited, and the screens were small. Yet, those films and serials filled our hearts. They never tried too hard to impress, but spoke simply and sincerely.

Perhaps that's why they remain part of us, not because they were flawless, but because they were honest.

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SUNDAY EVENINGS AT 5:30 WERE SACRED. The whole family would wait eagerly for the film to start. Sometimes the movies were slow, artistic, or symbolic, not always easy for young minds to grasp. Yet, we watched patiently, giving respect to whatever was on screen.

Over 85% Students Clear Class 12 CBSE Exams

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The CBSE on Wednesday declared the class 12 exam results, revealing that over 85 per cent candidates have cleared the exams this year.

The results show that the overall pass rate dipped by over three percentage points compared to the last year. Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj confirmed that more than 85 per cent of the students have passed the exams.

A total of 94,028 candidates -- 5.32 per cent of all examinees -- scored 90 per cent and above, while 17,113 candidates (0.97 per cent) scored 95 per cent or more.

He said the number of students placed in compartment rose to 1,63,800 (9.26 per cent) in 2026, up from 1,29,095 (7.63 per cent) in 2025. It means that these students may have failed in one or two subjects in the main board exam but have passed in the other subjects.

Girls once again outperformed boys in the examinations and recorded 88.86 pass percentage, while for boys, it stood at 82.13 per cent.

Transgender candidates achieved a 100 per cent pass rate.

Among the 22 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) regions, Trivandrum led with the highest pass percentage at 95.62, followed by Chennai (93.84) and Bengaluru (93.19). Prayagraj recorded the lowest pass rate at 72.43 per cent, followed by Patna at 74.45 per cent.

Among institution types, Kendriya Vidyalayas posted the best performance at 98.55 per cent, followed closely by Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas at 98.47 per cent. Government schools recorded 89.55 per cent pass rate, while for independent schools, it stood at 84.22 per cent.

The examinations were conducted across 19,967 schools and 7,573 centres, with over 5.06 lakh invigilators deployed.

Marking a first, the CBSE carried out full-scale evaluation of class 12 exam answer sheets through 'On Screen Marking' (OSM), under which 98,66,622 answer books were digitally assessed by around 70,000 evaluators. Students placed in compartment or wishing to improve performance in one subject may appear in the supplementary examination scheduled for July 15, officials said.

The 'List of Candidates' (LOC) submission window will open on June 2.

Results can be accessed at cbse.gov.in or on DigiLocker.

Air India Cuts Over 100 Weekly Int'l Flights

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Air India will cut nearly 100 overseas flights and temporarily suspend services on seven routes, including Delhi-Chicago, that will result in up to 27 per cent reduction in the loss-making airline's international capacity as it grapples with mounting operational costs due to airspace curbs and high jet fuel prices.

The airline, which has already reduced flights on certain routes, on Wednesday said the latest announced rationalisation of services will be in place during the June-August period.

A combination of factors, including continued airspace restrictions over certain regions and record high jet fuel prices for international operations, are significantly impacting the commercial viability of certain planned services, Air India said in a statement.

An official said there will be around 27 per cent reduction in the international capacity or seat offered on various routes as part of the rationalisation.

More than 100 weekly or over 400 monthly international services will be reduced during the next



three months, as per calculations based on details of flight reductions provided by the airline in the statement.

The carrier will be temporarily suspending services on Delhi-Chicago, Delhi-Newark, Mumbai-New York, Delhi-Shanghai, Chennai-Singapore, Mumbai-Dhaka, and Delhi-Male routes till August.

While announcing the rationalisation of services, Air India also said it "may make further adjustments to its network, should the extraordinary operating environment prevail".

On the North America routes, the airlines will reduce at least 10 weekly flights apart from temporarily suspension of Delhi-Chicago services.

Air India will cut 12 weekly flights on the Europe network

while the reduction will be six weekly services on the Australia front, according to the statement.

There will be up to reduction of 68 weekly flights on the Far East, Southeast Asia, and SAARC network.

The airline said it would continue to operate more than 1,200 international flights every month.

These include 33 flights per week to North America, 47 flights per week to Europe, 57 flights per week to the UK, eight flights per week to Australia, 158 flights per week to the Far East, Southeast Asia, and SAARC regions, and seven flights per week to Mauritius (Africa).

During the June-August period, flights from Delhi to San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, Paris, Copenhagen, Milan, Vienna, Zurich, and Rome will be reduced.

Air India's services from Delhi to Melbourne, Sydney, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Kathmandu, Dhaka, and Colombo will also be cut.

