

## SC Allows Euthanasia Of Rabid Stray Dogs



Observer News Service

New Delhi: The Supreme Court of India on Tuesday, for the first time, permitted euthanasia of rabid, incurably ill, or demonstrably dangerous stray dogs, observing that public safety and the right to live with dignity cannot be compromised due to rising dog attack incidents.

A bench comprising Justices

Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria issued a series of directions aimed at tackling the growing stray dog population and increasing cases of dog bites across the country.

The bench said euthanasia of stray dogs in extreme cases was among the most important directions being issued to civic authorities.

It said local | More on P6

## Right To Life Includes Freedom From Dog Attacks: SC

The right to live with dignity encompasses the right to move freely without the threat of harm from dog bite attacks, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday while dismissing pleas seeking a recall of its earlier order on the relocation and sterilisation of stray canines.

"The court cannot remain oblivious to harsh | More on P6

**ENSURE ESTABLISHMENT OF AT LEAST ONE FULLY FUNCTIONAL ABC CENTRE** in each district duly equipped with requisite infrastructure and trained personnel, surgical facilities and supporting logistics,"

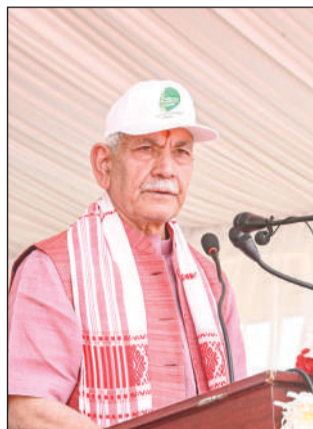
## We Will Tear Out Roots Of Narco-Terror: LG Says Drug Smuggler, Terrorist Two Sides of Same Coin

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday issued a stern warning to drug smugglers and narco-terror operatives, saying law enforcement agencies would "hunt them down even in their deepest hideouts" as the administration intensified its anti-drug campaign across Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a gathering in South Kashmir's Pulwama district as part of the Nasha-Mukt Jammu and Kashmir campaign, Sinha said the fight against drugs was no longer limited to curbing addiction but aimed at dismantling the entire narco-terror ecosystem.

"Our mission is not just arrests but the complete



destruction of the narco-terror empire and tearing out the very roots from which this poison spreads," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said a "public awakening" against drugs had emerged across Jammu and Kashmir



over the past 39 days, with communities beginning to openly challenge the menace.

"Neighbours became each other's support and the long-standing silence that hung over Jammu and Kashmir began to break. Today that

silence has turned into a loud, collective outcry against drugs," he said.

Sinha said more than 11,000 local events had recently been organised in Pulwama alone to raise awareness against substance | More on P6

## Fuel Prices Hiked Again

Petrol, Diesel Up Nearly 90 Paise Per Litre

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices were raised by nearly 90 paise per litre on Tuesday, marking the second increase in less than a week as state-run oil marketing companies sought to reduce mounting losses amid a sharp rise in global crude oil prices triggered by the Iran conflict.

With the latest revision, petrol in Delhi now costs Rs 98.64 per litre, up from Rs 97.77, while diesel has risen to Rs 91.58 per litre from Rs 90.67, according to industry sources.

The hike follows a Rs 3-per-litre increase announced on Friday, which was the first revision in fuel prices in more than four years.

The back-to-back increases come as global | More on P6

## UP Teen's Conversion in J&K Sparks Police Case

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A case each was filed in Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday in the alleged religious conversion of an 18-year-old barber in Kupwara district of the Union territory, officials said.

According to a complaint by the father of the teenager, Krishna Kumar, his son Vishal had gone to work at a salon in Ganderbal (Jammu and Kashmir) around three years ago, along with Wasim, a resident of Kajiwala village.

Kumar, a resident of Khanjhanpur Bahadur village in Bijnor, had claimed that Vishal is | More on P6

## Census 2027

### J&K Logs 1.5 Lakh Self-Enumerated Households

Observer News Service

Srinagar: More than 1.50 lakh households across Jammu and Kashmir have successfully completed self-enumeration within three days of the launch of the Census 2027, officials said on Tuesday.

Describing the public response as "highly encouraging", Chief Principal Census Officer Amit Sharma said citizens from urban, rural, hilly and far-flung areas were

actively participating in the first phase of India's fully digital and paperless Census exercise.

The self-enumeration process was officially launched in Jammu and Kashmir on May 17 and will continue till May 31 through the online portal.

"Over 1.50 lakh households across Jammu and Kashmir have successfully completed their self-enumeration exercise within the first three days after the launch | More on P6

## Criminal Law Can't Be Used To Settle Institutional Rivalries: HC

Quashes FIR Against Ex-J&K Cricketer


M Ahmad

Srinagar: Observing that criminal law cannot be permitted to be used as an instrument of harassment or for settling internal institutional disputes, the High Court of J&K and Ladakh has quashed an FIR registered against former cricketer over allegations


of submitting a fake date of birth certificate to secure registration for the Ranji Trophy.

A bench of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal made the observations and passed the order while allowing a petition filed by the cricketer, Majid Yaqoob Dar, seeking quashment of FIR No. 26/2023 registered by the Crime Branch, | More on P6






## OUR CENSUS OUR DEVELOPMENT



(First Phase of Census 2027)  
Common queries on Self-Enumeration (SE) and their Answers (Part-2)

**WHAT IS SELF-ENUMERATION?**  
Self-Enumeration is an online process in which you fill and submit your household details on the SE portal ([se.census.gov.in](http://se.census.gov.in)) yourself, without waiting for an enumerator




- ❖ **What are the benefits of Self-Enumeration?**
  - Fill details conveniently
  - Ensures privacy
  - Makes the Census process faster and efficient
- ❖ **How to log in to the Self-Enumeration portal?**
  - Select State/UT
  - Enter name of head of the family, mobile number and email (optional)
  - Verify through OTP
  - Start Self-Enumeration
- ❖ **How to mark the correct location of your house?**
  - Select district/PIN code
  - Enter area/landmark
  - Zoom on map and mark location near your house (Do not worry if exact address is not displayed)
  - Correct location marking is necessary
- ❖ **Can I edit my information later?**
  - Yes, you can edit before final submission during State/UT SE period
  - After final submission changes can be done during enumerator's visit
- ❖ **Can SE portal be accessed outside India?**

No, this facility is available only within India's geographical boundaries
- ❖ **What if an error is found after submission?**

Correction can be made when the enumerator visits your house
- ❖ **Can I save and complete the form later?**

Yes, you can save progress and complete the form within the stipulated time

**TOLL FREE - 1855**

Let us fulfill our responsibility, Let us participate in the Census  CensusIndia2027

CBC 19108/13/0101/2627

## Silverlines x Fortofino

PRESENTS

# J&K JEWELLERY EXHIBITION

## CUM SALE

YOU ARE INVITED TO  
EXPERIENCE TOP JEWELLERY  
BRANDS UNDER ONE ROOF

## 21<sup>st</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> May

2026

## 11 AM - 8 PM

**RADISSON COLLECTION**  
HOTEL & SPA RIVERFRONT SRINAGAR

**DIAMOND | GOLD | SOLITAIRE**

10,000+ DESIGNS | NATURAL DIAMONDS | BRIDAL COLLECTIONS

RSVP

## 750 81 9 1111

\*T&C APPLY



# Study Finds Cognition, Nutrition Key to Elderly Survival in India

Press Trust Of India

A higher overall intrinsic capacity among older adults in India, especially better cognition, good nutrition, and better ability to move, is related with a lower risk of death, according to a study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal. Findings from the analysis of data from the Longitudinal Aging Study in India-Diagnostic Assessment of Dementia (LASI-DAD) highlight how functional abilities and not just diseases should be looked at while planning healthcare and interventions for ageing populations, researchers said. The team, including researchers from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, and National Health Service (NHS) Trust, University Hospitals Sussex in the UK, analysed data from 4096 community-dwelling individuals aged at least 60, 951 of whom died by the end of the study period. Intrinsic capacity, a measure of physical and mental abilities combined, was evaluated across six domains of functioning -- cognition, mood, nutrition, locomotion, vision, and hearing. "A higher IC (intrinsic capacity) score was associated with a lower risk of death," the



authors wrote. Risk of mortality was found to increase progressively with number of impaired domains of intrinsic capacity -- one impaired domain was associated with an increased risk of 48%, two with 110%, three with 71% and four with 215%. Further, the researchers identified cognition, nutrition, and locomotion (movement) as the strongest predictors of survival.

