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## India Cements UAE Ties Amid West Asia Crisis



PIB PHOTO

### PM Modi Seals Key UAE Energy, Defence Deals

Press Trust Of India

Abu Dhabi: India is ready to extend all possible support to bring peace in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, during his talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as both sides signed agreements to firm up strategic collaborations in the areas of energy, defence and technology. The UAE has also announced investments worth USD 5 billion in India, Modi said.

The Modi-Al Nahyan meeting took place shortly after the prime minister landed in the Gulf nation in the first leg of his five-nation tour that also includes four European countries.

The UAE was a roughly two-and-a-half-hour stopover for the prime minister, following which he left for the Netherlands.

"We condemn the attacks on the UAE," Modi said in his opening remarks in the meeting with the UAE leader.

The UAE, which hosts a prominent US military base, has been at the receiving end of Iranian strikes during the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran that started on February 28.

Full story on kashmiobserver.net

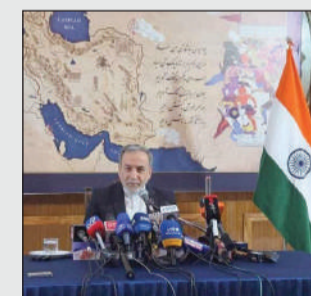
## Iran Gives High Priority To India Ties: Araqchi

### Chabahar Seen As Gateway Linking India to Central Asia

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi held wide-ranging talks on Friday focused on the West Asia crisis, maritime security and strategic connectivity projects, as both sides sought to strengthen cooperation amid continuing regional tensions and disruptions in global trade routes.

The discussions marked the first comprehensive high-level engagement between India and Iran since conflict erupted following the US-Iran war that began on Feb. 28.



Araqchi was in New Delhi on a three-day visit to attend a BRICS foreign ministers' meeting.

Had a detailed conversation with FM Abbas Araqchi of Iran this | More on P6

## J&K Forms Selection Panel For Fresh JJBs And CWCs

Agencies

Srinagar: In a significant move, the Jammu & Kashmir Government has initiated the process for re-constituting Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) and Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) across the Union Territory.

The Department of Social Welfare has constituted a selection-cum-oversight committee to facilitate the appointments.

The panel will be headed by Justice (Retd.) Puneet Gupta, former judge of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The term of members of JJBs

and chairpersons/members of CWCs had recently ended. However, on April 20, 2026, the government granted them a six-month extension from the date of expiry of their term, or until the new boards and committees are constituted-which ever is earlier.

A Juvenile Justice Board, as per law, comprises a Metropolitan Magistrate or Judicial Magistrate (First Class) and two social workers, of whom at least one must be a woman. The JJBs deal with cases involving children in conflict with law.

Each Child | Full story on kashmiobserver.net

## From Coaching Rooms To Exam Halls: CBI Maps NEET Leak Chain

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Central Bureau of Investigation on Friday claimed to have cracked the NEET-UG paper leak case with the arrest of a Pune-based professor alleged to be the "source" of the leaked chemistry paper.

Professor P V Kulkarni, a chemistry expert from Latur who had served on panels involved in setting NEET question papers over the years, was arrested after what the agency described as "thorough interrogation".

The agency alleged that Kulkarni exploited his privileged access to confidential examination material and conducted special coaching sessions at his Pune residence during the last week of April, shortly before the May



3 examination.

According to investigators, students attending these sessions were dictated questions, answer options and solutions that later appeared in the actual NEET-UG examination.

"Students paid several lakhs of rupees to attend these sessions where they wrote down the questions in notebooks,

which later tallied exactly with the examination paper," a CBI spokesperson said.

How The Leak Network Allegedly Worked

The agency said Kulkarni had mobilised students with the help of co-accused Manisha Waghmare, who was arrested on May 14.

On Thursday, the CBI also arrested Dhananjay

Lokhande from Ahilyanagar.

Investigators alleged that Lokhande received the leaked paper from Waghmare and passed it to Nashik-based Shubham Khairnar, who then shared it with Yash Yadav for wider circulation.

The agency has also arrested three individuals from Jaipur — Mangilal Biwal, Vikas Biwal and Dinesh Biwal — in connection with the alleged racket.

According to officials, Khairnar informed Yadav in April that Mangilal Biwal was willing to pay Rs 10 to 12 lakh for arranging leaked NEET questions for his younger son.

Investigators alleged that nearly 500 to 600 questions were shared with Yadav, with assurances that the material was enough to secure admission to a reputed | More on P6

## NEET-UG Re-Test On June 21, CBT Mode From Next Year

Observer News Service

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday announced that the NEET-UG re-test will be

conducted on June 21, while the examination will shift to a computer-based test (CBT) mode from next year as part of reforms following allegations of irregularities in this year's

medical entrance exam. The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (UG), held on May 3, was cancelled after allegations of question paper leaks and examination | More on P6

## Cabinet Clears Rs 93 Crore Power Upgrade Projects For Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir cabinet headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday approved power infrastructure projects worth Rs 93 crore for Srinagar aimed at improving electricity transmission capacity and reducing power interruptions across the city and adjoining areas.

An official spokesperson said the approval was accorded during the sixth meeting of the Council of Ministers chaired by the chief minister.

According to the spokesperson, the cabinet approved the augmentation of the Grid Sub Station at Zainakote from 450 MVA to 780 MVA at an estimated cost of Rs 67.66 crore.

The Council of Ministers also cleared the upgradation of the 132 KV



Pampore-Rawalpora and Rawalpore-Bemina transmission lines at a cost of Rs 25.47 crore.

The spokesperson said the projects are expected to significantly strengthen the power infrastructure in Srinagar and surrounding areas by enhancing transmission capacity and ensuring a more reliable electricity supply to consumers.

"The augmentation of the

Zainakote Grid Sub Station, along with the transmission line upgrades, is expected to improve overall grid stability and help meet the growing electricity demand in the region, particularly during peak load periods," the spokesperson said.

Officials said the projects are part of the government's broader efforts to modernise the power sector infrastructure and | More on P6

## HC Keeps ACB FIR Alive In J&K Bank-IFFCO Matter

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has refused to quash an Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) FIR registered in connection with the controversial J&K Bank-IFFCO Tokio insurance deal, observing that the allegations disclose cognizable offences requiring deeper investigation.

Justice Sanjay Dhar passed the judgment while hearing CRM(M) No. 265/2024 titled Pushap Kumar Tickoo & Ors Vs UT of J&K & Ors. Senior Additional Advocate General Mohsin S. Qadri appeared on behalf of the ACB.

The court held that the role of the petitioners, who were members of the evaluation committee constituted by Jammu & Kashmir Bank for selecting an insurance partner, still requires detailed

investigation by the agency. According to the FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau in 2019, allegations surfaced that J&K Bank entered into an insurance agreement with IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company in alleged violation of norms. Following the deal, a close relative of former J&K Bank chairman Parvez Ahmad Nengroo was allegedly appointed in the insurance company on a substantially higher salary package.

The court observed that the investigation revealed that Asif Manzoor Beigh, related to the former chairman, was appointed by IFFCO Tokio shortly after the agreement between the bank and the insurance company was executed. Investigators alleged that the appointment was made as a "special case" and was closely | More on P6

## HC Upholds PSA Adaptation Post 2019 J&K Reorganisation Act

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Friday upheld the constitutional validity of the adaptation of the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act after the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019.

While dismissing the challenge, a bench of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal held that Sections 95 and 96 of the Reorganisation Act expressly empowered continuation and adaptation of pre-existing laws applicable to the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Court observed that the continuation of the Public Safety Act after reorganisation flowed directly from parliamentary mandate and was not merely an executive exercise.



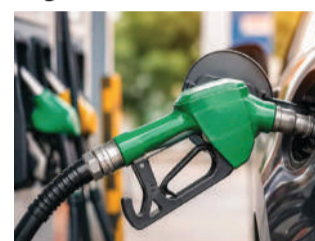
"A careful reading of Sections 95 and 96 of the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 makes it abundantly clear that Parliament itself, while enacting the Reorganisation Act, consciously provided a complete statutory mechanism not only for continuation of the existing laws applicable to the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir, but also for their adaptation and modification so as to facilitate their applicability to the successor Union Territories," the court

said. Referring to S.O. 1229(E) dated March 31, 2020, the Court said the substitution of the expression "State" with "Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir" was carried out within the statutory authority delegated by Parliament itself.

"The argument that only Parliament could carry out such substitution overlooks the fact that Parliament itself, by virtue of Section 96 of the Reorganisation Act, delegated such limited power of adaptation to the Central Government," the court said, adding, "Once the parent law itself gives such power, the action taken under it cannot be said to be outside the statute or unconstitutional."

The court said that the adaptation does not change the basic nature, | More on P6

## Petrol, Diesel Prices Hiked By Rs 3



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices were raised by Rs 3 per litre on Friday for the first time in more than four years, as surging global crude prices following the Iran war forced state-run fuel retailers to pass on part of their mounting losses after months of holding rates steady through key state elections.

The increase pushed petrol prices in New Delhi to Rs 97.77 per litre from Rs 94.77, while diesel rose to Rs 90.67 from Rs 87.67, according to industry sources.

Rates vary across states due to differences in value-added tax.

Compressed natural gas (CNG) prices were also raised by Rs 2 per kg in cities including Delhi and Mumbai.

CNG in Delhi now costs Rs 79.09 per kg, and in Mumbai it costs Rs 84. | More on P6

Pahalgam Attack

## BRICS Pushes 'Zero Tolerance' Policy Against Terrorism

Agencies

Srinagar: Reiterating their unwavering commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, BRICS foreign ministers on Friday strongly condemned the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack that claimed the lives of 26 civilians, and called for concerted global action to eliminate the menace of terror.

A statement released at the conclusion of the 2-day BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted in New Delhi said, "The Ministers strongly condemned terrorism, describing such acts as criminal and unjustifiable irrespective of motivation, timing, location or perpetrators."

It said, "Ministers specifically referred to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir in which 26 people were killed and



several others injured." The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border movement of terrorists, terror financing and safe havens.

"They reiterated that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic group and that all those involved in terrorist activities and their support must be held accountable and brought to justice," the statement said.

The BRICS ministers also called for "zero tolerance" against terrorism | More on P6



## BJP Protests Liquor Sales

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday staged a protest in Srinagar against the sale of liquor in Kashmir, demanding a complete ban on alcohol and closure of all wine shops across the Valley.