As per the statement, flights from Mumbai to Singapore, Bangkok, and Colombo will be trimmed while services on the Mumbai-Newark will be increased.

Earlier this month, Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson told the staff that the airline reduced some flying for April and May as massive rise in jet fuel prices, which, together with airspace closures and longer flying routes, have caused many of its international flights to become unprofitable to operate.

Airspace restrictions in the wake of the West Asia conflict have forced the airline to take longer routes for many international destinations, resulting in increased fuel burn.

Hit hard by Pakistan airspace closure and Iran war, Air India has resorted to cost-cutting measures, including holding back annual increments for staff and asking them to cut discretionary spending as well as non-critical expenditures, and has warned of "tough times".

J&K Police Destroy Cannabis Crop Spread Over 53 Kanals of Land

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Police have launched a massive crackdown on the cultivation of cannabis and destroyed the crop grown in over 53 kanals of land in Doda and Samba districts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

Doda Police carried out a series of anti-drug operations across different parts of the district and destroyed wild cannabis cultivation spread over nearly 36 kanals of land, they said.

A major destruction drive was conducted in the Nagri, Tondwah and Ghat areas, where wild cannabis cultivation spread over approximately 15 kanals of land was destroyed, they added.

Similarly, police teams also carried out a special drive and uprooted wild cannabis cultivation spread over approximately three kanals of land in Kashtigarh, two kanals in Chamote and Goha areas, and one kanal each in Billawas, Bagla and Pul Doda, they said.

Police teams also carried out a special anti-narcotics drive under Dessa Police Station, during which wild cannabis plants spread on nine kanals were destroyed as part of the district-wide campaign against narcotics, they said.

The action is part of the intensified campaign launched by Doda Police to eradicate the menace of narcotics from society and safeguard the youth from the harmful effects of drug abuse, they said.

Cannabis was also destroyed on over four kanals of land at other places in the district.

In Samba district, police carried out a major operation against a cannabis plantation spread over approximately 10 kanals of government land in Rattwana village, which falls under Chagwal Police Station limits, they said.

In another such operation, police carried out a special drive in the Phagsoo and Kahila Jamrayi areas, thereby destroying wild cultivation of cannabis plants spread over approximately one kanal of land in Doda, they said.

Similarly, a team conducted a special anti-cannabis drive in the area, where wild growth of cannabis plants spread over approximately three-and-a-half kanals of land was destroyed, they said.

In another operation, police destroyed a wild crop of cannabis plants spread over approximately three kanals of land in the Assar and Baggara areas, they said.

Lebanon: Israeli Strikes Kill 12, Including 2 Children

Agencies

Beirut: Israeli airstrikes on Wednesday struck seven vehicles in Lebanon -- three of them on the main highway just south of Beirut -- killing 12 people, including a woman and her two children, the Lebanese Health Ministry said.

The Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah infrastructure in several areas in southern Lebanon, hours after telling residents of six southern villages to evacuate.

Lebanon and Israel are scheduled to hold another round of direct talks in Washington on Thursday as the Trump administration pushes for a breakthrough between the two neighbours that have been in a state of war since Israel was created in 1948.

The Health Ministry confirmed the seven airstrikes on vehicles but didn't provide full details of the number of people in each vehicle.

Two of Wednesday's drone attacks hit a highway linking Beirut with the southern port city of Sidon, while a third struck the town of Saadiyat near the busy freeway, the state-run National news agency said. The Health Ministry said those strikes killed eight people in total, including the mother and children.

A fourth strike took place in the early afternoon near the northern entrance of Sidon, leaving one person dead and another wounded, the ministry said. It added that three other drone strikes on cars deeper in southern Lebanon

killed three people.

An Associated Press photographer saw the bodies of three people killed in two of the strikes near the coastal towns of Barja and Jiyeh.

In southern Lebanon, Israeli airstrikes were reported in various towns and villages, while Hezbollah claimed that it launched additional attacks on Israel as both sides kept exchanging fire despite a US-brokered ceasefire on April 17.

Hezbollah also has been using drones in its attacks on Israeli forces.

The UN peacekeeping force deployed in southern Lebanon, known as UNIFIL said Wednesday it is increasingly concerned about fighting between Hezbollah and

Israeli soldiers near its positions, putting peacekeepers at risk, including with explosions of drones in and around UN bases.

UNIFIL said a presumed Hezbollah drone detonated inside its headquarters in the coastal town of Naqoura on Tuesday, following earlier presumed Hezbollah drone detonations on Monday and Tuesday. No one was injured, but some buildings were damaged.