"Older adults in India with higher overall intrinsic capacity -- particularly better cognition, good nutrition, and better locomotor capacity -- had a lower risk of death," the authors wrote. "These findings highlight the importance of looking at functional abilities, not just diseases, when planning health care and interventions for ageing populations," they said. The team said that most evidence on intrinsic capacity comes from high-income countries, linking a higher score with a lower risk of death. They added that a few studies from low and middle-income countries, including India, have measured intrinsic capacity but none have looked at its relationship with mortality over time. The study provides long-term evidence from India validating the World Health Organization's framework of intrinsic capacity in a low and middle-income setting, the team said. An intrinsic capacity-based screening could allow for an early detection of vulnerable individuals before a visible disability appears in low and middle-income countries such as India where the ageing population is increasing and health systems face resource limitations, the researchers said.

## Physical Activity And Mood Go Hand-In-Hand, Finds Study

Press Trust Of India

An international study that analysed data from 67 research groups worldwide, involving over three lakh real-time mood reports, on how physical activity is related to good mood and positive emotions has found that for most people, mood improves with everyday movement. The findings, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, also show that people are more physically active when they are feeling better. Researchers, including those from Ruhr University Bochum in Germany and other institutes in Europe and the US, examined data from more than 8,000 participants collected through smartphones and wearable devices. The tools allowed the researchers to capture how people felt and moved throughout their daily routines -- from walking and climbing stairs to household activities, they said.

"Within persons, PA (physical activity) displays a positive association with energetic arousal, positive affective states and valence, yet a negative relation to calmness," the authors wrote. "The practical effect sizes are comparable to other daily life activities, with energetic arousal evincing the strongest relation to PA," they said. For most individuals, mood was found to improve following everyday physical activity, and conversely, people were found more likely to move when already feeling positive. Energy levels showed the strongest relationship, with more than 95 per cent of the participants reporting an increased energy around periods of activity. Individuals with a lower well-being to begin with experienced the greatest benefits from physical activity, the study found. "This study reflects the growing importance of understanding health behaviors in real-world settings,"

co-author Amanda Staiano, of Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Louisiana State University, US, said. "By incorporating data from diverse populations from around the world -- including participants studied here at Pennington Biomedical -- we're gaining a clearer picture of how even small amounts of daily movement can meaningfully impact how people feel," Staiano said. Evidence from the study confirms a strong link between physical activity and well-being, previously shown in controlled, laboratory settings and cross-sectional (short-term) studies, the researchers said. The study examines physical activity and well-being under natural, everyday conditions made possible by smartphones and wearables, and helped the researchers distinguish between how activity affects individuals over time and how people compare to one another.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (Old Name) Abdul Rouf Bhat to (New Name) Mattoo Abdul Rauf. In future, I shall be known as (New Name) Mattoo Abdul Rauf. If anybody is having any objection, he/she may contact the passport office Srinagar within 07 & days. After 07 days, no objection will be accepted.

INF

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Change in Name/Title of Travel Agency Notice is hereby given that I, Mr. Amir Ali Zaidar S/o Mohammad Rafiq Zaidar R/o Saida Kadal, Nigeen Road, Srinagar, Proprietor of the travel agency, have applied to the Tourism Department, Kashmir for change in the name/title of my registered travel agency. The agency was earlier operating under the name and style of "RIVER ROCK TOURS AND TRAVELS" bearing Registration No. JKEA00002159 dated 16-06-2023. Now, I intend to change the name of the said agency to "ZAILDAR TOURS & TRAVELS" as per Section 39 of the J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act, 1978/2011. Any person, institution, bank, or authority having any objection regarding the proposed change may file their objection in writing before the office of the Deputy Director Tourism, Registration, within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections shall be entertained after the stipulated period, and the request will be processed as per rules. Amir Ali Zaidar (Proprietor) Contact no:-9906701918

FKO

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Kowser Jan, W/o Tariq Ahmad Lala, R/o Shamsabad Sector-5, Bemina, hereby inform that my name has been wrongly mentioned as Kousnar Jan in my passport No. Y9623492, whereas my correct name is Kowser Jan as per all my official documents; both names refer to one and the same person, and I intend to correct the same in my passport. If anybody has any objection, they may file the same within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice to the concerned authorities, failing which no objection shall be presumed.

Sd/- Kowser Jan

FKO

### OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR SARIWARPORA

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Numair Ahmad Khan D.o.B 18/10/2013 and Sadaf Jan D.o.B 19/04/2016 SD/o Jan Mohammad Khan R/o Seriguo Dangerpora Tehsil Pattan. In this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd

FKO

Naib Tehsildar Sariwarpora

### OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..

**PUBLIC NOTICE..**  
 The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Sadiya Mehraj D/o Mehraj Ud Din Ganie R/o Yadipora tehsil pattan with verified date of birth 27/07/2022 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Sd

Naib Tehsildar Pattan

FKO

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Altaf Hussain Khanday to (new name) Altaf Hussain Khanday in future I will be known as (new name) Altaf Hussain Khanday. If anybody is having any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the passport office srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

INF

### PUBLIC NOTICE

My father's name in my driving licence bearing DL No: JK05 20250002024 has been wrongly written as Habibuallah Ullah Loan while his correct name is Habibuallah Loan. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Abdul Rashid Loan S/o Habibuallah Loan

fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, ARIF AHMAD BAKSHI S/O MOHD SHAFI BAKSHI R/O CHECKCHARATRAM, TEHSIL KUNZER, DISTRICT BARAMULLA, J&K, hereby declare that my date of birth is 16-03-1988 and the same has not been registered in the office of Registrar Births & Deaths, Block Kunzer. Now, I intend to register my birth record for issuance of Birth Certificate.

If anybody has any objection regarding the above matter, he/she may file objection before the concerned authority within the stipulated period. Otherwise, the case shall be processed accordingly.

ARIF AHMAD BAKSHI R/O CHECKCHARATRAM, KUNZER DISTRICT BARAMULLA, J&K

fko

### Office of the Naib Tehsildar Palhallan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Daniyal Manzoor Dar s/o Manzoor Ahmad Dar R/o Khambiyar Tehsil Pattan with verified date of birth 16/08/2018 occurred at home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD

fko

Naib Tehsildar Palhallan

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, ANAYAT HUSSAIN, resident of J&K UT, hereby notify for the information of general public that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 7563 as "INAYAT HUSSAIN" instead of my correct name "ANAYAT HUSSAIN".

That my correct and actual name is ANAYAT HUSSAIN and henceforth I shall use this name for all official and legal purposes. If anybody has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. ANAYAT HUSSAIN

fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, MASOODA BEGUM W/O MOHD AFZAL WANI R/O TRIKOLBAL HANJIWERA, TEHSIL PATTAN, DISTRICT BARAMULLA, hereby notify for the information of general public that my name has been wrongly recorded in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 5272 as "MAQSOODA BEGUM" instead of my correct and actual name "MASOODA BEGUM".

Now, I intend to use and record my correct name as MASOODA BEGUM for all official purposes and for publication in Government Ranbir Press Jammu regarding name correction/ update in the above mentioned Aadhaar Card. If anybody has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. MASOODA BEGUM R/O TRIKOLBAL HANJIWERA, PATTAN District Baramulla

fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, FOZIA AKHTAR D/O PEER SHAMAS UD DIN KRALAWAT R/O GUL NEELOFAR, TEHSIL KUNZER, DISTRICT BARAMULLA, hereby notify for the information of general public that my name has been wrongly entered in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. XXXX XXXX 0618 as "FAZIYA JAN" instead of my correct name "FOZIA AKHTAR" as per my school records.