The protest march began from Ram Munshi Bagh in Sonwar and proceeded towards Gupkar Road, where the residence of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is located. However, police stopped the march well before it could reach the high-security zone and detained several BJP leaders.

According to details available with KNO, security forces were deployed in strength, and the protesters were dispersed peacefully after being halted near Gupkar Road.

BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur told reporters at Gupkar that the party in Kashmir is against all kinds of intoxicants. "The National Conference government wants to drown the local

youth in liquor," Thakur alleged. He warned that if the government does not act, the BJP will continue its protests. "The BJP will lock down liquor stores. This is a warning," he said.

BJP leader Manzoor Bhat also threatened that the party may launch a hunger strike if its demand is ignored, blaming rising addiction among youth on the availability of alcohol.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), defended its position while questioning previous policy decisions. "We fully respect the sentiments of these 20 BJP workers. But one must ask: which government was in power in J&K when the 2017 Excise Policy made Municipal Wards and Tehsils the basis for identifying unreserved areas? And which government was in office in 2022 when liquor sales were permitted in grocery shops?" the NC statement read.

## Minister Ito Reviews Patient Care Services at JVC Hospital

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Ito visited JVC Hospital Bemina to inspect the functioning of various healthcare facilities and review patient care services being provided at the hospital.

During the visit, the Minister undertook a comprehensive tour of several departments of the hospital and assessed the availability of medical services, infrastructure, healthcare delivery systems and overall patient management.

The Minister also interacted with patients, attendants, doctors, paramedical staff and hospital adminis-

tration to obtain first-hand feedback regarding the quality of treatment and functioning of the institution. She enquired about the availability of medicines, diagnostic facilities and other essential healthcare services being extended to the patients.

Emphasising the Government's commitment towards strengthening public healthcare infrastructure, Sakeena Ito directed the hospital authorities to ensure efficient patient care, improved sanitation, timely medical attention and smooth functioning of all departments. She stressed upon the medical staff to maintain utmost dedication and compassion while dealing with patients.

## Census-2027 Preparations for Census Self-Enumeration Exercise Reviewed in Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In connection with Census-2027, the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Srinagar (Principal Census Officer (Rural), Akshay Labroo and Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) (Principal Census Officer (Urban), Faz Lul Haseeb on Friday chaired a joint meeting of District and Sectoral Officers of all line Departments at Banquet Hall Conference Complex, Srinagar.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner and SMC Commissioner assessed the modalities for Self-enumeration and review progress of House listing Operations (HLO) and its update on Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS) under Phase-I of Census-2027 operations in the District.

During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the ongoing preparatory activities related to Phase-I of Census-2027 was undertaken, focusing particularly on ensuring smooth implementation of self-enumeration



procedures, completion of House Listing Operations within stipulated timelines and real-time updation of data on the CMMS portal.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of maintaining accuracy, transparency and coordination during the Census exercise, terming it a vital national exercise that forms the basis for planning and policy formulation. He directed all concerned Officers to ensure that the House Listing Operations

are conducted meticulously and that no household is left uncovered during the enumeration process.

The DC instructed all line departments to strengthen inter-departmental coordination and provide full logistical and technical support to field functionaries for seamless execution of the exercise. He further directed Officers to closely monitor field-level progress on a daily basis and ensure timely updation of collected data on the Census Management and Moni-

toring System to avoid discrepancies and delays.

Highlighting the significance of public participation in the self-enumeration process, the DC called upon Officers to intensify awareness generation activities at the grassroots level so that citizens are properly informed about the process and benefits of accurate Census data. He also stressed the need for capacity building and handholding support for field staff to ensure efficient handling of digital platforms and census-related procedures.

The duo, while reviewing the urban component of the Census operations, directed all Charge Officers and field teams within Municipal limits to ensure proper verification and timely completion of House Listing Operations in all Municipal wards of the City.

The SMC Commissioner further underscored the importance of the Census exercise and emphasized maintaining data integrity and adhering strictly to the prescribed Census guidelines and timelines.

## Countrywide Integration Camp of NCC Starts in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 12-day special integration camp of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets from across the country began here on Friday, a defence spokesman said on Friday.

A contingent of 342 cadets and assistant NCC officers (ANOs) representing every state and Union Territory of India arrived here to participate in the Special National Integration Camp (SNIC) Srinagar, a 12-day camp being conducted by NCC Group Srinagar under the aegis of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate, the Srinagar-based PRO, Defence said.

According to PTI, he said the

camp commenced on an auspicious note with the lighting of lamps and a multi-faith prayer ceremony at the Sarv Dharm Sthal, symbolising unity in diversity and reinforcing the ideals of communal harmony and national integration.

In a colourful and culturally vibrant start to the camp, cadets dressed in traditional attire from their respective regions showcased the vibrant mosaic of India's heritage. Their enthusiastic participation radiated youthful energy and a shared sense of patriotism that set the tone for the camp's inclusive ethos, he said.

Brigadier Gurbir Singh, VSM, Group Commander NCC Srinagar, in his welcome address, highlighted the

importance of such initiatives in nurturing unity, leadership, cultural pride and patriotism among the youth. He reiterated NCC's commitment to grooming responsible citizens and future leaders of the nation, the spokesman said.

The serene surroundings of Badami Bagh Cantonment then witnessed a spirited Battle of Intellects, as four teams engaged in a high-spirited quiz competition focused on the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the NCC, he said.

Demonstrating impressive knowledge and team spirit, the cadets impressed one and all. The day continued with fun-filled activities, invigorating military training sessions and exhilarating cultural exchanges, he added.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

We, Mr. Shakeel Ahmad Khanday S/o Ferooz Ahmad Khanday R/o New Colony Palpora, Srinagar and Mrs. Tanzeela D/o Gh. Nafi Sofi W/o Shakeel Ahmad Khanday R/o Achen Saidapora, Srinagar, hereby inform the general public that the original Sale Deed dated 16.08.2023 and registered on 16.08.2023 before the Sub-Registrar Srinagar, pertaining to land measuring 4 Marlas under Khasta No. 1271/383 & 384, Khata No. 176, Khewat No. 44 situated at Sidqabad, Estate Sangam, Tehsil Eidgah, District Srinagar, has been lost/misplaced. Despite thorough search, the said document could not be traced.

We now intend to deposit the certified copy of the aforesaid Sale Deed for creation of mortgage of the said property in favour of J&K Bank, Branch Chonduna. Any person having any objection or claim in this regard may submit the same in writing before the Branch Manager, J&K Bank Chonduna, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that no objection exists.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: Srinagar fko

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

I, Shaina parveen, D/O Gh Ahmad Sheikh resident of Noorani colony Dharambugh kralpora near RRR departmental store budgam do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that my name has been incorrectly recorded as Shaheena parveen in my Service Book. That my correct and official name is Shaina parveen

I hereby request all concerned authorities to take note of this correction and update their records accordingly. Henceforth, I shall be known and recognized as Shaina parveen for all official and legal purposes.

If any person has any objection to this correction, they may submit their objection to the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained

Shaina parveen Inf  
Resident of Noorani colony Dharambugh kralpora near RRR departmental store budgam

**Office Of The Executive Engineer, Electric Division- Ist, Srinagar.**

Tel No. 0194-2452079 Fax No.0194-2452079

**e-TENDER ABBREVIATED NOTICE**

**e-NIT No. 006/EDI, dt:14.05.2026**

For and on behalf of the Managing Director, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), the Tender Floating Authority, as specified in clause 1 of BDS, invites e-bids from reputed Contractors having Valid A-Class Electrical Contractor License or equivalent license issued by Chief Electrical Inspector of J&K PDD/Relevant issuing authority/ registered Firms/Bidders enlisted with CPWD/MES/Railways/GEM, for the works as specified in clause 2 of BDS (Bid Data Sheet).

S.No	Particulars	Estimated Cost (In Lacs)
1	Rate Contract for carrying out Restoration, Maintenance and HT-LT Network improvement Works for the year 2026-27 under the jurisdiction of Subdivision Nishat and Khunmoh (Stage Contract)	50.00

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidder/tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Bidding Documents contain Qualifying Criteria for Bidders, Specifications, Bill of Quantities, Terms and Conditions of Contract and other details.

A	Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document/Sale of Bid Document (Start)	The standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over <a href="http://jktenders.gov.in">http://jktenders.gov.in</a> from 14-05-2026; 04:00 PM
B	Clarification start date	15-05-2026; 10:00 AM
C	Clarification End date	18-05-2026; 02:00 PM
D	e-Bid submission (start) date and time (Submission of e-tender fee, and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	14-05-2026; 10:00 AM
E	e-Bid submission (End) date and time Submission of e-tender fee, and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	05-06-2026; 04:00 PM
F	Hard copy of tender document Submission end date (along-with Original Copy of e-tender fee, Instruments and other supporting documents)	Required for L1 only & to be submitted on or one day after opening of financial e-bid.
G	Online commercial and technical e-bid opening date and time	06-06-2026; 02:00 PM
H	Online financial e-bid opening date & time (only of the technically qualified bidders)	Will be communicated to the technically qualified bidders
I	Venue of opening of technical & financial e-bids	Office of Executive Engineer ED-I, Sgr.
J	Cost of e-bid document. (Copy of treasury challan/receipt to be up-loaded with e-tender)	Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand only).
H	EMD	Rs.20000/- (Rs. Twenty Thousand Only)

Sd/-

DIPK-NB-500/26 dated: 15-05-2026

Executive Engineer Electric Division Ist, Srinagar

TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266666  
PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883  
PDD: 0194-2450213  
FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155  
CAPD: 18001807011  
SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081  
Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +919484100200

**AIRPORTS**  
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

**RAILWAYS**  
SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259  
ANANTNAG: 01932-228243  
BARAMULLA: 0194-102029  
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: 53  
ZUHR 12:27  
ASR 5: 21  
Magrib 7:29  
ISHA 9: 03

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
28 Zil-Qadah  
1447

**This Day In History**

- 1204 - Baldwin IX, Count of Flanders, is crowned as the first Emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople
- 1527 - Florence becomes a republic
- 1571 Johannes Kepler, by his own calculations, is conceived at 4:37 AM
- 1606 - 2,000 foreigners murdered in Russia