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war started on March 2, when the Lebanese militant group fired rockets into northern Israel two days after the US and Israel attacked Iran.

The Health Ministry said Wednesday that since the war began, 2,896 have been killed and 8,824 wounded. (AP)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir's Liquor

looks impressive in budget speeches," said Dr. Mujeeb Hassan, a Srinagar-based economist who studies public expenditure. "The larger picture emerges when healthcare costs, crime, lost productivity and family debt enter the calculation. Kashmir earns a very small fraction of total excise revenue while paying a disproportionately high social price."

Official records show Jammu and Kashmir's liquor industry expanded dramatically after online auction reforms transformed the licensing system. Excise auction collections climbed from roughly 10 crore in 2020 to more than 1,118 crore in 2024-25. Alcohol sales increased sharply as well, rising from 471 lakh bottles in 2020-21 to more than 672 lakh bottles within three years.

Government officials defend the revenue as fiscally necessary. Jammu and Kashmir's 1.27 lakh crore budget relies heavily on central assistance, which accounts for nearly two-thirds of public revenue. Excise collections support expenditures that include salaries, pensions, infrastructure, electricity purchases and welfare programs. Budget documents link state spending to crop insurance schemes, support for orphaned children and subsidized LPG programs.

Finance officials privately acknowledge that replacing 3,000 crore in annual revenue would strain an administration already dependent on federal support. Kashmir critics of liquor policy respond with a narrower argument. They focus on the valley rather than the entire Union Territory. Their case rests on a blunt equation. Several local studies compiled by economists and public health researchers estimate that Kashmir Valley suffers annual alcohol-linked losses ranging between 1,500 crore and 2,500 crore. Those losses include healthcare spending, addiction treatment, workplace absenteeism, reduced productivity, domestic violence intervention, road accidents and illegal alcohol trade.

Researchers estimate that households in the valley spend 400 crore to 600 crore each year on alcohol consumption alone. Economists describe that spending as money diverted away from education, healthcare and savings. At Srinagar's Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, psychiatrists say younger patients now come with addiction problems once associated largely with older men.

"Kashmir's median age remains very young," said a senior psychiatrist at the hospital who requested anonymity because he lacked authorization to speak publicly. "Alcohol dependence affects educational performance, family relations and employability. Families often seek help after years of silent deterioration."

Police officers and social workers describe a similar pattern inside homes. A women's rights counsellor in downtown Srinagar recalled recent cases involving alcohol-linked domestic disputes. "Many families come very late," she said. "Debt accumulates first, violence enters later. Children absorb the emotional damage throughout."

Road safety officials also point toward rising concern. Traffic police officers estimate that alcohol contributes to a significant share of serious night-time accidents in urban areas, particularly among younger drivers.

Community leaders argue that the debate reaches deeper into Kashmir's cultural identity. Kashmir's Muslim-majority population has long maintained social resistance toward alcohol consumption. Religious scholars and local elders frequently describe liquor outlets as incompatible with the valley's social traditions and Sufi heritage.

That tension surfaces sharply in public protests whenever authorities attempt to open new liquor shops in Kashmir towns.

Outside a mosque in south Kashmir's Shopian district, residents gathered recently after Friday prayers and discussed rumours of possible licensing changes. Shopian has no liquor outlet, a fact residents often mention with pride.

"Our society made this choice years ago," said Ghulam Mohammad, a retired schoolteacher standing beside a row of shuttered storefronts. "People here believe alcohol harms families and damages the community atmosphere."

Business leaders in Kashmir increasingly connect that argument to tourism branding.

Tourism operators market Kashmir as a destination centered on mountains, spirituality, gardens and family travel. Some entrepreneurs believe liquor expansion weakens that image at a moment when the valley seeks premium tourism growth.

"Kashmir already possesses a global identity," said Mir Faisal, who operates a travel company in Srinagar. "Spiritual tourism, ecotourism and wellness tourism offer stronger long-term returns than alcohol sales."

Economic analysts also point toward sectors they believe could replace the valley's liquor revenue relatively quickly.

Tourism remains the largest candidate. Kashmir attracts most visitors arriving in Jammu and Kashmir each year, and economists estimate that modest growth in tourism taxes could exceed the valley's liquor income.

Horticulture gives another opening, as Kashmir produces roughly 1.8 million metric tons of apples annually, though farmers and exporters continue to struggle with limited cold storage, processing infrastructure and export access.