Now, I intend to use and record my correct name as FOZIA AKHTAR for all official purposes/documents. If anybody has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may file the same before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Sd/- FOZIA AKHTAR R/O GUL NEELOFAR, KUNZER District Baramulla

fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, HAJA BEGUM W.S/O LATE GHNABI RATHER R/O BUDERKOTE TESHIL TANGMARG DISTRICT BARAMULLA, have applied for the issuance of Legal Heir Certificate as my HUSBAND Namely Late GH NABI RATHER S.W/O. AB RAHMAN RATHER died on 29/12/2011.

the legal heirs of my deceased husband are below mentioned:-

S. No.	Name	Relation	Age	Marital Status
1	HAJA BEGUM	WIFE	65	MARRIED
2	BAIDAR AHMAD RATHER	SON	44	Married
3	FAREEDA BEGUM	DAUGHTER	42	MARRIED
4	SHOWKAT AHMAD RATHER	SON	40	MARRIED
5	SAMEER AHMAD RATHER	SON	39	MARRIED
6	SHABIR AHMAD RATHER	SON	30	UN MARRIED

if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objections shall be entertained.

fko

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I hereby inform the general public that my name and parantage has been wrongly recorded as Fayaz Ahmad S/o Mohd Kazim Mir in my service records. My correct name is Fayaz Ahmad Mir S/o Mohd Kazim Mir, as reflected in my official school documents and other records.

Henceforth, I shall be known and identified by the corrected name Fayaz Ahmad Mir S/o Mohd Kazim Mir for all official purposes.

If anybody has any objection in this regard, they may submit the same to the concerned authorities within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

FKO\_R

## Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) SOPORE

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

NIT No 08 /R&B /Sopore of 2026-27 Dated: 19-05-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Government of J&K UT, e-tenders are being invited on percentage basis (as applicable) from approved and eligible Contractors registered with the J&K Government, CPWD, Railways, and other State/Central Governments for the following works.

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) incl. cost of tar & GST	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Cost off/ Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Positing of AAA	Position of TS
1	Macadamization of inner links of Dangerpora by way of Providing and laying of 75 mm thick WBM, 75 mm thick WMM, 50 mm thick BM and 25 mm thick semidense incld seal coat and Berm filling by way of GSB.	78.44	156880/-	1600/-	30 days	C&T sector Capex Budget 2026-27	AAY	Accorded by SE R&B Circle Baramulla vide his order No/17 of 2026-27 dated: 16.5.2026	SE R&B Circle Baramulla vide his order No:18 of 2026-27 dated: 18.5.2026
2	Macadamization of Rampora Rajpora and Sampora Road by way of Providing and laying WBM Grade-2nd in Patches/ Stretches, 75 mm thick WMM, 50 mm thick Bituminous Macadam and 25 mm thick semidense incld 6 mm thick IRC type seal coat and Berm filling by way of GSB	58.829	117658/-	1600/-	30 days	C&T sector Capex Budget 2026-27	AAY	Accorded by SE R&B Circle Baramulla vide his order No/18 of 2026-27 dated: 16.5.2026	SE R&B Circle Baramulla vide his order No:17 of 2026-27 dated: 18.5.2026
3	Macadamization of inner links at Hathlangoo road by way of 75 mm thick WBM, 75 mm WMM, 50 Bituminous Macdam and 25 mm thick semidense, 6 mm thick IRC type seal coat with GSB for Berms	39.13	78260/-	1100/-	20 days	C&T sector Capex Budget 2026-27	AAY/ BEE	Accorded by SE R&B Circle Baramulla vide his order No/22 of 2026-27 dated: 16.5.2026	EE/R&B Sopore 04/TS of 2026-27 EE/R&B Sopore 04/TS of 2026-27

Project Authority:- Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B) North Kashmir.

Position of funds: Partially available.

1. The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) on the dates listed below:

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19-05-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	19-05-2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	19-05-2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	01-06-2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	01-06-2026 4:20 PM

Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid Submission End date) with NIT No. Name of work and Serial No. deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.

Geotech Photographs Minimum 03 sets (01 set Comprising of Photographs before, during and after execution of work) of size 26 cm x21 cm to be provided.

2. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid Submission End date) otherwise the tender will be rejected. The successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the contract cost, in single CDR/FDR/BG which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.

SD/

No: 1567-76  
 DIPK-1439/26

Dated: 19-05-2026

Executive Engineer  
 R&B Division Sopore

## Adv Jehanzeb, Prof Andrabi Call on LG Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhavan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Advocate Jehanzeb Allaqaband and former Vice Chancellor of University of Kashmir, Prof. Khurshid An-



drabi, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Lok Bhavan in Srinagar on Tuesday and discussed a range of issues related to education, youth empowerment and public welfare in the region.

During the meeting, deliberations were held on an upcoming conclave being organised by Advocate Jehanzeb Allaqaband. The participants also discussed various education-related

initiatives and the importance of empowering youth to strengthen the social and academic landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to details, Prof. Andrabi highlighted several issues concerning the education sector and stressed the need for greater youth engagement in developmental and academic activities. He also underlined the significance of creating opportunities that can channel the energy of young people towards constructive and progressive pursuits.

The meeting further focused on the ongoing anti-drug campaign, Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan, with discussions centred on measures aimed at curbing substance abuse and raising awareness among the youth about the harmful effects of drugs.

The participants also exchanged views on various public and developmental matters concerning the region.

## Pharmacy Owner Held in City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Police in Srinagar on Tuesday arrested the owner of a medical shop in Alochibagh after allegedly catching him selling Pregabalin capsules without a prescription and failing to produce valid purchase records during a raid, officials said.

The action was taken during a raid conducted by a police party from Police Station Shergari at a Pharmacy located in the Alochibagh area of Srinagar.

Police sources said the accused (owner of the medical shop) was allegedly caught red-handed selling Pregabalin capsules to customers without a medical prescription.

The raid was part of ongoing enforcement measures against the unauthorised sale and misuse of regulated pharmaceutical drugs, which officials said remain a concern due to their potential for abuse and illegal distribution.

Pregabalin is a prescription medicine commonly used for treating nerve pain,

epilepsy, anxiety disorders, and certain chronic pain conditions. Health authorities have, however, repeatedly warned against its unauthorised use, saying misuse can lead to dependency, intoxication, and other health complications.

Sources revealed that the shop owner also failed to produce any valid bill or invoice related to the seized medicine during the inspection.

Following the recovery and alleged violations, the accused was arrested on the spot and further legal proceedings were initiated.

Police did not immediately disclose details regarding the quantity of capsules recovered or the specific legal sections invoked in the case.

Authorities said investigations were underway to ascertain the source of the medicine and whether similar unauthorised sales had been taking place.

According to KNT, Police reiterated that strict action would continue against the illegal sale of prescription drugs and substances that may contribute to addiction and public health risks.



## Traffic Police Issues Advisory Ahead of Eid Rush

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Traffic Police Srinagar on Tuesday urged commuters to maintain road discipline during the Eid rush, avoid roadside animal sales, use designated parking spaces, and cooperate with traffic diversions to ensure smooth vehicular movement and public safety.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, a spokesperson said that in view of the ensuing Eid-ul-Azha and the expected public rush, commuters and pedestrians are requested to strictly adhere to traffic advisories to prevent congestion and inconvenience.

He said the public should park vehicles only at designated parking places and avoid the sale or display of sacrificial animals on or along roads, ensuring such activity is carried out only at approved locations.

Overloading in passenger vehicles must be avoided, while car-pooling is encouraged. Hawkers and vendors have also been directed not to occupy footpaths.

“Commuters are advised to use diversion and alternative routes to avoid congestion. Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operators should avoid slow movement, intermittent stops, and unauthorised boarding or alighting of passengers. Road discipline must be treated as a collective responsibility. Follow the route plan, lane discipline, and avoid overtaking to prevent traffic jams,” the spokesperson said.

He further advised motorists to give way to emergency and referral services, avoid unnecessary loitering in congested areas, and refrain from last-minute travel during the rush. Traffic diversions should be followed strictly without altercations.

The spokesperson said all citizens are requested to adhere to the advisory and cooperate in ensuring smooth traffic movement. “Your cooperation will help those in distress and urgent need.”

## Two Held during Naka Checking in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Police in Srinagar on Tuesday apprehended two persons during a naka checking operation in the Zoonimar area of Zadibal and recovered a heroin-like substance from their possession, officials said.

The arrests were made during routine checking conducted by Police Station Zadibal at Zoonimar.