**از نیابت یومی زینتگیر**

عنوان: درخواست منجانب عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود

**اشتبہ ہر خاص وعام**

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود کے بارے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے

عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن مزدوری 36 سال 50 سال  
جسید بیگم زوجہ عدل عدلی گھریلو کام 42 سال 49 سال  
حنان بیگم بیٹی عدلی ریٹن 05 سال 25 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سات یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ مینا گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تایب تحصیلدار FKO

**از نیابت یومی**

عنوان: درخواست منجانب عابدہ بیگم بیٹی اشرف احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود

**اشتبہ ہر خاص وعام**

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود کے بارے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے

عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن مزدوری 50 سال  
جسید بیگم زوجہ عدلی ریٹن گھریلو کام 45 سال  
نگفتہ دختر 24 سال  
عابدہ دختر 19 سال  
روقیہ دختر 8 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے سائل اسانکلی مہوار آمدنی 7500 روپے تک ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سات یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ مینا گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تایب تحصیلدار

**از نیابت یومی**

عنوان: درخواست منجانب شہیر احمد چوپان ولد غلام محمد الدین چوپان ساکنہ رشید آباد برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود

**اشتبہ ہر خاص وعام**

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود کے بارے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے

شہیر احمد چوپان ولد عدل غلام محمد الدین 46 سال مزدوری  
نازہ بیگم زوجہ شہیر احمد 42 سال  
بازل شہیر بیٹی 14 سال  
سیرت شہیر دختر 16 سال  
مدیہ شہیر دختر 06 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے سائل اسانکلی مہوار آمدنی 6000 روپے تک ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سات یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ مینا گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تایب تحصیلدار

**از نیابت یومی**

عنوان: درخواست منجانب ایجاز احمد وانی ولد لال دین وانی ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود

**اشتبہ ہر خاص وعام**

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود کے بارے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے

ایجاز احمد وانی ولد لال دین وانی مزدوری 50 سال  
گھریلو کام 49 سال  
زیر تعلیم 30 سال  
سُریہ اختر دختر 25 سال  
ناصر احمد وانی بیٹی 22 سال  
انظر احمد بیٹی 18 سال  
عدلیہ ایجاز دختر 15 سال  
صبرینہ دختر 12 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے سائل اسانکلی مہوار آمدنی 7000 روپے تک ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سات یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ مینا گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تایب تحصیلدار

**از نیابت یومی**

عنوان: درخواست منجانب رضوان احمد ڈار ولد ثناء اللہ ڈار ساکنہ سیلو برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود

**اشتبہ ہر خاص وعام**

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان عدل عدلی ریٹن ولد عدل احمد ریٹن ساکنہ ایس ایم ایچ زولوری برادری اجرائی نیگل ہیر سرٹیفکیٹ بحق خود کے بارے میں پوری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے

رضوان احمد ڈار ولد ثناء اللہ ڈار 30 سال ملازم  
افروز بیگم دختر ثناء اللہ گھریلو کام 35 سال شادی شدہ ازخانہ بیرون  
سمیرہ بیگم دختر 14 سال  
شبنم دختر 16 سال  
شبنم دختر 06 سال

اس کے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض سات یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ مینا گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تایب تحصیلدار

## KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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### KO VIEW

## Kashmir's Collective Fight

Kashmir's battle against drug addiction has finally entered the centre of public life, and the timing could not have been more important.

What remained hidden inside homes for years had already begun damaging the social foundation of the valley. Parents were watching young sons drift into addiction. Families were spending savings on treatment and recovery. Marriage alliances were collapsing after whispers about substance abuse surfaced around households. A growing generation of young people had started losing health, direction and dignity to narcotics.

That painful reality explains why the "Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyaan" launched under Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has received such a strong public response.

The 100-day campaign came as more than an administrative exercise. It arrived as a collective intervention at a moment when society itself was beginning to feel cornered by the scale of the crisis.

Recent figures paint a disturbing picture. A parliamentary panel estimated nearly 13.5 lakh drug users in Jammu and Kashmir, including more than 1.68 lakh children between the ages of 10 and 17. Doctors at Srinagar's Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences have repeatedly warned about the growing use of heroin among young people. Reports from the institution revealed that nearly 150 addiction cases reach the facility every day, while hepatitis C infection among intravenous drug users has also risen sharply.

Authorities have responded with unusual intensity. Police and civil administration launched public marches, awareness drives, drug testing campaigns and financial crackdowns against traffickers. Large rallies in Srinagar, Budgam and other districts brought students, teachers, volunteers and religious leaders onto the streets with a shared message. Officials also announced measures such as freezing financial assets, attaching properties and tightening surveillance against peddlers linked to narcotics networks.

This campaign matters because drug addiction in Kashmir stopped being a private struggle long ago. It had started disturbing social balance itself. Illegal money generated through narcotics was creating a parallel economy built on the destruction of young lives. Addiction was pushing many households into debt, emotional breakdown and public humiliation.

Every crackdown against peddlers therefore carries a larger meaning. It protects public health, social justice and community trust at the same time.

Public participation has become the strongest part of this movement. Schools, mosques, universities and neighbourhood groups have joined awareness efforts in large numbers. Addiction is finally being discussed openly instead of being hidden behind silence and stigma.

The campaign now needs a longer life beyond its fixed timeline. Drug networks evolve fast, and long-term vigilance will remain essential. Rehabilitation centres, counselling services, school outreach programmes and strict legal action against traffickers must continue with the same force. Young people struggling with addiction also need treatment, empathy and a genuine path back into society.

Kashmir's fight against drugs has become a people's movement. That collective spirit may become the valley's strongest defence.



Shahid Hakla Poonchi

The Jammu and Kashmir administration's decision to halt Rapido's bike taxi operations has sparked a debate that reaches far beyond transport law.

A question about permits and aggregator rules now sits at the center of a much larger public debate about unemployment, mobility, affordability, and the widening gap between policy and daily life.

Authorities say Rapido's bike taxi service operated without approval under the J&K Motor Vehicle Aggregator Rules, 2023. Officials also point to passenger safety, insurance standards, accountability, and driver verification as central concerns. Those arguments hold legal weight.

Public transport demands oversight, especially in a region where security and monitoring remain central parts of governance.

Public frustration, however, comes from the selective nature of the ban.

Rapido's cab and auto services continue to function. Delivery riders working with food and parcel platforms move through Srinagar and Jammu every day on motorcycles without interruption. Citizens therefore see a contradiction that the administration has failed to explain convincingly.

If app-based mobility services already exist on Kashmiri roads, many people ask why passenger bike taxis alone invite prohibition.

That question is now sparking this controversy.

Citizens usually accept regulation when rules appear fair and consistent. Public trust weakens when policies appear uneven. Kashmiris now see one category of commercial two-wheelers treated as acceptable while another category faces closure, despite similar operating models and similar use of digital platforms.

Government officials could have used this moment to build a regulatory system suited to modern urban mobility. Instead, the

administration chose a route that many commuters and riders see as abrupt and disconnected from economic reality. Economic reality matters deeply in Jammu and Kashmir.

Thousands of young people continue to struggle with shrinking employment opportunities and rising living expenses. Competitive exams consume years of preparation. Private sector jobs remain limited. Small income streams often become the difference between dependence and survival.

Bike taxi platforms gave many young men a workable path into self-employment. Students paid tuition fees through daily rides. Graduates supported families while searching for long-term careers. Young riders used personal motorcycles to generate income without waiting endlessly for recruitment drives or temporary contracts.

That reality deserves serious attention.

Public debate around Rapido often treats riders as anonymous app workers. Many of them actually represent a generation trying to build stability through initiative and hard work. A rider with a motorcycle and a smartphone found a way to participate in the economy through his own effort. That mattered in a place where economic frustration already runs deep.

Several riders have said they would welcome registration systems, police verification, insurance checks, fitness requirements, and licensing procedures. Most never demanded a free pass outside the law. They wanted a legal framework that allowed them to continue earning.

That distinction matters because regulation and prohibition serve very different purposes.

Commuters also embraced bike taxis for practical reasons that traditional transport systems failed to address. Affordability played a major role. Passengers in Jammu and

# Liquor Politics in Kashmir

A growing campaign against alcohol has exposed deep public frustration with leaders who discuss tourism and revenue while families confront addiction at home.



Raqif Makhdoomi

The latest political storm in Kashmir began outside Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's residence. BJP workers marched in protest as the debate around a proposed liquor ban intensified in Jammu and Kashmir.

Slogans filled the streets, television panels erupted, and social media timelines turned into battlefields. Another political confrontation had arrived in a region already exhausted by endless public feuds.

This time, though, the anger touched a nerve much deeper than party rivalry.

The campaign against alcohol has gained visible momentum in Kashmir during recent months. Religious groups, civil society voices, parents and sections of the political class have pushed the issue into the center of public debate. Growing concern about addiction among young people has transformed alcohol from a private habit into a public question about the direction of society itself.

Political parties soon entered the fight with familiar aggression. Leaders attacked one another with statements designed for headlines and hashtags. Ordinary people watched the spectacle with growing disappointment.

Kashmiris have deep political awareness, and they know the history of parties, the contradictions in speeches and the convenience behind sudden moral positions. Public frustration therefore comes from experience rather than confusion.

People expected governance, but they received political theater. The liquor debate exposed that disconnect with unusual clarity.

Alcohol has existed in Jammu and Kashmir for decades. The region's Excise Act came into force in 1984 and laid down rules for sale and consumption. Historical records place wine shops in Kashmir much earlier, dating back to the nineteenth century. Dogra rule played a major role in normalizing liquor sale in the region. Gupkar once housed vineyards and distilleries that generated substantial income for the monarchy. Srinagar still houses wine shops with licenses dating back several decades.

Kashmir therefore holds a long and layered history with alcohol. Public memory carries those facts clearly.

Still, social attitudes have changed sharply during recent years. Older generations viewed alcoholism with social embarrassment. Public drunkenness damaged personal reputation. Families treated addiction as disgrace rather than personality. That social restraint has weakened rapidly.

Young men now roam markets and streets in intoxicated conditions with little hesitation. Songs and online culture glorify heavy drinking as confidence and modern identity. Alcohol consumption has moved from private corners into visible public life. Easy access fuels that transformation further. A bottle today sits only a few minutes and a few hundred rupees away.