Handicrafts present additional possibilities, with pashmina shawls, walnut wood carving and hand-knotted carpets still commanding international recognition despite years of declining artisan income.

Technology firms and startup advocates see potential in Kashmir's young workforce. Remote work centers and IT services continue to expand gradually in Srinagar and other urban pockets.

Supporters of a valley-specific liquor ban argue that those sectors offer culturally acceptable revenue with stronger employment potential.

Their proposal avoids statewide prohibition. Jammu region, where alcohol consumption carries wider social acceptance, would continue operating its existing excise network

and retain most government revenue. Kashmir Valley would phase out its small liquor market while focusing on alternative sectors.

Economists backing the proposal estimate that reduced healthcare burdens, lower crime costs and improved productivity could generate annual gains exceeding the valley's current liquor revenue many times over.

Critics warn that prohibition could expand black-market activity. Bootlegging already exists in parts of the valley, fuelled partly by restricted legal access. Public health experts also caution that underground alcohol networks often produce dangerous spurious liquor.

Government officials have avoided committing to any policy shift. Political parties speak carefully about the issue because it touches religion, economics and regional identity simultaneously.

Still, the debate grows sharper with each budget cycle.

Kashmir's liquor revenue equals only a tiny fraction of the Union Territory's total budget. Supporters of prohibition see that number as proof the valley can absorb the transition. Opponents see symbolism overpowering fiscal reality.

Back at the Srinagar hospital, attendants continued moving stretchers through crowded corridors long after midnight. A doctor paused briefly before returning to another patient. "Revenue enters government files," he said softly. "Consequences arrive here."

BJP Cries Foul

Independent Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, and Congress's Nizamuddin Bhat will respectively head the Public Accounts Committee, Environment Committee, Subordinate Legislation Committee, and Ethics Committee.

In a statement issued here this evening, Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma said that Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather's decision to hand over the chairmanship of eight out of nine House committees to MLAs of the ruling National Conference-led alliance smacks of a move to turn the J&K Assembly into the National Conference's headquarters, Nawai Subah.

He said that the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly belongs to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and that the BJP will resist any move to turn it into the fiefdom of any party.

"The decision to appoint eight MLAs of the ruling party as heads of the committees is totally unjustified and an insult to the mandate of the people of J&K," he said, adding that the universally accepted principle of proportional representation has been trampled by the Speaker.

He said the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly empower the Speaker to nominate chairman of House committees, but discretion must be exercised fairly in all decisions. (KNO)

Rain, Lightning &

advisory issued by the Met Department said. The weather office also warned of thunder, lightning and gusty winds with speeds reaching 40 to 50 kilometres per hour at isolated places in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

concerns regarding delays and stoppages in livestock movement from Punjab remain unresolved despite representations made to the authorities.

Mehraj-ud-Din said that unlike previous years, no formal consultation has yet been held with mutton dealers ahead of Eid-ul-Adha.

"The J&K administration says it has written three times to Punjab, while we have received no response or update. As Eid-ul-Adha approaches, the government claims sufficient stock and preparedness, but questions remain over earlier concerns and demands," he said.

The issue assumes significance as Kashmir witnesses a sharp increase in demand for livestock and mutton during Eid-ul-Adha, with traders heavily dependent on animal supplies transported from outside the Union Territory, particularly Punjab and other northern states.

Payment Delays

dues running into hundreds of crores, and some claims are still unpaid since 2021. This situation has pushed many healthcare institutions, especially dialysis units, to the brink of closure," he said.

He added that the Insurance Mode, already adopted in several other states and Union Territories, offers a more accountable and efficient mechanism for timely reimbursement through professional insurance companies.

According to Faizan, the transition would help ensure quicker settlement of claims and reduce financial uncertainty faced by hospitals. "It will help prevent disruptions in critical healthcare services such as dialysis, oncology treatment, cardiac care and emergency services," he said.

General Secretary of the association, Dr Masood ul Hassan, also expressed concern over mounting liabilities under the current arrangement.

He said that despite the expiry of the P58 period last month, nearly 60 per cent of payments are still pending, placing immense operational stress on healthcare institutions.

"Our only concern is uninterrupted patient care. A transparent and robust payment mechanism will restore the confidence of private hospitals and ensure that Golden Card beneficiaries continue to receive treatment without any fear of suspension of services," Dr Hassan said.

The association warned that continuation of the present situation could adversely impact healthcare delivery across Jammu and Kashmir, particularly for economically weaker patients dependent on the Ayushman Bharat-Sehat Scheme for free treatment.