Officials identified the accused as Showkat Ahmad Dar, a resident of Umarhair Buchpora, and Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Ahmad Nagar.

According to KNT, Police said a heroin-like substance was recovered from their possession during the operation.

Following the recovery, police registered a case under FIR No. 09/2026 under Section 9/21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic

Substances (NDPS) Act at Police Station Zadibal.

Officials said further investigation into the case had been initiated to ascertain the source and intended distribution network linked to the recovered substance.

Police reiterated their continued efforts to curb narcotics trafficking and substance abuse through intensified surveillance and enforcement operations across Srinagar.

## Srinagar to Host 14th J&K Jewellery Exhibition at Radisson Collection

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The 14th edition of the J&K Jewellery Exhibition Cum Sale will begin at the Radisson Collection Hotel & Spa, Riverfront Srinagar on Thursday, bringing together leading jewelers from across Jammu and Kashmir under one roof.

The four-day exhibition, organised by Silverlines, Fortofino and Semparia, will continue till May 24 from 11 am to 8 pm. The event features over 10,000 jewellery designs, including bridal collections, gold jew-

ellery, natural diamond jewellery and solitaire pieces.

Organisers said the exhibition offers hallmarked and HUID-certified gold jewellery, while all diamond jewellery comes with internationally certified natural diamonds. A major attraction this year is natural diamond jewellery starting at Rs 35,000.

The exhibition also includes offers such as zero deduction on old gold exchange, zero making charges on select jewellery, free diamond jewellery on purchases and a lucky draw

worth Rs 1 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, Kunal, Director of Silverlines and Fortofino, said Srinagar has always appreciated fine craftsmanship and timeless jewellery designs. He said the aim of the exhibition is to provide customers with certified quality, transparent pricing and designs suited for weddings as well as everyday wear.

The organisers have invited jewellery enthusiasts, brides-to-be and families across the Valley to visit the exhibition during the four-day event.

## Gujarat Tourist Dies in Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A tourist woman from Gujarat was found unconscious at her accommodation in a Srinagar hotel late Monday night and was later declared brought dead at a hospital, officials said.

The deceased was identified as Nakitaben, 47, a resident of Gujarat. Officials said she was staying at a hotel in the Sonwar area of Srinagar when she was found unconscious by her relatives during late-night hours. She was immediately shifted by family members to Paras Hospital for medical treatment.

## Rampora Chattabal Residents Protest Water Shortage

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Locals of the Rampora Chattabal area in Srinagar on Tuesday complained of an acute drinking water shortage, saying the prolonged disruption in supply has severely affected daily life and pushed families into distress.

According to local residents, the area has been witnessing a serious water crisis for the past several days, forcing people to struggle even for basic drinking water needs.

The shortage, residents said, has disrupted household routines and created difficulties for fam-

ilies dependent on regular public water supply.

Locals said women, children, and elderly persons were bearing the brunt of the ongoing crisis and were facing increasing hardship in arranging water for drinking and household use.

“We don’t have water even to drink. People are suffering badly due to this shortage and our daily routine has been badly affected,” several residents said while expressing resentment over the situation. They alleged that despite the worsening situation, the supply issue had not been adequately addressed.

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER LAKE DIVISION NO.II, MISKEEN BAGH KHANYAR SRINAGAR,

J&K LAKES CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, SRINAGAR.  
website:www.lcma.gov.in

#### Gist of Fresh Forward Auction Notice No.02 of 2026-27

For and behalf of the Lt. Governor of the Jammu and Kashmir U/T, e-tenders/bids are invited on GeM from interested experienced and resourceful persons/parties for following outsourcing as per below mentioned term and conditions: -

S.No.	Description	Period of outsourcing	Minimum reserve bid	Earnest Money Deposit
01.	Outsourcing of Parking space of J&K LCMA near Nishat Garden along with Pay and Use Toilet Block inside Parking Lot and Toilet Block near Makai Park Srinagar. Total parking area : 6271.93 Sq.Meters	One Year from the date of issuance of allotment.	Rs.41.61 Lacs plus 18% GST.	Rs.83,220.00 P/T Executive Engineer Lake Division No.2 <sup>nd</sup> , J&K LCMA, in the form of BG/CDR/FDR.

#### Online Bidding Schedule:

01.	Date of publication of tender notice.	16.05.2026:10.00 AM
02.	Pre-Qualification Submission Start Date and Time	18.05.2026 :10.00 AM
03.	Pre-Qualification Submission End Date and Time	26.05.2026 :04.00 PM
04.	Pre-Qualification Assessment End Date and Time.	29.05.2026 : 04.00: P.M
05.	EMD Submission Start Date and Time	01.06.2026 :10.00 AM
06.	EMD Submission End Date and Time	02.06.2026 :04 PM
07.	BID Submission/ Auction Start Date and Time	03.06.2026 10 A.M
08.	BID Submission/ Auction End Date and Time	04.06.2026 4.P.M
09.	Incremental Price	Rs.50,000.00 (Fifty thousand only)
10.	Tender inviting authority.	Executive Engineer Lake Div.2nd J&K LCMA Miskeen Bagh Khanyar Srinagar.
11.	Tender Receiving/ Opening Authority.	
12.	Earnest Money pledged to:-	

Sd/-

No.LD-II/ 332-58  
Dated: 16.05.2026

DIPK-NB-537/26  
DATED:19-05-2026

Executive Engineer,  
Lake Division NO.2<sup>nd</sup>

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 941993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

**AIRPORTS**  
SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

**RAILWAYS**

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

**HIGHWAY STATUS**

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

**PRAYERS**

FAJR 3: 49  
ZUHR 12:27  
ASR 5: 24  
Magrib 7:32  
ISHA 9: 07

**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
3 Zil-Hajj  
1447

### This Day In History

- 1303- Treaty of Paris restores Gascony to the English and arranges marriage of English Prince Edward to French Princess Isabella
- 1498- Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama arrives at Calicut, India becoming the first European to reach India by sea
- 1609 William Shakespeare's Sonnets are first published in London, perhaps illicitly, by publisher Thomas Thorpe
- 1690- England passes Act of Grace, forgiving followers of James II
- 1736- Royal Approval is given by King George II to construct the original Westminster Bridge across the River Thames in London
- 1774- The British pass the second of the Intolerable Acts: the Massachusetts Government Act, giving British-appointed governor wide-ranging powers
- 1784- Britain & Netherlands sign peace treaty (Peace of Paris)
- 1830- D Hyde patents fountain pen
- 1835- Otto is named the first modern king of Greece
- 1864- Battle at Ware Bottom Church, Virginia, 1,400 killed or injured
- 1873- Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis patent the first blue jeans with copper rivets
- 1875- International Bureau of Weights & Measures formed by the signing of the Metre Convention treaty by 17 states and prototypes of the meter and the kilogram selected
- 1882- Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy sign the Triple Alliance
- 1891- 1st public display of Thomas Edison's prototype kinetoscope to members of the National Federation of Women's Club
- 1892- George Sampson patents clothes dryer
- 1895- 1st commercial movie performance (153 Broadway, NYC)
- 1896- The six ton chandelier of the Palais Garnier opera house in Paris falls on the crowd resulting in the death of one and the injury of many others
- 1899- First speeding infraction by a New York cabbie driving an electric car - 12mph down Lexington Street
- 1900- Second modern Summer Olympics (Games of the II Olympiad) opens in Paris and continues for 5 months
- 1902- United States withdraws its troops from Cuba as the first Cuban president, Tomas Estrada Palma takes power
- 1903- Britain's House of Commons begins a debate on the charges of poor administration and ill treatment of natives in Belgium's colony in the Congo Free State
- 1910- Funeral for Britain's King Edward VII held in Westminster Abbey, has one of the largest assemblages of European royalty
- 1916 Saturday Evening Post cover features Norman Rockwell painting
- 1918 - 1st electrically propelled warship (New Mexico)
- 1927 - Saudi Arabia becomes independent of Great Britain in the Treaty of Jeddah
- 1943 - French, British and US victory parade in Tunis, Tunisia
- 1944 -US Communist Party dissolves
- 1954 - Chiang Kai-shek becomes president of Nationalist China
- 1955 - Argentine parliament accepts separation of church and state
- 1956 - Atomic fusion (thermonuclear) bomb dropped from plane at Bikini Atoll
- 1956 - Jordan government of Samir resigns
- 1959 - Japanese-Americans regain their citizenship
- 1963 - Sukarno appointed president of Indonesia
- 1965 - Pakistani Boeing 720-B crashes at Cairo Egypt, killing 121
- 1967 - 10,000 demonstrate against war in Vietnam
- 1974 - Soyuz 14 returns to Earth
- 1976 -USSR performs nuclear test at Sary Shagan USSR
- 1978 -US launches Pioneer Venus 1; produces 1st global radar map of Venus
- 1991 - Soviet parliament approves law allowing citizens to travel abroad
- 1992 - India launches its 1st satellite independently
- 1993 - 10m meteor comes within 150,000 km of Earth (1993KA)
- 1997 - Cosmos Zenit-2 Launch (Russia), Failed
- 2002 - The independence of East Timor is recognized by Portugal, formally ending 23 years of Indonesian rule and 3 years of provisional UN administration (Portugal itself was the former colonizer of East Timor until 1976)