This normalization alarms many families in Kashmir. People see similarities between rising alcohol



dependence and the devastating drug crisis that already grips parts of the valley. Rehabilitation centers continue receiving young patients. Police campaigns continue targeting narcotics networks. Parents continue fearing addiction more than almost any other social threat.

Many citizens therefore see alcohol abuse as part of the same larger collapse affecting youth health, family stability and public behaviour.

A dangerous argument has also entered public discourse. Some people defend drinking by claiming alcohol stands preferable to drugs. That logic ignores reality.

Alcohol addiction destroys physical health, damages mental stability and empties household finances with equal force. Liver disease, violent behaviour, depression and fatal accidents emerge from excessive drinking just as death and destruction emerge from narcotics abuse.

One poison does not become acceptable because another poison exists.

The political response to this crisis has deepened public anger.

A ruling party MLA opposed a proposed ban by arguing that Jammu and Kashmir functions as a tourist destination and that liquor restrictions could hurt tourism and government revenue. Public criticism came immediately because people heard a painful message beneath the statement. Citizens heard political leaders placing excise collections above social consequences.

Clarifications followed quickly, though public resentment had already spread.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah later addressed the controversy by stating that nobody faces compulsion to consume alcohol and that existing liquor shops cater to communities whose faith permits drinking. He added that his government supports regulation rather than promotion.

The statement triggered another wave of criticism.

Many Kashmiris felt the government spoke like a business regulator during a growing social crisis.

The backlash intensified further after old remarks from National Conference president Farooq Abdullah resurfaced online. He had stated that alcohol prohibition could happen if the central government compensated financial losses linked to

liquor revenue.

That single condition changed the entire debate. Public attention shifted from morality to political priorities. Citizens began asking difficult questions.

What value does a government place on public health? What future awaits young people when excise income enters discussions before addiction prevention? What message reaches families already struggling with substance abuse inside their homes?

Kashmir today faces a society under visible strain. Economic pressure, unemployment and psychological distress already burden large sections of youth. Public spaces increasingly display intoxication as entertainment. Social media rewards excess with attention. Political leaders continue exchanging accusations while the culture surrounding addiction grows stronger by the day.

People therefore see hypocrisy in the current political fight.

Parties accuse rivals of promoting alcohol despite decades of institutional acceptance surrounding liquor sale. Leaders suddenly discover moral outrage after years of silence. Public trust weakens further because citizens remember the past clearly.

Kashmir needs seriousness instead of performance politics. Strong regulation, tighter licensing, awareness campaigns and investment in rehabilitation could at least signal genuine concern. Honest leadership would acknowledge both historical realities and present dangers without reducing society's future to a revenue calculation.

The current campaign against alcohol has already moved beyond party politics. Families discuss it at dinner tables, clerics raise it during sermons, young people argue about it online, and parents fear its consequences inside their homes.

That fear comes from watching a generation drift toward addiction while political leaders debate percentages and profits.

Kashmir's future cannot survive as another entry in an excise ledger.

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## The Ride Ends Here

Kashmir's latest transport controversy highlights the growing tension between older systems and changing public expectations.

older frameworks.

Bike taxis require regulation. Riders should undergo verification. Insurance standards should remain mandatory. Fare structures should remain transparent. Passenger safety should guide every operational rule. Government agencies should also create grievance systems and monitoring mechanisms that protect commuters.

A complete shutdown, however, solves very little.

Public demand for affordable mobility will continue. Economic pressure on unemployed youth will continue. Traffic congestion in growing urban centers will continue. Those realities require policy innovation rather than selective enforcement.

Kashmir's transport debate therefore presents a larger test of governance itself. Strong governance listens carefully to public experience while building systems that uphold legality and accountability. Effective policy grows through engagement with changing social conditions rather than resistance to every new model that emerges.

Many Kashmiris now seek clarity more than confrontation. They want to understand why passenger bike taxis face prohibition while other app-based transport and delivery services continue to operate freely. They also want policies that recognize the financial strain many families face each month.

That debate deserves honesty, consistency, and public engagement.

Jammu and Kashmir's administration still has an opportunity to correct course through a balanced regulatory framework that protects passengers while preserving livelihoods.

Such a policy could bring bike taxis into the legal system instead of pushing demand into uncertainty and resentment. People in Kashmir need transport systems that work for their daily realities. Young workers deserve policies that expand lawful economic opportunity instead of narrowing it further.

Good governance succeeds when it adapts wisely to how ordinary citizens actually live, travel, and earn.

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# Kashmir's Last Rafugars

As disposable fashion floods the market, the ancient Kashmiri craft of invisible mending survives in dim attics, worn fingers, and family memories stitched into pashmina shawls.



Shereen Naman

I sat on the floor of my grandmother's room as winter sunlight filtered through the lattice windows and settled softly on a folded pashmina shawl in her lap. She ran her fingers slowly along its border before stopping at a tiny tear that escaped my notice entirely. Her expression shifted with the gravity one reserves for something deeply personal.

"This needs a rafugar," she said. That moment introduced me to a world I would spend years trying to understand.

Rafugari, the centuries-old art of invisible mending, stood at the center of Kashmiri domestic life for generations. A rafugar repaired tears in shawls, pherans, silk robes, and treasured garments with such precision that the damaged area vanished into the weave itself.

The work demanded extraordinary patience, sharp eyesight, and an intimate understanding of fabric. Master craftsmen studied the direction of threads, the density of wool, and the grain of the weave before placing a single stitch.

Many Kashmiris once spoke of rafugars with the respect usually reserved for physicians or calligraphers. Families entrusted them with heirlooms linked to weddings, funerals, dowries, and memories that stretched through decades.

Pashmina shawls often spent months on the loom before reaching completion, which made repair an essential part of preserving both wealth and sentiment.

That world now survives in fragments.

I found one of those fragments in Srinagar's old city, tucked inside a narrow lane lined with aging brick

homes and sagging wooden balconies. A flight of creaking stairs led me to the attic workspace of 64-year-old Gulam Hassan, one of the few rafugars still practicing the craft full time.

Dust floated through thin beams of afternoon light as he sat hunched over a shawl, surrounded by spools of muted thread and folded pieces of fabric stacked carefully along the walls.

His fingers bore the signs of decades spent working with needles. Arthritis had bent the joints inward, though his movements still held remarkable precision. He leaned forward, adjusted his glasses, and guided a thread into the weave with the concentration of a surgeon.

"I used to repair five or six shawls every day during the 1980s," he told me without looking up. "Families came regularly, shopkeepers waited outside with bundles, and work filled every hour."

Silence fills much of his week now.

Mass-produced clothing transformed the relationship people maintain with garments. Shopping malls, online marketplaces, and fast-moving fashion cycles changed consumer habits throughout Kashmir as disposable clothing grew cheaper and easier to replace. Younger buyers rarely view shawls or pherans as heirlooms tied to family history. Torn fabric often heads straight toward the trash.

Gulam Hassan spoke about that shift with calm acceptance rather than bitterness.

"People want speed," he said. "Learning this work takes years. Repairing one small hole can take three or four days. A customer sees only a tear, I see the entire weave."

He usually charges around 800 rupees for painstaking repairs that consume long hours under dim light. Customers frequently bargain over the price, even when the shawls themselves cost tens of thousands of rupees.

"They think the work is expensive," he said. "They see thread and needle. They don't see time."

Kashmir's pashmina industry once depended heavily on rafugars. Fine shawls woven from Changthangi goat wool rank among the region's most prized textile tradi-



**TEXTILE SCHOLARS OFTEN COMPARE THE PRACTICE WITH THE JAPANESE TRADITION OF KINTSUGI, WHERE ARTISANS MEND BROKEN POTTERY WITH LACQUER MIXED WITH GOLD POWDER. Kintsugi highlights damage openly and transforms cracks into visible beauty. Rafugari follows the opposite philosophy. Kashmiri craftsmen restore fabric so completely that rupture vanishes into continuity.**

tions. Delicate fibers often snagged or tore during use, making skilled repair essential for preserving garments that traveled through generations. Wealthy households maintained long-standing relationships with trusted rafugars who understood the history attached to every piece they handled.

Older Kashmiris still describe those customs vividly.

Shawls rested inside cedar-lined trunks between seasons. Mothers folded them carefully before passing them to daughters. Small tears prompted immediate visits to craftsmen whose names circulated through neighbourhoods by word of mouth.

That culture revolved around care, patience, and preservation.

Rafugari emerged historically through Persian influence and

flourished throughout Kashmir, Lucknow, Punjab, and Rajasthan. Craftsmen developed techniques capable of replicating almost any textile pattern by hand.

Historians frequently describe them as textile restorers whose work blended artistry with technical mastery. Their success depended precisely on invisibility. The finest repair disappeared entirely into the cloth.

That invisibility now contributes to the craft's fading presence in public consciousness.

Contemporary culture rewards branding, speed, and visual spectacle. Rafugari leaves behind no visible signature. A perfect repair erases evidence of intervention itself. Mastery exists precisely where attention cannot detect it.

Textile scholars often compare the practice with the Japanese tradition of Kintsugi, where artisans mend broken pottery with lacquer mixed with gold powder. Kintsugi highlights damage openly and transforms cracks into visible beauty. Rafugari follows the opposite philosophy. Kashmiri craftsmen restore fabric so completely that rupture vanishes into continuity.

Both traditions, however, emerge from deep respect for objects and the stories attached to them.

Several designers and sustainability advocates now attempt to revive interest in mending traditions through slow-fashion initiatives in Delhi, Mumbai, and Srinagar. Workshops documenting traditional textile repair techniques have begun archiving oral knowl-

edge passed through generations of craftsmen. Fashion labels occasionally incorporate visible darning inspired by Rafugari into contemporary collections aimed at environmentally conscious consumers.

Those efforts remain small compared with the speed of industrial fashion.

Very few young Kashmiris enter the profession today. Gulam Hassan told me apprentices rarely stay beyond a few months. Better-paying jobs attract younger workers, while years of training discourage many who seek faster financial returns.

"Eyesight weakens," he said. "Hands ache, income stays uncertain, and parents want easier lives for their children."

His attic reflects that uncertainty. The room feels suspended between preservation and disappearance, holding traces of a profession that once formed part of Kashmir's cultural backbone. Folded shawls rested beside fading photographs and rusted sewing tools inherited from older craftsmen. Every object seemed tied to a slower understanding of value.