"The present crisis has demonstrated that the Trust Mode is not sustainable. Delayed reimbursements are putting healthcare institutions under severe stress and ultimately placing patients at risk," the association said.

JKPHDA has appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to intervene immediately and facilitate a transition to the Insurance Mode at the earliest.

The association said timely payments and a stable reimbursement mechanism are essential to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services under the Ayushman Bharat-Sehat Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs meets LG Sinha



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, which is on a visit to Jammu and Kashmir, on Wednesday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here, an official spokesman said.

According to PTI, he said

the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs headed by Radha Mohan Das Agrawal called on Sinha at the Lok Bhavan here.

The committee is on a visit to Jammu and Kashmir to assess the overall security and developmental scenario in the Union territory.

Non-Gazetted Employees of New GMCs Begin Indefinite Strike

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A deep sense of uncertainty and frustration among more than 3,300 non-gazetted employees working in the five newly established Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) of Jammu and Kashmir erupted into an indefinite strike on Tuesday, bringing routine healthcare services under strain across several districts of the Union Territory.

The employees, posted at GMCs Baramulla, Anantnag, Doda, Rajouri and Kathua, have accused the administration of ignoring their long-pending service-related concerns despite their continuous contribution to the healthcare sector over the past seven years.

The protesting staff, recruited during 2018 and 2019, include nurses, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, paramedical workers and ministerial employees. They said they had not only managed routine hospital responsibilities over the years but had also served on the frontlines during the COVID-19 pandemic when healthcare institutions across Jammu and Kashmir were functioning under extraordinary pressure.

Despite nearing seven years in service, the employees continue to work

without formally notified Service Recruitment Rules (SRRs), a situation they described as professionally and financially crippling. In the absence of the rules, no Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) have been constituted, leaving thousands of employees without promotions, career progression or clarity regarding their future within the department.

Employees alleged that the issue has persisted despite repeated representations, meetings and assurances from the authorities. Although draft recruitment rules were circulated for objections in late 2025, the final notification is yet to be issued, intensifying resentment among the workforce.

The agitating employees said the delay has created a sense of discrimination, particularly when compared to older Government Medical Colleges where structured service rules and promotional mechanisms are already in place.

Protests and sit-ins were witnessed across the campuses of all five GMCs on Tuesday, with employees raising slogans against what they termed as "administrative indifference" towards non-gazetted staff, whom they described as the backbone of hospital functioning.

Patients Suffer Due to Staff Shortage at District Hospital Shopian

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Hundreds of patients were forced to wait in long queues for hours at District Hospital Shopian on Wednesday due to the absence of staff at registration and ticket counters, causing severe inconvenience to patients and attendants.

From early morning hours, the hospital premises remained overcrowded as patients from different parts of Shopian and adjoining areas gathered for medical consultations and treatment.

Several patients alleged that despite repeated complaints regarding the functioning of ticket counters and the shortage of manpower, authorities have failed to take corrective measures, leaving patients to suffer regularly.

Waqar Ahmad, who accompanied his ailing mother to the hospital, said they reached the facility around 8:00 AM, hoping to receive timely treatment, but remained stranded for nearly two hours due to the non-functional ticket counter.

hope, but they are made to suffer even before meeting a doctor. Patients are being forced to wait endlessly just to obtain a registration ticket. This kind of negligence can become dangerous for sick and elderly patients," he added.

Attendants said tempers flared repeatedly in overcrowded queues as frustration mounted among waiting patients, with some alleging that arguments broke out between people due to delays and disorder in the registration area. Many patients expressed concern that such delays could prove risky, particularly for those suffering from fever, breathing complications, severe pain, or other urgent health issues.

Locals said the problem has persisted for a long time and accused authorities of failing to improve hospital functioning despite public grievances being raised on several occasions. Witnesses said long queues extended across the registration section while several patients waited anxiously for their turn, with many doctors inside OPDs unable to attend patients on time as registrations had not been completed.

Patients, attendants, and locals have demanded immediate intervention of Health Minister Sakeena Itoo in this regard.

Officials, however, said the issue rose due to a shortage of manpower, saying insufficient staff strength was making it difficult to manage heavy patient inflow efficiently. They said they have already informed higher-ups and are hopeful that necessary steps will be taken at the earliest.

CM Omar Lauds UMEED's Role in Transforming Rural Livelihoods across J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday congratulated the Rural Development Department and J&K Rural Livelihoods Mission (UMEED) for their remarkable contribution towards transforming rural livelihoods and empowering women across Jammu & Kashmir.