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP  
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam  
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K  
Editor-in-Chief: Sajjad Haider  
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo  
News Editor: Farzana Nisar  
Online Editor: Syed Hamid  
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,  
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah  
Distribution & Advertising: Firdous Ahmad  
RNI Registration No: 69503/98  
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16  
Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja  
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 8899256463  
Editorial: (0194) 2502327  
Email: editor@kashmirobserver.net

KO VIEW

Kashmir's Shrinking Shade

As the mercury climbs in the valley, Srinagar is beginning to feel the full force of a summer that concrete has made harsher. Heat now rises from rooftops, pavements and walls that trap warmth through the day and release it deep into the evening. Air conditioners hum in homes, shops and offices as families search for relief inside buildings that have turned into heat chambers.

Srinagar once breathed differently. Chinar-lined roads, sprawling gardens, dense neighbourhood trees and water bodies softened the summer sun. Shade belonged to daily life. A walk through the city rarely felt punishing. That memory now feels distant in many parts of the capital where glass, cement and unchecked construction have replaced natural cooling.

Decorative plants planted along road dividers may brighten the streetscape, though they cannot replace the shelter that large trees once gave. A flowering shrub cannot cool a crowded road the way a thick canopy can. During peak afternoon hours, vast stretches of Srinagar stand exposed under direct sunlight, with little refuge for pedestrians, street vendors, elderly residents or children heading home from school.

This growing discomfort raises a deeper question about the path the city has chosen. Construction continues through wetlands, flood basins and open spaces with little thought about climate conditions that scientists have warned about for years.

Summer temperatures are rising, rainfall patterns are changing, and heat waves are becoming more frequent in regions that once depended on mild weather as their natural advantage.

Srinagar cannot treat this as a passing inconvenience solved through more cooling machines. Air conditioners may lower indoor temperatures for some families, though they also push more heat into the streets outside while increasing electricity demand. A city built without climate sense eventually begins to punish the people living inside it.

Public parks alone will not solve this crisis either. Srinagar needs widespread urban shade, protected water bodies, tree corridors and strict limits on reckless construction. Climate planning cannot survive as a decorative symbol in official presentations while excavators eat into wetlands and concrete spreads into every available patch of land.

The crisis also exposes a larger social failure. Waste piles continue to grow in neighbourhoods because consumption has expanded much faster than civic responsibility. Plastic, garbage and untreated waste choke water channels and pollute public spaces. Residents often blame the administration once the damage becomes visible, though sustainable living requires public participation as much as government action.

Officials certainly have responsibilities that demand stronger enforcement and long-term planning. Citizens also have a role in deciding what kind of city Srinagar becomes over the next decade. A society that destroys its natural cooling systems while waiting for technology to rescue it will eventually face summers far harsher than the present one.

Kashmir has recently witnessed strong public campaigns against drugs and social decay. Climate awareness now deserves similar public attention. Schools, neighbourhoods, religious institutions and civil groups can all help rebuild respect for nature and sustainable living before the damage grows irreversible.

Another hot afternoon in Srinagar already gives a glimpse of that future. The sun feels harsher because the city has stripped away too much of the shade that once protected it.



Hidayat Bukhari

Kashmir's apple economy cannot keep running on compensation forms and post-disaster surveys.

Hailstorms strike orchards, officials conduct assessments, relief announcements follow, and growers return to the next season with deeper debt and thinner margins. Administrative procedure moves forward, but economic logic collapses.

That contradiction now sits at the center of one of India's most important horticultural regions.

Kashmir produces the bulk of the country's apples during strong seasons and supports a vast economic chain tied to orchards, freight, cold storage, packaging, labour, transport, and rural commerce. Climate shocks now hit that system with growing frequency, while public policy still treats those shocks as temporary farm distress.

This economy demands a different framework. Serious commercial sectors function through risk management, infrastructure protection, and financial continuity planning. But Kashmir's apple belt still depends heavily on relief economics. The scale alone explains why this approach fails.

According to NITI Aayog, horticultural acreage in Jammu and Kashmir expanded from 1.31 lakh hectares in 1980 to 3.44 lakh hectares by 2022. Production climbed from 5.6 lakh metric tonnes to more than 27 lakh metric tonnes during the same period. Apples dominate that expansion.

Industry and government estimates place Kashmir's contribution at roughly three-fourths of India's apple production during strong harvest years.

That system supports nearly 7 lakh farming families. Millions more depend on the secondary economy built around fruit movement and sales. Truck operators, mandi workers, carton manufacturers, commission agents, pesticide dealers, cold storage operators, seasonal labourers, and

shopkeepers all depend on orchard income circulating through the valley.

This is economic infrastructure, which needs protection before collapse, rather than paperwork after damage.

Hail remains one of the most destructive commercial threats facing orchard economies. Timing makes the damage especially severe.

Growers spend heavily during flowering and early fruit-set stages on fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, irrigation, pruning, labour, and orchard maintenance. Revenue still sits months away when hail tears through orchards.

Visible fruit loss tells only part of the story. A bruised apple loses premium value even when it survives on the tree. Hail scars weaken appearance, increase fungal vulnerability, and reduce grading quality. A crop that reaches the market with downgraded quality generates sharp income erosion inside a business built on appearance, consistency, and shelf value.

One weather event can therefore trigger a wider financial chain reaction. North Kashmir districts such as Baramulla, Sopore, Kupwara, and Bandipora face frequent exposure to hailstorms. South Kashmir districts including Shopian, Pulwama, Kulgam, and Anantnag anchor the commercial core of the valley's apple industry. Central Kashmir's mixed farming zones deepen that exposure further.

Damage inside one district quickly moves through transport systems, labour networks, wholesale markets, and credit flows tied to horticulture. History already shows the scale of that danger.

The 2014 floods caused more than 5,600 crore in combined agriculture and horticulture

losses. Horticulture alone accounted for nearly 1,568 crore in damage. Climate research examining hailstorm patterns identified 83 severe hail events between 2010 and 2022. Severe weather disruptions during 2022 reduced apple yields by an estimated 15 to 30 percent in affected areas. Official figures during 2025 placed agriculture and allied-sector weather losses near 209 crore, while Reuters estimated 600 to 700 crore in damage to Kashmir's apple business linked to floods and transport disruptions.

Repeated losses of that scale signal something larger than seasonal hardship. They point to recurring economic shocks hitting a strategically important regional economy. Household finances absorb the first blow. Orchard income funds school fees, medical treatment, weddings, home construction, seasonal reinvestment, and debt repayments throughout much of rural Kashmir. A damaged harvest pushes families into fresh borrowing after substantial seasonal spending has already taken place.

That pressure quickly spreads outward. Supplier payments slow down, trader advances tighten, commission financing weakens, labour payments face delays, and bank repayment cycles suffer strain.

The valley's horticulture economy functions heavily through informal and semi-formal credit systems, which means climate damage weakens confidence throughout the wider financial ecosystem. The multiplier effect grows rapidly.