Before I left, Gulam Hassan handed me a repaired shawl wrapped carefully in cloth.

"This belonged to a bride," he said softly. "Her daughter brought it after many years."

I searched the fabric carefully for signs of damage and found none. The repaired section dissolved completely into the weave. Warm wool slipped through my fingers with perfect continuity, as though rupture had never entered the cloth at all.

That moment revealed the deeper truth inside Rafugari.

The craft preserves far more than garments. It preserves attachment, memory, and the belief that broken things still hold meaning when treated with patience and care.

Kashmir's last rafugars continue their work in forgotten attics and narrow rooms while the world races toward replacement and speed. Their stitches remain almost impossible to see.

Their disappearance, however, grows impossible to ignore.

— The author is a cultural activist by passion and scribe by profession. She can be reached at shereennaman33@gmail.com.

# The Other Side of the Story

The rise of citizen journalism is challenging conventional media narratives and exposing the dangers of reducing complex realities to a single story.



Seema Sangra

The power of media lies in its ability to shape public perception, all the more during the crisis. It has the power to intensify the situation during any crisis, mitigate its impact, or distort the truth.

In times of crisis, the risks of misinformation and manipulated narratives grow significantly, making the threat of information disorder more severe. Consequently, the need to prevent and combat such disorder becomes increasingly urgent.

Media's responsibility grows multifold during such times, and it must empower its citizens to think critically and behave mindfully by providing access to multiple perspectives, and positive stories. Media must check the tone of its reporting and restrain from any angle that can instigate unrest.

As a journalism student, we were taught that media must uphold their independence and prioritise the public interest, as they play a vital role in fostering social cohesion, integrating diverse communities, and serving as an inclusive platform for pluralistic debate.

Unfortunately with the emergence of private players, breaking news culture, consistent need to stay ahead

from each other, desire for high TRPs, lack of monitoring of ethical journalistic practices, and the wrong precedent set by some of successful journalists and TV anchors have created a culture that is turning the reporting, mostly biased and presents a single story.

During the TV panel discussions, a staple of our modern media landscape, the anchor's role become significant. The anchor's responsibility is to ensure a balanced debate, presenting diverse viewpoints, keeping discussions on track, and verifying facts to prevent misinformation.

Unfortunately, the role in present scenario is misunderstood by the reporters. They believe to advocate a single perspective and anyone that does not agree with it is treated with aggression and disrespect. This unethical conduct not only disrupts the studio environment but also influences viewers at home, who rely on these debates for information, specially during times of crisis.

A good example of media narrative and perception building can be culled out from the Vietnam war. It is often said that America lost the war not on the battlefield, but at home, a defeat significantly shaped by journalism.

When CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite declared in 1968 that he believed the U.S. could not win the war, his words carried immense weight, fueling political divisions and shifting public opinion. The war, many argue, was not only misreported at the time but is also misremembered today.

A thought-provoking piece in The Washington Post once asked: "Did the News Media, Led by Walter Cronkite, Lose the War in Vietnam?" The very question underscores the enduring power of media framing, a reminder that how a story is told can be as consequential as the events themselves.



**A GOOD EXAMPLE OF MEDIA NARRATIVE AND PERCEPTION BUILDING CAN BE CULLED OUT FROM THE VIETNAM WAR. It is often said that America lost the war not on the battlefield, but at home, a defeat significantly shaped by journalism.**

In today's scenario, another major player is social media. From 2006 onwards, with the rise and popularisation of platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), and TikTok (presently banned in India), there is a surge of citizen journalism, where by users also become the content creators.

The community size of some of the

bloggers is larger than most popular news houses and publications. This gives enormous power to these bloggers, besides individual posts at times of crisis bring in firsthand information in real time, sometimes difficult for larger cities based news channels.

Also sometimes reports by citizens and bloggers bring in the other perspective to larger audiences who are

otherwise dependent on conventional media narrative.

In the last year's Pahalgam terror attack, while the most of the conventional media specifically TV Channels reported a single narrative, and diverted the discussions to a divisive tone, social media brought forward a different narrative. Ordinary citizens, tourists, and bloggers shared videos,

photos, and firsthand accounts that painted a picture of resilience, compassion, and unity.

Locals opened their homes to stranded tourists, offering free food and shelter. Taxi drivers provided rides to the airport without charge. Youth from the valley organised protest marches condemning the violence, while the business and artist communities voiced their anguish. Prominent bloggers shared heartfelt messages, highlighting the solidarity of Kashmiris in the face of adversity.

If not for the counter-narratives on social media, the world might have accepted a one-dimensional version of events, reinforcing stereotypes rather than revealing truth.

This brings to my mind Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's powerful 2009 TED Talk, where she warned of the perils of a single story. Though in a different context, she says: "All I had heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them."

Her most striking insight was: "When we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."

Today, social media acts as that liberating force, challenging dominant narratives, amplifying marginalised voices, and restoring the lost 'paradise' of nuance. In a world still prone to oversimplification, that multiplicity of stories remains our greatest defense against misunderstanding.

This time social media changed the single story of Kashmiris!

— The author is the Program Leader for the Media Studies Department at Amity University, Dubai Campus.

## 3 Years Strong: PARAS Health Srinagar's Mission of Hope, Healing and Humanity

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Paras Health Srinagar marked the completion of three remarkable years of service in Kashmir — a milestone that celebrated not merely the passage of time, but a journey of compassion, resilience, and trust built with the people of the Valley.

What began as a vision to bring quality healthcare closer to communities has, over the years, transformed into one of India's most trusted healthcare networks. From its inception in Gurugram in 2006 as the region's first corporate hospital, Paras Health has steadily expanded its footprint across Gurugram, Patna, Darbhanga, Panchkula, Ranchi, Udaipur, Kanpur, and Srinagar — carrying forward a singular philosophy: care beyond medicine.

Managing Director Dr. Dharminder Nagar reflected on the deeper meaning behind building healthcare institutions and the philosophy that shaped Paras Health's journey.

"A hospital is never just a building or infrastructure. Its true strength lies in its people — the doctors, nurses, and healthcare professionals who dedicate themselves to serving humanity



every single day," said Dr. Nagar. He emphasized that the vision behind Paras Health Srinagar was rooted in making advanced, quality-driven healthcare accessible within Kashmir itself.

"We are here because Paras Health wants to ensure impactful, accessible, and quality healthcare reaches the people of Kashmir closer to their homes. Patients should not have to move outside unnecessarily or bear additional emotional and financial burdens. Their own doctors, their own capable teams are here to serve them with excellence and compassion," he added.

In this regard, a glorious event will be held in Srinagar today. The evening would highlight the inspiring journey of Paras Health under Dr. Nagar's leadership — a journey shaped not by shortcuts, but by perseverance, patience, and purpose. While many focused on metropolitan expansion, Paras Health chose to invest in regions where quality healthcare was needed most, often overcoming financial, operational, and infrastructural challenges to build institutions grounded in trust and humanity. Paras Health Srinagar, nestled amidst the scenic beauty of Kashmir, stands today as a

symbol of that commitment. Over the past three years, the hospital has emerged as a trusted healthcare destination in the Valley, touching thousands of lives through advanced treatment, compassionate care, and dedicated medical expertise.

Zonal Director Seema Vig acknowledged the collective efforts of doctors, nurses, support staff, and healthcare workers who contributed to the hospital's growth and reputation.

Facility Director, Paras Health Srinagar, Dr. Muruza Habib, also expressed gratitude towards the people of Kashmir for placing their faith in the institution and reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to continuously strengthening healthcare services in the region.

The celebration served not only as an anniversary event but as a tribute to every patient healed, every family comforted, and every healthcare professional who stood steadfast through challenges and triumphs alike.

"Paras Health Srinagar is not simply a healthcare institution, but a growing relationship built on trust, dignity, compassion, and hope for a healthier Kashmir," said PARAS Health Srinagar management.

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The Supreme Court of India on Friday called for rationalisation of airfares and asked the Centre to provide relief to air travellers amid concerns over sharp variations in ticket prices charged by airlines operating on the same routes.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta observed that airlines were charging vastly different fares for economy class seats on the same sector and the same day.

"Try to give some relief to the people because of the discrepancy. On the same day, flights to the same sector, one airline charges Rs 8,000 while another charges Rs 18,000 for economy class," the bench told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre.

Justice Mehta observed that there should be "some rationalisation" of airfares.

The solicitor general told the court that the government recognised the issue and was treating it as a non-adversarial matter while considering all aspects under a new legal framework.

He informed the bench that the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhinyam, 2024 had come into

force in January 2025 and that rules under the new law were currently under consultation.

The plea was hearing a petition filed by social activist S Laxminarayana seeking a robust and independent regulator to ensure transparency and passenger protection in the civil aviation sector.

The plea also sought regulatory guidelines to control "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfares and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines.

Senior advocate Ravindra Srivastava, appearing for the petitioner, argued that rules already existed under the Aircraft Act, 1937 but were not being properly implemented.

He submitted that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) already had powers to intervene if airlines were found charging predatory or excessive fares, but was failing to exercise those powers.

"The rules are there, the power is there, but it is a case of non-exercise of powers," Srivastava told the court.

The bench asked the petitioner to file a response to the Centre's counter-affidavit and recorded the solicitor general's submission that consultations on the new aviation rules were underway.

The matter has now been posted for further hearing on July 13.

The plea alleged that airlines were exploiting passengers through opaque pricing systems, arbitrary fare hikes and hidden charges, especially during festivals, emergencies and weather-related disruptions.

It further claimed that private airlines had reduced free check-in baggage allowance for economy class passengers from 25 kg to 15 kg without any justification, thereby converting a previously included service into an additional revenue source.

The petition argued that there was currently no effective regulatory mechanism to review or cap airfares and ancillary charges, allowing airlines to impose arbitrary pricing through dynamic fare systems.

It also contended that the absence of regulatory safeguards disproportionately affected poor and last-minute travellers and violated citizens' rights to equality, freedom of movement and dignified travel.

The Supreme Court had earlier, during hearings in January, termed steep airfare hikes during festivals as "exploitation" and sought responses from the Centre and the DGCA on the issue.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### From Coaching

medical college.

Questions Allegedly Shared Before Exam

Officials claimed that Mangal Bimal later circulated the leaked questions among relatives, while Yadav allegedly encouraged Vikas Bimal to identify more aspirants interested in purchasing the paper to recover part of the money involved in the deal.