The Chief Minister said that the sustained efforts of the Rural Development Department and UMEED have brought about a significant socio-economic transformation in rural areas by strengthening women-led Self Help Groups (SHGs) and promoting financial inclusion and entrepreneurship.

The Chief Minister's remarks came in the backdrop of growing national recognition received by Jammu & Kashmir's women-led rural development initiatives under UMEED.

Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Shivraj Singh Chouhan also commended the leadership of the Jammu & Kashmir Government and the J&K Rural Livelihoods Mission (UMEED) for the remarkable achievements across Jammu and Kashmir.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, the Union Minister stated that continued focus on scaling high-value enterprises, strengthening market ecosystems and deepening convergence would further accelerate the



progress achieved under UMEED.

Expressing confidence in the future trajectory of the programme, Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that Jammu & Kashmir would continue to set benchmarks in women-led rural development.

In his communication, the Union Minister observed that Jammu & Kashmir has emerged as a strong example of inclusive and women-led rural transformation under UMEED.

Highlighting the financial inclusion component, the Union Minister said that the progress has been complemented by over ₹3,106 crore in bank credit and ₹820 crore in capitalization support fa-

cilitated under the programme.

During his Budget Speech 2026-27, the Chief Minister had reiterated that under the Lakhpati Didi initiative, 2,00,952 SHG women had already become Lakhpati Didis, while the remaining 32,048 potential households would be covered by June 2026 to further enhance women's economic empowerment and rural enterprise.

Over 8.10 lakh women have been mobilised into more than 96,000 SHGs, with over ₹3,106 crore in bank credit facilitated and more than 2.30 lakh women achieving annual incomes above ₹1 lakh under the Lakhpati Didi

CS Reviews Progress under PM-SYM Scheme in J&K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) scheme across the districts of Jammu and Kashmir, with emphasis on expanding social security coverage for unorganised workers through sustained awareness and registration drives.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar; Commissioner Secretary, Forests; Labour Commissioner, Charandeep Singh and other concerned officers, while Deputy Commissioners participated through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the Labour Department to make dedicated efforts for reaching out to all eligible unorganised workers for their registration un-

der the scheme so that they are able to avail the benefits envisaged under it. He asked the Labour Commissioner to furnish weekly progress reports indicating district-wise registrations and the incremental achievements made from today onwards.

Highlighting the significance of the scheme, the Chief Secretary observed that the benefits enshrined under PM-SYM are highly attractive for workers engaged in the unorganised sector. He said that the scheme, along with other social security initiatives such as PM Kisan Maandhan and the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons, guarantees old-age financial security to vulnerable sections of society.

He also called upon the Finance Department to closely monitor the implementation of these schemes and directed the Deputy Commissioners to assist in increasing registrations in their respective districts to ensure

saturation of benefits.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, on the occasion, stated that Jammu and Kashmir possesses immense scope for the successful implementation of such schemes as a large section of the population is associated with the unorganised sector. He stressed the need for widespread awareness regarding the benefits of these schemes so that more eligible workers are encouraged to enrol themselves.

Labour Commissioner, Charandeep Singh, while apprising the meeting about the scheme, informed that PM-SYM is a flagship pension scheme of the Government of India launched in 2019 to provide old-age social security to workers in the unorganised sector, including street vendors, construction workers, domestic workers, agricultural labourers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, hotel industry workers and other vulnerable categories earning up to Rs 15,000 per month.

J&K Bank Holds Interaction with Leading Car Dealers to Strengthen Vehicle Finance Outreach



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Reinforcing its focus on strengthening retail lending partnerships and expanding vehicle finance business across the region, J&K Bank today organised an interaction programme with authorized car dealers of Kashmir here at its Corporate Headquarters.

The programme witnessed participation from all major automobile dealers of the Valley representing leading brands including Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Tata Motors, Mahindra, Kia, MG Motor and Toyota. The interaction focused on the Bank's customer-friendly car loan products, dealership partnership framework and collaborative growth opportunities aimed at enhancing automobile financing penetration in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, General Manager (Retail, Agriculture & MSME) Rakesh Magotra said, "The automobile

sector is an important driver of economic activity and consumer aspirations. Through stronger engagement with our dealership partners, we aim to create a mutually beneficial framework that not only enhances business opportunities for all stakeholders but also ensures seamless and affordable financing solutions for customers."

"J&K Bank remains committed to continuously upgrading its products and processes in line with market requirements and stakeholder feedback so that our vehicle finance offerings remain competitive, flexible and customer-centric," he added.