A severe disruption inside an 8,000 to 10,000 crore apple economy can generate direct losses nearing 2,000 crore. Freight operators lose business, packaging demand falls, market turnover

contracts, retail spending weakens in orchard-dependent districts, and credit circulation tightens. Repeated disruptions begin to resemble localized economic contractions rather than isolated agricultural setbacks. Logistics deepen that vulnerability further. Kashmir's apple industry depends heavily on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. That thoroughfare functions as an economic artery for the valley's fruit business. Orchard damage combined with highway disruption creates a far more destructive commercial scenario.

Fruit quality deteriorates during transport delays, working capital gets trapped, and traders absorb rising uncertainty. The 2025 disruptions exposed that vulnerability clearly as weather damage and movement bottlenecks amplified commercial losses simultaneously. Public policy still leans heavily on compensation. That mismatch stands exposed through the numbers. Commercial exposure inside productive orchards can range between 2 lakh and 5 lakh per hectare depending on maturity and expected yield. Historical disaster assistance for perennial crops has often hovered near 22,500 per hectare.

Such a framework leaves the overwhelming majority of financial exposure uncovered. Business continuity cannot survive on symbolic relief.

Leading horticultural regions treat climate volatility differently because they treat it as a permanent commercial reality. Washington State in the United States protects more than 240,000 acres of apple orchards through structured insurance systems covering billions of dollars in value. Italy's South Tyrol treats anti-

hail netting as productive infrastructure. New Zealand increasingly combines protected cultivation with precision forecasting systems. Dutch agriculture approaches environmental volatility through engineering, predictive planning, and systems management.

Kashmir can pursue the same path. Anti-hail netting, orchard hardening, canopy systems, and drainage engineering remain far below economically rational levels for a high-value fruit economy. Hyperlocal forecasting and orchard-level hail alerts remain limited. Faster digital verification systems using drones and satellite imaging could accelerate recovery and reduce liquidity stress. Trigger-based insurance payouts, emergency working capital facilities, cooperative risk pools, and structured credit restructuring could stabilize growers after major weather events.

Italy and India:

A Strategic Partnership for the Indo-Mediterranean

As global power shifts from the Atlantic to interconnected Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean corridors, New Delhi and Rome are building a partnership rooted in technology, trade, connectivity and democratic values.



Narendra Modi



Giorgia Meloni



The relationship between India and Italy has now reached a decisive stage. In recent years, our ties have expanded with unprecedented momentum, evolving from a cordial friendship into a special strategic partnership grounded in the values of freedom and democracy, and a common vision for the future.

At a time when the international system is undergoing a profound change, the partnership between Italy and India is guided by regular exchanges at higher political and institutional levels, and is gaining a new and higher dimension that combines our economic dynamism, societal creativity, and millennia-old civilisational wisdom.

Our cooperation mirrors our shared awareness that prosperity and security in the 21st century will be shaped by the ability of nations to innovate, manage energy transitions, and strengthen strategic sovereignty. To this end, we have committed to deepen and diversify our bilateral relationship with a view to pursuing new objectives and pooling our complementary strengths.

We aim to forge a powerful synergy between Italian design, manufacturing excellence, and world-class supercomputers—reflecting Italy's position as an industrial powerhouse—and India's rapid economic growth, engineering talent, scale, and innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem with over 100 unicorns and 200,000 start-ups.

This is not a simple integration, but a co-creation of value where our respective industrial strengths amplify one another.

The Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and India paves the way for increased trade and investment in both directions. We want to reach and exceed the Euro 20 billion target for trade between Italy and India by 2029, with a focus on defence & aerospace, clean technologies,

machinery, automotive components, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, agri-food, tourism and more.

"Made in Italy" has always been synonymous with excellence worldwide, and today it finds a natural synergy with the high-quality goals of the "Make in India" initiative.

In this context, the growing interest of Italian businesses in the production for India and the increasing presence of Indian industries in Italy, numbering over 1000 from both sides now, is a positive sign that will strengthen the integration of our supply chains.

Technological innovation lies at the very heart of our partnership. The coming decades will be shaped by a technological revolution of unmeasurable scope, marked by advances in sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing, critical minerals, and digital infrastructure. India's dynamic innovation ecosystem, coupled with highly skilled professional talent pool, and Italy's advanced industrial capabilities make our cooperation in the above sectors both natural and strategic. The growing partnership between our Universities and Research Centres will support this.

India's Digital Public Infrastructure is already finding resonance with a large number of countries particularly in the Global South. Artificial Intelligence, in particular, is already impacting our societies and the global economy. Italy and India have long been collaborating to ensure that AI development is responsible and human-centred.

From this perspective, India and Italy also see AI as a powerful instrument for inclusive development, especially for the Global South, where digital public infrastructure and accessible, multi-lingual technologies can bridge divides rather than deepen them.

Building on India's vision of MANAV—putting human at the centre of technology—and Italy's leadership in promoting a human-centric 'algor-ethics' rooted in its humanist

tradition, our partnership seeks to ensure that AI acts as a catalyst for social empowerment.

Our approach combines India's digital scale with Italy's ethical and industrial expertise, ensuring technology serves human dignity.

By sharing best practices in secure digital cooperation, capacity-building and resilient cyber infrastructure, we aim to create an open, trustworthy and equitable digital space in which every nation can shape and benefit from AI. This perspective forms the core of Italy's G7 Presidency and outcomes of the AI Impact Summit 2026, held in New Delhi.

Conceiving AI as a tool created by humans for humans means firmly asserting that technology cannot replace individuals or undermine their fundamental rights, nor be used to manipulate public debate or alter democratic processes. Our approach to defending freedom and human dignity in an increasingly interconnected world hinges on this very challenge.

Our cooperation also covers the space sector. India's impressive advancements in space exploration and satellite technology, together with Italy's aerospace engineering excellence, offer significant opportunities for joint initiatives and next-generation technology development.

Security and stability remain essential to ensuring nations' prosperity. Italy and India intend to further strengthen their cooperation in sectors such as defence, security and strategic technologies. Our collaboration will help ensure the security of critical maritime routes, strengthen resilience in the face of threats, such as terrorism, international criminal networks, drug trafficking, cyber-crimes and human trafficking.

Energy is another key pillar of our partnership. The global transition towards diversified energy sources requires innovation, investment, and cooperation. India and Italy are collaborating from renewable energy to hydrogen technologies, and from

smart grids to resilient infrastructure.

While India's push for becoming a hub for Green Hydrogen exports offers immense potential, it perfectly complements Italy's advanced technology in renewable infrastructure and its strategic role as an energy gateway for Europe. Our collaboration along with other countries in key India-led initiatives—International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA)—is also important in this context.

Physical, digital and human connectivity is the thread that weaves us together. Both India and Italy are located at the very heart of two crucial hubs of the global economy, the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean—regions that cannot be viewed as separate spheres, but instead as increasingly interconnected spaces.

As a matter of fact, we are witnessing the emergence of what might be termed the Indo-Mediterranean, an important corridor for trade, technology, energy, data and ideas tying the Indian Ocean to Europe. It is precisely within this interconnected space that our bond naturally evolves into a special strategic partnership—one that bridges two continents and shapes new global dynamics.

In this context, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) represents a vision aimed at connecting our regions through modern transport and infrastructure, digital networks, energy systems, and resilient supply chains. India and Italy are also committed to working together with other partners to make this vision a reality.

We can address our shared challenges by drawing upon the profound partnership and the enduring cultural ties between our nations. Within Indian culture, the concept of "Dharma" evokes the sense of responsibility that must guide our actions, whilst the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family—resonates powerfully in this interconnected digital age.

Such values find a natural echo in Italy's humanist tradition, rooted in the Renaissance, which highlights the dignity of each individual and the power of culture to unite peoples and societies.

Our shared vision, therefore, aims to lay the foundation for a strong and forward-looking India-Italy Partnership with our people at the centre.

The authors are the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic.

The High Cost of Hail

Relief cheques and damage audits cannot protect a ₹10,000-crore economy that powers millions of lives in the valley.

hail netting as productive infrastructure. New Zealand increasingly combines protected cultivation with precision forecasting systems. Dutch agriculture approaches environmental volatility through engineering, predictive planning, and systems management.