The alleged agreement for the leaked paper was struck for nearly Rs 10 lakh, investigators said.

The agency further claimed that students attending the private coaching sessions wrote down the dictated questions, which later matched the actual NEET-UG paper conducted on May 3.

Raids, Seizures And Digital Evidence

CBI teams conducted searches at several locations across the country over the last 24 hours and seized mobile phones, electronic gadgets and incriminating documents.

Officials said forensic and technical analysis of the seized material was currently underway.

Investigators claimed that preliminary analysis of digital devices had already revealed incriminating chats, leaked question papers and other electronic evidence. Further forensic examination is expected to help retrieve deleted data.

Massive Exam Under Scanner

The NEET-UG examination, conducted by the National Testing Agency, was held across 551 cities in India and 14 overseas centres, with nearly 23 lakh candidates registered for the test.

The NTA had earlier said it received information regarding alleged malpractice on the evening of May 7 and subsequently escalated the matter to central agencies for investigation.

### NEET-UG Re-Test

malpractice surfaced.

Addressing a press conference, Pradhan said the government's "topmost priority" was protecting the future of students and asserted that there would be "zero tolerance" towards any irregularity in the examination process.

"We did not want any deserving student to lose an opportunity because of mafia conspiracies or money power. That is why we took the tough decision of cancelling the examination," he said.

The minister announced that candidates will be given a one-week window to choose their preferred examination cities again for the re-test. He also said the duration of the examination has been extended by 15 minutes, with the test now scheduled from 2 pm to 5:15 pm.

Admit cards for the re-examination will be issued by June 14, he said.

Pradhan said the Centre would coordinate with state governments regarding transport arrangements for students appearing in the examination and added that weather-related contingency plans were also being considered.

Explaining how the issue came to light, the minister said objections were received through the National Testing Agency's grievance redressal system regarding overlaps between alleged "guess papers" and actual examination questions.

"By May 7, objections started coming in. A preliminary inquiry was immediately initiated by the NTA and the Higher Education Department," he said.

According to the minister, authorities became certain within a few days that questions had indeed been leaked under the guise of "guess papers", following which the government cancelled the examination on May 12.

The case has now been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation, with Pradhan asserting that "no one will be spared", whether within the NTA or outside it.

The minister also announced that NEET-UG would move to CBT mode from next year, saying the format was comparatively more secure than the existing OMR-based system.

Meanwhile, officials said the examination fee paid by candidates for the cancelled test would be refunded and no additional fee would be charged for the re-test.

The National Testing Agency is expected to issue detailed guidelines and timelines regarding the examination and declaration of results in the coming days.

### Petrol, Diesel

However, prices of both natural gas piped into household kitchens for cooking, called piped natural gas, as well as domestic cooking gas LPG, remained unchanged.

Global crude prices have surged more than 50 per cent since US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28 and Tehran's retaliation disrupted flows through the Strait of Hormuz, a key artery for global oil shipments.

Despite the surge, retail fuel rates were kept frozen at two-year-old rates as part of what the government said was an effort to shield price-sensitive consumers from higher global energy costs. But the opposition parties saw political motives behind the move as key states went to polls.

The increase in fuel prices followed the completion of elections and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) expanding its influence after winning three of five states, including West Bengal.

After the increase, petrol and diesel prices are now the highest since May 2022.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked the government over the hike, saying the public was being forced to pay for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led administration's mistakes.

"Ghalti Modi sarkar ki, keemat janta chukayegi (The public will pay the price for the Modi government's mistake)," Gandhi said in a post on X. "The Rs 3 shock has already arrived, the rest of the 'vasooli' (recovery) will be done in instalments."

BJP, however, defended the decision, saying the government had shielded consumers from the global oil shock for more than two months and implemented only a "limited and calibrated" increase of 3.2-3.4 per cent.

Prices have remained on freeze since April 2022, but for a one-off reduction by Rs 2 a litre each on petrol and diesel in March 2024, just before Lok Sabha elections. Rates were last hiked in April 2022.

Petrol in Mumbai now costs Rs 106.68 a litre and diesel comes for Rs 93.14 per litre. In Kolkata, petrol now costs Rs 108.74 per litre and diesel Rs 95.13, while in Chennai, prices increased to Rs 103.67 for petrol and Rs 95.25 for diesel.

Industry sources said the price hike is modest relative to the rise in crude prices and still leaves retailers absorbing significant losses.

Radhika Rao, Senior Economist at DBS Bank, said the higher pump prices were likely to moderate fuel demand, while adding 15-25 basis points to headline inflation, excluding second-round effects.

Prashant Vasisht of Icrs said the "modest" increase was insufficient to restore profitability for OMCs if crude prices remain elevated.

Icrs estimates that at crude prices of USD 105-110 per barrel, OMCs continue to incur losses of around Rs 500 crore daily on sales of auto fuels and domestic LPG even after the fuel price increase, he added.

Crisil's Sehul Bhatt described the increase as a "meaningful, if partial, step" toward reversing one of the longest under-recovery cycles in recent years.

"At their peak, oil marketing companies were absorbing losses of Rs 23-30 per litre on petrol and diesel, translating to a combined daily loss of Rs 1,300-1,400 crore," Bhatt said.

According to Crisil estimates, the government's excise duty relief and the latest price increase have narrowed under-recoveries to about Rs 10 per litre on petrol and Rs 13 on diesel, though cumulative losses since the start of the conflict are expected to exceed Rs 1 lakh crore by the end of May.

Friday's move follows excise duty cuts announced in March and comes as the government rolls out measures to curb fuel consumption and contain the country's oil import bill. Prime Minister Narendra Modi this week urged fuel conservation, work-from-home practices and reduced travel as higher energy prices strain India's foreign exchange reserves and

threaten to widen the current account deficit for a third straight year.

Some state governments have already instructed departments to limit travel, avoid physical meetings and operate with reduced office staffing.

Private fuel retailers had already increased pump prices. Nayara Energy, the country's largest private fuel retailer, in March, raised petrol prices by Rs 5 per litre and diesel by Rs 3, while Shell increased petrol prices by Rs 7.41 and diesel by Rs 25 per litre from April 1. In Bengaluru, Shell sells petrol at Rs 119.85 per litre and diesel at Rs 123.52.

Domestic cooking gas LPG prices were raised in March by Rs 60 per cylinder, but they are still way lower than the actual cost. Oil companies are losing Rs 674 per 14.2-kg cylinder of LPG.

Industry sources said the price hike appears calibrated — enough to partially ease margin pressure on oil companies without creating a major inflationary shock.

The increase, however, will have some impact on inflation, they said.

India's retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to 3.48 per cent in April 2026 from 3.40 per cent in March, while wholesale price inflation (WPI) surged to 8.3 per cent, a 42-month high, driven by a sharp rise in fuel and energy prices amid elevated global crude oil rates.

Petrol and diesel do not have a standalone category in the CPI basket, but are captured under the broader "transport and communication" component and "fuel and power" category. Petrol and diesel carry relatively smaller but still significant weights through transport-related items, and economists say fuel price hikes have a wider indirect impact because they raise freight, logistics and input costs across sectors.

### Cabinet Clears

address increasing electricity demand in urban and semi-urban areas of the Valley.

### BRICS Pushes

and rejected double standards in countering terror activities.

They stressed that global counter-terror efforts must comply with international law, the UN Charter, international humanitarian law and human rights obligations.

The ministers welcomed the activities of the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group and its sub-groups functioning under the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Action Plan.

They also called for the expeditious finalisation and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the United Nations framework and sought concerted action against all UN-designated terrorists and terror entities.

The statement said, "The member countries failed to arrive at a consensus on the Middle East situation, preventing the issuance of a joint declaration."

"There were differing views among some members as regard to the situation in the West Asia/Middle East region. BRICS members expressed their respective national positions and shared a range of perspectives," it said.

On the situation in West Asia, the ministers expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis and condemned violations of international humanitarian law, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and obstruction of humanitarian aid.

The statement said members highlighted the need for dialogue and diplomacy, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, protection of civilian lives and ensuring safe maritime commerce through international waterways.

The ministers also called for an immediate, permanent and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and urged unhindered humanitarian assistance to civilians.

The BRICS grouping currently comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.

### Iran Gives High

morning in Delhi," Jaishankar said in a social

media post.

"Discussed the situation in West Asia and its implications. Also exchanged views on bilateral issues of mutual interest."

Jaishankar also appreciated Araqchi's participation in the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting.

People familiar with the discussions said India raised concerns over conditions in the Strait of Hormuz, where several Indian vessels remain stranded awaiting safe passage.

The escalating conflict has severely disrupted global energy markets because of restrictions and instability surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic chokepoint through which approximately one-fifth of the world's petroleum supplies normally transit.

Araqchi described the discussions with Jaishankar as "fruitful".

"In fruitful engagement with my host @DrJaishankar, discussed regional developments and clarified that Iran will always carry out historical duty as protector of security in Hormuz," he wrote on social media.

"Iran is a reliable partner of all friendly nations, who can rely on the safety of commerce."

Hours later, speaking at a media briefing, Araqchi reiterated that Tehran attached "great importance" to relations with India and expressed hope that the Strait of Hormuz would soon return to normal operations.

"As far as we are concerned, the Strait of Hormuz is open, and all vessels can pass except the vessels of those countries which are fighting with us," he said.

The Iranian foreign minister also turned attention to economic cooperation, describing the Chabahar Port project as a major symbol of India-Iran relations and urging continued Indian involvement despite renewed uncertainty caused by US sanctions.

Speaking in New Delhi, Araqchi praised India's contribution to the development of Chabahar and highlighted its role in regional connectivity and trade.

He said Indian participation had played an important role in developing port infrastructure but acknowledged that investment momentum had slowed because of sanctions-related concerns.

Araqchi's remarks came weeks after the expiry on April 26 of a U.S. sanctions waiver related to Chabahar, creating uncertainty around future investment and operational arrangements.

India views Chabahar as strategically important because it provides direct access to Afghanistan and Central Asia while bypassing Pakistan and serves as a critical pillar of New Delhi's broader connectivity strategy linking South Asia with Central Asia and Europe.

Araqchi said the project carried significance beyond bilateral ties.