During the programme, the participants were apprised of the key features of the Bank's car loan scheme including competitive interest rates starting from 7.70%, repayment tenure up to 84 months, flexible eligibility norms, family income pooling facility and financing of ancillary expenses such as insurance premium, registration charges

and accessories. Special benefits extended to government employees, pensioners, high net-worth individuals and other customer segments were also highlighted during the interaction.

The Bank also outlined its dealership collaboration framework aimed at streamlining loan sourcing, operational coordination and hassle-free credit delivery for improved service efficiency and business growth.

The participating dealers appreciated the Bank's initiative for holding the interaction programme and emphasized the need for conducting such engagements at regular intervals to facilitate idea sharing and strengthen long-term collaboration.

They also expressed satisfaction over the Bank's products and processes while voicing confidence that the enhanced partnership would contribute towards improved vehicle sales and greater customer convenience in availing finance facilities.

LoP Criticises Omar Govt Over Public Services

SRINAGAR: Leader of Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma on Wednesday slammed the Omar Abdullah-led government over governance in Jammu and Kashmir, saying its headquarters seem to lie somewhere between marathon tracks and Gulmarg's ski slopes.

Speaking to KNO, Sharma alleged that misgovernance and corruption have peaked during Omar Abdullah's government. "If you are looking for Omar Abdullah or his ministers, don't go to the Civil Secretariat. You should look for them somewhere between marathon tracks and Gulmarg's ski slopes," he said. He further alleged that Omar Abdullah's government is only concerned with the interests of elites, and not with the common man.

"Omar Abdullah-led government allowed the introduction of the lease extension bill to protect the interests of Kashmir's rich, who have been provided land for peanuts. On the other hand, it has shut its eyes to the problems faced by the common people of J&K. You should visit the hospitals and see that there are no doctors or facilities. The roads across the Union Territory are in shambles, and instead of receiving 200 free units of electricity, people are burdened with hefty power bills," Sharma added. (Observer News Service)

Tanvir Sadiq Takes Swipe at Sunil Sharma over J&K Remarks

SRINAGAR: National Conference chief spokesperson and MLA Tanvir Sadiq on Wednesday took a sharp dig at Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, saying he would offer him coffee and remind him that this is Jammu and Kashmir, not Assam.

Speaking with reporters, Tanvir Sadiq, as per KNO, said the BJP was disconnected from the political realities of Jammu and Kashmir and asserted the National Conference would continue to remain the people's choice in the Union Territory.

He said some BJP leaders were making statements without understanding the political realities and public mood of Jammu and Kashmir.

"They are dreaming. They have come from Assam and forgotten the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. I will go to his house and offer him coffee so that he wakes up and understands this is Jammu and Kashmir, not Assam."

"The National Conference is in government because people have voted for it. InshaAllah, when elections are held again after five years, the National Conference will return to power again. Without NC, nobody can form the government here," he said.

Taking a dig at the Opposition, Sadiq said those who promote sports and healthy lifestyles understand society better than those associated with drugs and negativity.

He also dismissed allegations of backdoor appointments and corruption by opposition parties as "baseless and repetitive political narratives" and challenged critics to produce proof against the government.

"If they bring out lists, the world knows who made backdoor appointments and transfers in the past. Let them prove even one illegal appointment or transfer made by our government or ministers," he said. (Observer News Service)

Census Crucial for Accurate Planning, Policy Making: Faz Lul Haseeb

SRINAGAR: Principal Census Officer (Urban) and Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, on Wednesday said the upcoming Census 2027 will play a decisive role in strengthening governance, improving planning frameworks and addressing long-standing data gaps at the ground level.

Speaking during an inspection visit to ongoing census training centres at Kashmir Government Polytechnic College, Gogji Bagh and Government Women's College, M.A. Road, the Commissioner, as per KNO, said supervisors and enumerators are being trained ahead of the nationwide enumeration exercise.

He said the census is being conducted after a significant gap of nearly 16 years. "It is constitutionally held every ten years, the scheduled 2021 exercise was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic," he said. He said the government has now directed preparations for the census, with Srinagar actively engaged in multiple training phases.

"Our census is almost after a gap of 16 years. Normally, every 10 years there is a census. In 1951 there was the first census, then in 1961, and the last in 2011. It was supposed to be conducted in 2021, but due to COVID-19 it could not take place. Now in 2026, the Government of India has instructed us to conduct the census," he said.

The Commissioner said the second round of training for multiple phases is currently underway, with four to five designated locations selected to ensure comprehensive coverage and capacity building of field staff.