Kashmir can pursue the same path. Anti-hail netting, orchard hardening, canopy systems, and drainage engineering remain far below economically rational levels for a high-value fruit economy. Hyperlocal forecasting and orchard-level hail alerts remain limited. Faster digital verification systems using drones and satellite imaging could accelerate recovery and reduce liquidity stress. Trigger-based insurance payouts, emergency working capital facilities, cooperative risk pools, and structured credit restructuring could stabilize growers after major weather events.

Orchard modernization must now include resilience engineering as a core economic priority. The government has already recognized horticulture's importance through high-density plantation programmes and broader modernization initiatives. Those efforts hold real value.

Productivity strategy alone, however, leaves a dangerous gap when climate volatility steadily intensifies and competition sharpens from Himachal Pradesh, controlled-atmosphere inventories, and imported premium fruit.

Quality consistency now determines commercial survival inside the apple business. Climate damage weakens that consistency.

Kashmir's hailstorms therefore represent far more than seasonal bad weather. They strike one of India's most strategically important rural economies with growing force and frequency. The next storm already sits somewhere beyond the horizon.

Economic policy now faces a simple test: build protection before the damage comes, or continue financing decline after it does.

The author is a business strategist, AI transformation commentator, and government contracting consultant focused on economic resilience, technology, and market competitiveness and can be reached at Hidayat.bukhari@gentechnolc.com.

# The Doctor Writing Kashmir's Emotional Landscape

The Kashmir-based physician-writer discusses pain, empathy, trauma, literature and the emotional architecture of relationships.



Aashiq Hussain Andrabi

**D**r. Henana Berjes has spent much of her life around pain, first as a doctor, and then as a writer trying to understand what suffering does to people.

A Kashmir-based pain physician and author, she works with patients living through chronic physical and emotional pain while also writing fiction and poetry driven by those very human experiences.

Her journey has taken her from Kashmir to the Middle East and back again, through years in emergency medicine, motherhood, loss, silence and literature. Along the way, she discovered that medicine and writing were never separate worlds.

One taught her how people suffer, the other helped her give that suffering a voice.

In this conversation, Dr. Berjes speaks about growing up with books, returning to writing after years away, and how her experiences as a physician drafted works like *The Third Daughter* and *The Fault Lines Within*. She also sheds light on chronic pain, mental health, gender, empathy and the silent emotional struggles many people carry unseen.

**Medicine and literature rarely belong to the same life. How do those two worlds meet inside you?**

Writing entered my life long before medicine did. But medicine changed the way I understood literature and human beings themselves.

Once I stepped into hospitals and clinics, once I began seeing the emotional and psychological worlds patients carry inside them, life stopped looking simple to me.

Medicine exposed me to suffering in its rawest forms. It showed me how much hidden pain exists around us. Somewhere along that journey, writing stopped feeling like a passion alone. It began feeling like a responsibility, almost as though life itself had placed a pen in my hand and asked me to witness what people endure.

**Which phase of your life changed you most deeply?**

Life changes us continuously. Some experiences leave wounds, others leave wisdom, but all of them stay behind as marks upon us.

Before medicine and before publication, I was a child deeply absorbed in literature. I wandered through books my young mind could barely fully understand, though I remained endlessly drawn toward them.

Russian literature fascinated me. By fifteen, I had already read most Russian classics available in local libraries alongside Tafseer, Iqbaliyat and Chahlib. It felt like standing before a vast ocean after discovering a small boat.

The years that changed me most unexpectedly were my years in the Middle East. It was the first time I had lived away from Kashmir. I missed home constantly while learning how to survive inside un-

familiar surroundings and a different culture. At the same time, emergency medicine exposed me to immense human suffering. While I was learning how people survive pain, life back home was changing too.

But perhaps the most humbling phase arrived when my son spent nearly a month in the NICU. That experience altered something fundamental inside me, both as a mother and as a doctor. It deepened my understanding of fear, helplessness and emotional suffering in ways nothing else had before.

I think my writing still returns to one central question: what does pain do to people, and how do they continue living afterward?

**Your first published work was Urdu poetry through the Sahitya Akademi. What was that younger poet searching for?**

I was very young when the Sahitya Akademi approached me for my poetry collection. Looking back now, I realise it was a serious literary beginning, though at that age I did not fully understand its significance. Life was moving quickly. Medicine, migration and adulthood had already begun demanding attention.

My poetry had already been shaped by the books I grew up reading. Literature became a natural emotional language for me very early in life. I was trying to understand where my own voice belonged within that immense literary world.

Perhaps the younger poet in me was searching for emotions the physician had not encountered yet through real life. Medicine later exposed me to physical suffering and psychological trauma, but poetry had already introduced me to longing, loneliness and emotional fragility. Before I learned how to treat pain, I was trying to give it language.

I remember writing: "Is daur ki mitti se paida jo kiya mujh ko / Aye kaash mujhe dil bhi lohay ka diya hota."

"If I was created from the soil of this age / I wish I had been given a heart of iron too."

Looking back now, I think that couplet understood me long before I understood myself.

**Then came silence. Nearly a decade without writing. What was growing inside that silence?**

Many mothers enter a phase where personal ambitions move silently into the background while children are growing up. Somewhere within that chaos, my writing also disappeared for a while.

But I never abandoned reading. Books remained with me through fragments of time between emergency duties, during travel, while cooking or returning home after work. Even during years when I was not writing, I believe I was preparing myself emotionally and intellectually for the books that would eventually emerge later.

I do not regret that silence at all. Reading widely across cultures, languages and literary traditions changed the way I understood grief, relationships, loneliness, displacement and the human mind itself.

The early 2000s also belonged to a different world. Even downloading an e-book required patience because internet speeds were painfully slow. But perhaps we gained something precious in return. Books occupied the centre of our emotional lives. They were companions rather than distractions.

**What convinced you that pain**



**I WISH PEOPLE BELIEVED PAIN EVEN WHEN IT REMAINS INVISIBLE. CHRONIC PAIN CANNOT ALWAYS BE MEASURED THROUGH SCANS OR REPORTS, but it slowly consumes people emotionally, psychologically and physically. Many patients spend years feeling dismissed because their suffering does not appear outwardly visible. Sometimes the greatest relief a patient receives comes from a very simple human act: being believed.**

**treatment needed a more holistic approach in Kashmir?**

Our understanding of pain has changed enormously over the years. Chronic pain does not always continue because tissue damage still exists. Sometimes the original injury heals, but the nervous system remains trapped in a heightened state of sensitivity. Through Central Sensitization, the brain begins interpreting pain as part of daily existence itself.

Research in pain neuroscience, rehabilitation and the emotional dimensions of chronic pain has expanded greatly in the West. Slowly, we are moving toward that understanding as well.

Many patients I encountered were suffering far beyond physical symptoms alone. They were living with exhaustion, fear, anxiety, poor sleep, emotional trauma, physical deconditioning and social isolation. Medication by itself was often insufficient.

The idea behind the HB Holistic Pain Management Centre is to approach pain through multiple dimensions: physical, emotional, psychological and functional. That includes rehabilitation, movement therapy, mindfulness, patient education and helping people reconnect with their own bodies again.

Pain management cannot remain limited to suppressing symptoms through medicines. A doctor must

understand the person living inside that suffering.

**Kashmir has lived through prolonged stress for decades. What does that do to the body medically?**

Stress amplifies pain significantly. That is one of the ways Central Sensitization functions.

When the nervous system remains under prolonged stress, the body becomes more vulnerable to chronic pain conditions such as fibromyalgia, migraines, IBS and unexplained body pain. We are witnessing increasing cases of these illnesses in Kashmir.

This reality changed the way I practise medicine. It taught me to look beyond scans and blood reports and pay attention to emotional and psychological suffering as well.

Beyond medication, many patients need understanding, guidance and a broader approach toward healing.

**Women's pain often gets dismissed. How often do you encounter that reality?**

Very often. People sometimes assume women complain more openly about discomfort, but they overlook the fact that women endure some of the most intense forms of physical pain known to human experience,

including childbirth.

I believe women generally possess a very high pain threshold. Which is why repeated complaints of pain should never be dismissed casually. Usually, there is deep suffering behind them.

I also think patients tend to trust female physicians more in chronic pain settings. Perhaps because society has historically associated women with caregiving roles. That emotional trust allows many patients to speak more openly.