According to the Iranian minister, Chabahar had the potential to emerge as a major trade corridor connecting India with Central Asia, the Caucasus and European markets.

He added that the port could facilitate easier access for Central Asian and European countries to the Indian Ocean and evolve into a broader regional connectivity hub.

Araqchi said the project's benefits extended beyond India and Iran and would serve multiple countries involved in regional trade networks.

He expressed hope that India would continue its participation so the project could achieve its full economic and strategic potential.

India and Iran strengthened cooperation last year by signing a 10-year agreement under which New Delhi assumed operational responsibility for the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar, marking India's first overseas port management project.

India has reportedly invested approximately \$120 million in infrastructure and equipment support linked to the project.

However, despite Chabahar's strategic importance, India's latest Union Budget did not allocate fresh funding for the initiative.

The United States had previously granted sanctions exemptions to Chabahar because of its role in facilitating trade and humanitarian access to Afghanistan.

Indian officials have said discussions

continue with both Washington and Tehran to protect New Delhi's interests linked to the project.

Reports have also suggested India is considering contingency arrangements, including temporary operational transfers involving local Iranian entities during the sanctions period.

Araqchi also encouraged a larger Indian diplomatic role in regional affairs, saying New Delhi's balanced relations across West Asia positioned it to contribute constructively toward peace and stability.

He said India enjoyed goodwill across the Persian Gulf region and could play an important role in encouraging dialogue and reducing tensions.

The Iranian minister said Tehran would welcome any positive and constructive role played by India in advancing diplomacy and regional stability.

### HC Keeps ACB

linked to the insurance contract awarded to the company.

As per the judgment, the ACB alleged that the then chairman and officials of the insurance company conspired to confer undue benefit upon Beigh, while the bank allegedly suffered financial losses in commission earnings after shifting insurance business from Bajaj Allianz to IFFCO Tokio.

The petitioners, who were senior officials of J&K Bank at the relevant time, argued before the court that their role was limited to evaluation of bids submitted by insurance companies and that they had no role in Beigh's appointment. They further contended that the financial loss assessment made by the investigating agency was "imaginary" and not based on proper insurance business calculations.

During the proceedings, the court observed that there appeared to be prima facie merit in the petitioners' contention that differing evaluations by expert committees could not automatically establish criminal conspiracy. The court also noted that the alleged commission loss calculations appeared uncertain and dependent on several business-related factors.

However, Justice Dhar observed that there were "strong incriminating circumstances" indicating a close nexus between the insurance deal and Beigh's appointment, warranting continuation of the investigation.

The High Court further stated that the investigating agency still needs to examine whether the presence and influence of the then chairman during the bid evaluation process had any impact on the committee's decision-making.

Refusing to interfere at the present stage, the court said quashing the proceedings at this point would amount to "scuttling a genuine prosecution," which is impermissible in law.

Accordingly, the petition was dismissed, with liberty granted to the petitioners to approach the court again after filing of the final report or seek discharge before the competent court if a chargesheet is filed.

### HC Upholds PSA

object or policy of the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978.

The replacement of the word "State" with "Union Territory" is only a consequential change made because of the reorganization of 2019, the court underscored. "The purpose and operation of the law remain the same."

The court held that accepting the petitioner's contention would undermine the entire adaptation mechanism contemplated under the Reorganisation Act and render all such statutory modifications vulnerable.

Accordingly, the Court ruled that the adaptation of the Public Safety Act was valid and did not suffer from any constitutional or legal infirmity, dismissing the challenge as devoid of merit.

"Accordingly, the challenge laid by the petitioner to the constitutional validity of the provisions of the Public Safety Act is devoid of any merit and therefore, rejected," the court.

The court was hearing a plea against detention order under PSA passed by District Magistrate, Baramulla against Tanveer Ahmad Mir of Boma Zainger. The court ultimately dismissed the plea.

## Kashmir Charts Global Textile Export Roadmap at SKICC Summit



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a major initiative aimed at aligning Jammu & Kashmir's traditional strengths with India's ambitious textile export vision, the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, under the Industries & Commerce Department, in collaboration with the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, organized a mega two-day Consultative Workshop on "Textiles for Global Markets: Strategy for Achieving USD 100 Billion Exports by 2030" at SKICC, Srinagar.

The workshop brought together policymakers, exporters, industry leaders, artisans, entrepreneurs, Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), DGFT representatives and sectoral stakeholders to deliberate on strategies for enhancing exports, strengthening value chains and positioning local products in global markets under the broader "Local to Global" framework.

On Day-2, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce attended the consultative session and interacted extensively with participating stakeholders. He held detailed deliberations on issues concerning export promotion, market access, value chain strengthening and opportunities for enhancing Jammu & Kashmir's presence in global textile markets. During the interaction, he highlighted the immense potential of the region's handicrafts and handloom sector and emphasized focused interventions in branding, quality enhancement and export competitiveness.

According to KNO, the two-day programme was structured around focused policy consultations under export planning frameworks. Day-1 featured discussions under the District Export Ac-

tion Plan (DEAP) framework with emphasis on identifying district-specific export strengths and sectoral opportunities. Day-2 focused on the State/UT Export Action Plan (SEAP) through wider consultations on policy interventions and export-oriented growth strategies for the textile sector.

During the deliberations, it was highlighted that the Ministry of Textiles has designated Budgam and Baramulla as Aspirational Districts, while Srinagar has been identified as a Champion District, recognizing the significant textile and handicraft potential of these districts and paving the way for focused interventions, infrastructure support and export promotion initiatives.

Participants held detailed discussions on major themes including export competitiveness, Foreign Trade Policy 2023, District Export Hub initiatives, Free Trade Agreements, sustainability and ESG frameworks, cluster development models and strengthening linkages between artisans, producers and international markets.

Officials informed that recommendations emerging from the consultations would feed into the National Consultative Summit scheduled in June 2026, where inputs from States and Union Territories shall contribute towards formulation of a comprehensive national strategy and roadmap for achieving the target of USD 100 Billion textile exports by 2030.

The workshop is expected to provide a significant impetus to Jammu & Kashmir's export ecosystem and further strengthen efforts towards integrating the region's globally renowned handicrafts and textile products into international value chains.

## Garbage Dump near Lidder River Raises Environmental Concerns



Observer News Service

**ANANTNAG:** Large quantities of waste are being dumped close to the banks of the Lidder River in the Sarbal area of Pahalgam, triggering outrage among residents and environmental activists who warned that the pollution poses a serious threat to the fragile ecosystem and public health downstream.

Resident informed KNO that the garbage generated from hotels, restaurants, residential areas and other commercial establishments is being accumulated near the river, posing a serious threat to the fragile ecosystem as well as to the health of people dependent on the river water downstream.

They said that although the government had established a waste management plant at Sarbal Pahalgam for scientific disposal of waste, the situation on the ground remains alarming as the fencing around the facility has been damaged, allowing waste material and contaminated runoff to flow directly towards the Lidder River, particularly during rainfall.

"Heaps of garbage can be seen lying scattered around the plant, and with every spell of rain, dirty water and other pollutants from the waste piles get washed into the river," said a local. "The location of the dumping site itself is highly inappropriate. The waste and contaminated liquid directly enter the Lidder River, which is a source of drinking water for dozens of water supply schemes across

Anantnag district."

Another resident said the unchecked dumping of waste near the river could lead to severe environmental degradation and increase the risk of water-borne diseases among the population using the river water for drinking and household purposes.

"We are not only talking about pollution of a river but the destruction of an entire ecosystem. Thousands of people depend on this water downstream. If immediate measures are not taken, the consequences could be irreversible," he said. Environmental activists expressed serious concern over the growing waste crisis in the tourist resort and questioned the absence of proper scientific waste disposal mechanisms despite rapid commercial expansion in the area.

"There should be proper facilities and infrastructure for the disposal and treatment of waste. If such facilities are not available, then on what basis are hundreds of hotels, guest houses and other structures being allowed to come up every year in Pahalgam?" an environmental activist questioned.

He said Pahalgam, being one of Kashmir's prime tourist destinations, is witnessing an increase in tourist footfall. However, waste management systems have failed to keep pace with the expansion.

Locals alleged that despite repeated complaints and growing public concern, the authorities have failed to take timely and effective measures to address the issue.

## Woman Killed Trying to Stop Daughter's Alleged Abduction

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** A woman was killed while trying to prevent the alleged abduction of her 15-year-old daughter in Kechpuran area of Khansahib, with police solving the blind murder and kidnapping case within 12 hours and rescuing the minor girl safely, officials said.

Officials told KNO that Police Station Khansahib received information during the intervening night about an accident at Chek Sheera, where an unknown vehicle had allegedly run over a woman pedestrian, resulting in her death.

A police official said the deceased woman was shifted to District Hospital Budgam, where doctors declared her brought dead. He said a case, FIR No. 96/2026, under Sections 125A and 281 of the

**DURING THE COURSE OF THE INVESTIGATION, POLICE FOUND THAT THE MINOR DAUGHTER OF THE DECEASED HAD ALLEGEDLY BEEN KIDNAPPED, and the woman was killed when she tried to prevent the accused from taking her daughter away,"**

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was registered at Police Station Khansahib, and an investigation was taken up.

During the course of the investigation, police found that the minor daughter of the deceased had allegedly been kidnapped, and the woman was killed when she tried to prevent the accused from taking her daughter away.

Acting swiftly, a police team headed by SDPO Khansahib launched an intensive investigation, analysing multiple CCTV footages and technical evidence. Police said that through sustained efforts, the accused was traced and arrested from the Parimpora area of Srinagar, while the kidnapped 15-year-old girl was rescued safely within 12 hours of the incident.

Subsequently, relevant sections related to murder and kidnapping were added to the case, while further investigation is underway, the official said.

## CS Steers Stakeholder Consultations for Growth of Key Economic Sectors

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday chaired detailed consultations with key stakeholders to devise a comprehensive strategy and institutional platform aimed at accelerating the economic growth of Jammu and Kashmir by strengthening core sectors including Tourism, Agriculture, Handicrafts and Industry.

The high-level consultative meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Regional Head of RBI Jammu; Managing Director, J&K Bank; Director, IIM Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Secretary, Skill Development, Revenue and Employment Departments; besides representatives from BISAG-N, RXIL and other official and non-official stakeholders.