"Today we have held the second round of census training for Phase 4, Phase 5, Phase 6 and Phase 7. A large number of participants are attending. We have trained master trainers who will further ensure proper training of all staff so that when house listing begins in June, we get clean and authentic data," he said. (Observer News Service)

Northern Army Commander Reviews Security Dynamics

SRINAGAR: Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Wednesday reviewed the security situation and operational preparedness along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, #ArmyCdrNC, visited forward areas along the #LineOfControl in North Kashmir to assess the existing security dynamics, summer strategy and review operational preparedness across the region," the Army's Northern Command said in a post on X.



According to PTI, the Army said that during an interaction with the troops deployed along the LoC, the Army Commander appreciated their unwavering spirit, operational acumen and tireless commitment in service to the nation.

"He encouraged all ranks to pursue excellence in operational capability, remain vigilant, responsive and combat-ready at all times," the Northern Command added.

Trump in China Against Backdrop of Iran War

Associated Press

BEIJING: US President Donald Trump landed in Beijing on Wednesday for a high-stakes summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping aimed at easing deep tensions between the rival superpowers.

Giving a fist pump, Trump descended the steps of Air Force One. One after touching down at Beijing Capital International Airport, kicking off the first visit to China by a US president in almost a decade.

Right behind him were Tesla boss Elon Musk and Nvidia chief Jensen Huang — potent symbols of the business deals that Trump hopes to sign between the world's biggest economies.

Trump was greeted with



a bunch of flowers and then walked along the red carpet, which was lined with 300 Chinese youths in white uniforms chanting "welcome" and waving small Chinese and US flags in unison.

While en route to Beijing, Trump said on social media he would "be asking President Xi, a Leader of extraor-

dinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic."

Nvidia's Huang was a surprise late addition to the trip, joining the plane at a stopover in Alaska. China is currently banned under US national security rules from buying the cutting-edge AI chips that the company pro-

duces.

But Iran, trade and Taiwan loom over the highly anticipated meeting, which Trump had already delayed from March because of the war the United States and Israel started in the Middle East.

Visiting China for the first time since 2017 during his previous term, Trump is expected to receive a lavish welcome from Chinese authorities.

Trump and Xi will hold talks at 10:00 am (02:00 GMT) on Thursday in Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People.

The US president will also visit the historic Temple of Heaven, a world heritage site where China's emperors once prayed for a good harvest.

Netanyahu Made Secret UAE Visit During Iran War

Trans Asia News

LONDON: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a secret visit to the United Arab Emirates during the war with Iran, his office announced on Wednesday, describing the previously undisclosed trip as a turning point in bilateral relations between the two countries.

"In the midst of the US-Israeli war on Iran, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a secret visit to the United Arab Emirates and met with the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed," Netanyahu's office said in a statement.

"This visit led to a historic breakthrough in relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates," the statement added.

The disclosure comes amid a series of reports indicating that wartime cooperation between Israel



and the UAE expanded far beyond the diplomatic and economic framework established under the 2020 Abraham Accords, evolving into direct military and intelligence coordination during the confrontation with Iran.

The head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, David Barnea, visited the UAE at least twice during the war with Iran to help coordinate operations, according to a report by The Wall Street Journal.

Barnea travelled secretly to the UAE on at least two separate occasions in March and April, the report said, highlighting a growing partnership between Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv.

NEET Paper Leak: CBI Arrests 5

Vijay calls for abolishing test, Kejriwal says Gen Z can 'force' accountability

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The CBI arrested five persons and conducted searches at multiple locations across the country in the NEET UG paper leak case as protests over the cancellation of the examination intensified on Wednesday and the chorus for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation grew louder.

One of the accused arrested in Jaipur claimed that influential people were being protected while ordinary people were being harassed.

During the day, a plea was filed in the Supreme Court by the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) seeking a complete overhaul of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and its replacement with a "technologically advanced and autonomous

body" to restore the integrity of medical entrance exams.

The CBI arrested Mangilal Biwal, Vikas Biwal and Dinesh Biwal from Jaipur, Yash Yadav from Gurugram and Shubham Khairnar from Nashik with several others suspects being quizzed in various cities and might be arrested later, officials said.

A political blame game also erupted with the Congress and the TMC claiming some of the arrested were associated with the BJP. Several social media handles shared photographs purportedly showing Dinesh with BJP leaders and ministers from Rajasthan.

Family members of Dinesh said he and his brother were detained by police for questioning and claimed that they were being falsely implicated.

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