During the deliberations, the Chief Secretary underscored that the primary objective of the meeting was to evolve a unified mechanism capable of bringing all stakeholders onto a common platform for giving a major boost to the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. He observed that several initiatives are already underway across different sectors and stressed the need for convergence among them to maximize their impact.

Highlighting the ongoing interventions of the government, the Chief Secretary referred to the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) for Agriculture, MSME Health Clinic and Raising and Accelerating



MSME Performance (RAMP) for Industry, Mission YUVA for entrepreneurship promotion and the Home-stay initiative for Tourism, besides several Government of India schemes aimed at supporting these sectors.

He emphasized that the present need is to create a single integrated ecosystem that takes into account the strengths and challenges of all sectors and works in a convergence mode to support economic verticals such as Tourism, Agriculture, Industry and Handicrafts in a coordinated manner.

The Chief Secretary further proposed that the existing Mission YUVA framework, including the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) functioning at the district level, along with the MSME Health Clinic established under the RAMP programme, could be reoriented and leveraged to provide easier access to credit, expert advisory services, capacity building and sustained

handholding support to aspiring entrepreneurs and enterprises across sectors.

He observed that all these sectors fundamentally operate as economic enterprises with the common objective of achieving growth and profitability, and therefore require a unified institutional mechanism capable of continuously assessing their health and extending timely support for their expansion and sustainability.

Stressing the importance of financial inclusion and institutional support, the Chief Secretary called for optimum utilization of various Government of India schemes and frameworks including the New Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, local Industrial Policy initiatives, RBI-sponsored Unified Lending Interface (ULI) and the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS). He said these initiatives could significantly strengthen support systems for farmers, traders, artisans, industrial unit holders, hoteliers, home-stay operators, self-help groups and other farm and non-farm enterprises across Jammu and Kashmir.

To carry the initiative forward in a structured manner, the Chief Secretary directed constitution of a core team of relevant stakeholders to be headed by the Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department, with representation from the Employment Department, RBI, J&K Bank, IIM Jammu and BISAG-N for steering the proposed framework towards achieving the desired objectives.

## Govt Constitutes High-Level Committee for MSME Health Clinic initiative

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The government has constituted a high-level committee for the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir MSME Health Clinic initiative to strengthen the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Government Order No. 912-JK(GAD) of 2026, accessed by KNO, sanction has been accorded to the formation of the committee comprising senior officials, financial experts and institutional representatives to oversee and operationalise the ambitious initiative designed to support and revive MSMEs in the Union Territory.

The committee will be chaired by the Administrative Secretary of the Public Works (R&B) Department, while the Administrative Secretary of the Industries and Commerce Department has been designated as Member Secretary.

Other members of the committee include the Administrative Secretary of the Labour and Employment Department, Director of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, Managing Director of Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd., Directors of Industries for Kashmir and Jammu, and the Executive Director of Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI).

The government has entrusted the committee with a wide-ranging mandate to create a comprehensive framework for the identification, diagnosis, intervention and monitoring of MSMEs, particularly those facing financial or operational distress.

As per the order, the committee will formulate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for identifying stressed and sick MSMEs and establish coordination mechanisms

among government departments, financial institutions, industry bodies and knowledge partners.

The panel has also been tasked with designing a robust diagnostic architecture to identify stress factors affecting MSMEs and developing standardised tools for root cause analysis covering financial, operational, technological, regulatory and market-related issues.

To streamline monitoring and support, the committee will create a classification framework categorising MSMEs as stable, vulnerable, stressed or sick based on measurable indicators. It will also work on creating an indigenous platform for systematic data collection and integration, including GST, Udyam registration and banking data.

The order further states that the committee will identify operational gaps and weaknesses in MSMEs through data-driven insights and develop a real-time monitoring system for effective decision-making.

In a major technology-oriented component of the initiative, the committee has been asked to conceptualise and develop an AI and Large Language Model (LLM)-based interactive chatbot for MSMEs, especially stressed and sick units. The chatbot is expected to provide real-time guidance and advisory support, assist in problem identification and preliminary diagnosis, and offer information regarding schemes, compliance requirements and best practices.

The committee will also recommend sector-specific and enterprise-specific solutions, including financial interventions such as credit restructuring and incentives, as well as non-financial measures like technology adoption, skill development and market linkages.

## Minister Sharma Pitches for Promotion of Indigenous Products

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma visited "The Flea Market" by Maple and Ivy at Amar Singh Club. He underscored the need for promoting indigenous products, local entrepreneurship and homegrown brands to strengthen the region's economy and cultural identity.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, was also present on the occasion.

During his visit, the Minister inspected various stalls showcasing fashion, handicrafts, food products, décor items and lifestyle brands from across the country, with special appreciation for participation of local Kashmiri entrepreneurs and artisans.

Interacting with the exhibitors and visitors, Satish Sharma said that platforms like the flea market provide immense opportunities to local youth, artisans, startups and small businesses to showcase their talent and products before a wider audience. He stressed that indigenous products represent the rich cultural heritage, craftsmanship and entrepreneurial spirit of Jammu and Kashmir and deserve stronger market visibility and institutional support.

The Minister observed that promoting locally-made products not only generates employment opportunities for youth but also contributes towards sustainable economic growth and self-reliance. He said the government remains committed towards encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and market linkages for local businesses and artisans.

Satish Sharma also appreciated the organisers of Maple and Ivy for bringing together local and national brands under one platform and creating a vibrant cultural and commercial space for the people of Srinagar. He noted that such events help foster creativity, community engagement, and economic activity while offering consumers a unique retail and lifestyle experience.

## X-Ray Facility Restored at District Hospital Shopian

**SHOPIAN:** The X-ray facility at District Hospital Shopian has been restored, bringing major relief to thousands of people dependent on the hospital for diagnostic services.

The restoration has ended weeks of uncertainty and inconvenience for patients, attendants, and emergency cases who were forced to travel outside the district for basic radiological examinations.

An official from the hospital, as per KNO, said the X-ray facility has now been made fully operational and is functioning normally. "The machine has been restored, and diagnostic procedures have been conducted successfully on Friday. This will greatly help patients requiring immediate medical attention and reduce unnecessary referrals to hospitals outside the district," he said.

The official added that efforts are being made to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services at the hospital so that patients do not face similar problems in future. The issue had triggered widespread resentment in the district, with residents alleging that the healthcare sector in Shopian continues to face frequent disruptions in essential services.

Patients, including accident victims, elderly citizens, and those suffering from severe pain, had to move from one hospital to another or visit private diagnostic centres, leading to delays in treatment and additional financial burden on already distressed families.

Patients and attendants now expressed relief over the development and hoped that essential healthcare facilities would now remain functional without any further interruption. (Observer News Service)

## Ladakh Police, Army Rescue Stranded Tourists in Night Operation

**KARGIL:** Ladakh Police carried out a night rescue operation in the Drass sector and rescued a group of stranded tourists, including women and small children, after their vehicles got stuck due to poor road conditions in a remote mountainous area.

According to official sources, Police Station Drass received information late at night through PCR Kargil regarding tourists stranded between Labar and Umbala near Manman Top in the Drass sector. The tourists were travelling in two vehicles when they became trapped on the difficult route amid deteriorating road conditions.

Following the alert, SHO Drass Inspector Abdullah, accompanied by a police team, immediately launched a rescue operation and moved towards the location despite adverse weather and challenging terrain.

Officials said the road conditions were non-motorable at several points, forcing the police team to continue the rescue mission on foot for nearly one kilometre through rugged mountainous terrain during the night.

Simultaneously, another rescue team from Police Post Sankoo, led by Sub-Inspector Villayat, was dispatched from the opposite side to establish contact with the stranded tourists and support the operation.

Authorities also sought assistance from the Indian Army as the rescue operation intensified in the high-altitude area.

With coordinated efforts involving District Police Drass, District Police Kargil, and the Indian Army, all seven tourists along with their vehicles were safely rescued and escorted towards Sankoo without any reported injuries, officials said.

According to KNT, the incident once again highlighted the risks associated with travel across high-altitude and weather-sensitive routes in the Ladakh region, where sudden deterioration in road conditions can leave vehicles stranded, particularly during night hours. (Observer News Service)

## Forest Department Orders Survey of Dangerous Dry Trees after Tangmarg Incident

**BARAMULLA:** The Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department has ordered a detailed enumeration of dry standing trees posing threat to life and property across the Tangmarg area following a recent incident in which a falling tree injured a biker.

According to an official communication issued by the Office of the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Special Forest Division Tangmarg, the directive was issued after a dry Kail tree fell due to strong winds on May 14 near Darul-Uloom Qazipora on the Qazipora road, resulting in injuries to a motorcyclist.

The communication, addressed to the Range Officer Gulmarg, said the matter had been viewed seriously and directed officials to conduct a comprehensive survey of dry standing trees located along roadsides and near public establishments.

The order specifically asked officials to identify trees situated close to schools, mosques, residential areas, public institutions, and other establishments in and around Tangmarg.

Authorities have also been directed to enumerate all dry standing trees along the Gulmarg-Tangmarg road.

The Forest Department instructed field staff to furnish compartment-wise information along with geo-tagged photographs of every identified tree so that necessary action for removal of threat-posing trees could be initiated at the earliest.

The official order also prescribed a reporting format requiring details such as species, tree number, diameter class, estimated timber and firewood volume, geo-coordinates, and remarks.

The move comes amid increasing concern over safety risks posed by old and dry trees during strong winds and changing weather conditions in Kashmir. (Observer News Service)

## J&KCEGA welcomes Jal Shakti Dept Reorganization

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu & Kashmir Chief Engineers Gazetted Association (J&KCEGA) on Friday welcomed the reorganisation of the Jal Shakti Department, terming it a practical and balanced reform aimed at strengthening the department and improving public service delivery across the Union Territory.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a spokesperson said the Jammu & Kashmir Chief Engineers Gazetted Association (J&KCEGA) has expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir for the landmark reorganisation of the Jal Shakti Department, terming it a progressive, balanced and institutionally sound reform aimed at strengthening the departmental structure and improving public service delivery across the Union Territory.

He said the Association has particularly conveyed its deep appreciation to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Minister for Jal Shakti Javed Ahmad Rana, and Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department Shaleen Kabra, for their visionary leadership, administrative wisdom and positive intervention in ensuring that the restructuring exercise was carried out in a rational, practical and professionally balanced manner without disturbing the existing top administrative order and institutional hierarchy. (Observer News Service)



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