**Your book, *Mahzur* revolves around forbidden choices and their consequences. Why did fiction feel necessary for that subject?**

The *Mahzur* draws loosely from the story of Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit. But I was interested in what happens after the choice is made.

Human beings constantly stand before moral choices in life. Sometimes forbidden paths appear beautiful initially, but they leave emotional destruction behind afterward. I did not want to approach that idea through direct preaching because it would have sounded moralistic.

Fiction allows people to experience emotional truth rather than merely receiving instruction.

Through the novel, I wanted to explore how certain boundaries may exist to protect humans from damaging themselves. People often realise that truth only after the consequences arrive.

**The *Third Daughter* emerged from a real moment inside a hospital. Did that incident stay with you immediately?**

Completely.

A pregnant woman was being wheeled into surgery while her husband warned her he would leave if she delivered another daughter. As a physician, my duty was to protect both mother and child. But emotionally, I was devastated watching what that woman was enduring psychologically alongside childbirth itself.

After the delivery, the husband abandoned them.

Some incidents never leave you. I knew immediately that this one would remain with me for years.

When I eventually wrote *The Third Daughter*, it did not feel like ordinary storytelling. It felt deeply personal. Some experiences leave scars that never disappear fully.

It remains one of my most widely read books. If it changes even one person's attitude toward daughters, then it was worth writing.

**You once described *The Fault Lines Within* as a book about the "blank spaces between relationships." What exists inside those spaces?**

Human beings rarely speak openly about the emotions that affect them most deeply.

The spaces between people contain silences, suppressed truths, misunderstandings, betrayal, fear, loneliness, expectations and sometimes even love that never found language. Those invisible emotional currents often determine whether relationships survive or collapse.

Relationships resemble the night sky. People notice the stars first, but an unseen universe exists between them.

That is what fascinated me while writing *The Fault Lines Within*. As a writer, I pay close attention to what remains unsaid because silence often reveals more than speech.

**Have readers responded to your**

**books in ways that surprised you?**

Kashmir has always possessed a strong intellectual and literary culture, so meaningful responses from readers here affect me deeply. I have received calls late at night from people wanting to discuss a particular book or thank me for writing it. Those moments stay with a writer forever.

At the same time, meaningful literary discussion has become far less common now. Reading culture has weakened gradually. Endless scrolling has replaced books for many people.

Ironically, some of the most detailed reviews and discussions around my work have come from readers outside Kashmir and even abroad. I genuinely wish stronger literary engagement existed within Kashmir itself because literature helps societies understand themselves more honestly.

**Your work constantly enters emotional darkness, but your personal life seems rooted in books, gardening and solitude. Does solitude help you recover?**

Externally, I may appear calm. Internally, there is constant turbulence.

A doctor and a writer absorb enormous emotional intensity over time. The mind cannot remain untouched after witnessing suffering repeatedly.

Reading and gardening help calm me and restore some balance, though sometimes even they fail to quiet the mind fully. Solitude gives me space to process what life places inside me.

I also believe honest writing requires emotional turbulence. A writer must feel deeply enough to bleed emotionally onto the page. Without inner conflict, literature loses honesty.

**Your next book explores mental health and relationships. What drew you toward that subject now?**

Mental illness remains deeply misunderstood in our society. People casually mock terms like bipolar disorder or OCD without understanding the suffering behind them.

I felt compelled to write about those struggles in a humane and emotionally truthful way. I wanted to explore how mental health conditions affect relationships, identity and daily life itself.

Writing this book took emotional immersion beyond clinical understanding. I had to connect deeply with people living through those experiences, many of whom had already trusted me enough to share their inner battles with me as patients.

More than anything, I want the book to help people feel understood rather than judged.

**After spending years trying to relieve pain and understand it, what do you wish people understood about suffering?**

I wish people believed pain even when it remains invisible.

Chronic pain cannot always be measured through scans or reports, but it slowly consumes people emotionally, psychologically and physically. Many patients spend years feeling dismissed because their suffering does not appear outwardly visible.

Sometimes the greatest relief a patient receives comes from a very simple human act: being believed.

— The interviewer is a senior scribe from Pulwama.



**A PREGNANT WOMAN WAS BEING WHEELED INTO SURGERY WHILE HER HUSBAND WARNED HER HE WOULD LEAVE IF SHE DELIVERED ANOTHER DAUGHTER.**

As a physician, my duty was to protect both mother and child. But emotionally, I was devastated watching what that woman was enduring psychologically alongside childbirth itself. After the delivery, the husband abandoned them. Some incidents never leave you. I knew immediately that this one would remain with me for years.

# Shah Seeks Fast-Track Courts for Long-Pending Cases

Press Trust Of India

Chhattisgarh: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said High Courts should set up special courts for the speedy disposal of cases pending for more than five years.

Chairing the 26th meeting of the Central Zonal Council (CZC) in Jagdalpur, headquarters of Chhattisgarh's Bastar District, Shah also said timely DNA testing in cases registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and rape cases could raise conviction rates in these offences to "100 per cent".

The meeting was attended by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami along with senior officials, said an official release.

Shah said it was a matter of "great joy" that the meeting was being held in Bastar after achieving the "historic milestone" of a Naxal-free India.

The entire credit for making India Naxal-free goes to the hard work and bravery of the jawans of our security forces, he said, adding that coordinated efforts by intelligence agencies, state police and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) ensured timely and decisive action against Naxalites.

He said development initiatives were simultaneously carried out in areas freed from Naxalism under the "Whole of Government Approach", with

state governments and central departments working together.

"Our fight is not over yet because Naxal-affected areas have been lagging behind in the race for development for nearly five decades. The effort would continue until these regions matched the rest of the country in terms of development," the release quoted Shah as saying.

After resolving all contentious issues between the states (in the central zonal council) as well as those between the states and the Centre, the meeting was being held in a very positive and cordial atmosphere, he said.

The meeting focused mainly on monitoring development works, including Jal Jeevan Mission-2, nutrition, health, education, financial inclusion and power sector reforms.

Union Home Minister said that if timely DNA testing is conducted in POCSO and rape cases, the conviction rate in these cases can increase to 100 per cent.

The High Courts should establish special courts for the speedy disposal of cases pending in courts for more than five years, Shah said, adding that the administration must demonstrate seriousness in dealing with serious crimes.

He also called upon all the chief ministers and chief secretaries to join hands and move forward shoulder to shoulder with the Government of India in the fight against malnutrition.

The Union minister also stressed the need to reduce school dropout rates and improve the quality of education.

Ensuring banking facilities within a five-kilometre

radius was a major achievement as most welfare schemes are linked to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), he said.

Shah also urged states to implement their 1930 cybercrime helplines in line with the Union Home Ministry's model format, and modernise their call centres. On food adulteration cases, he said penalties imposed on guilty establishments should be widely publicised to create public awareness.

Referring to the implementation of the new criminal laws, Shah said the three "Naveen Nyaya Sanhitas" had been implemented effectively but further emphasis was needed on certain aspects.

The government should aim to ensure disposal of every criminal case, including those reaching the Supreme Court, within three years before 2029, he said.

Highlighting the functioning of Zonal Councils, Shah said India's federal structure had become stronger under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, and regular council meetings had helped resolve disputes among states and between states and the Centre.

Only 11 Zonal Council meetings were held between 2004 and 2014, compared to 32 meetings between 2014 and 2026, he said while also pointing out that Standing Committee meetings increased from 14 to 35 during the same period. Between 2004 and 2014, discussions were held on just 569 issues at these meetings, whereas from 2014 to 2026, discussions have taken place on 1,729 issues, out of which nearly 80 per cent have

also been resolved, he said.

A large number of the pending issues are related to monitoring, in which there is no dispute of any kind, he added. The Central Zonal Council comprises the states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Shah said the region, stretching from the Himalayas to the Gangetic plains and mineral-rich central Indian plateaus, was strategically important for the country's food security, economic development and cultural heritage.

Chhattisgarh connects nearly seven states, which gives the entire Central Zone immense strategic importance. Today this entire region has become not only Naxal-free but also free from disputes, which is a matter of great joy for all of us, he said. (Agencies) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said High Courts should set up special courts for the speedy disposal of cases pending for more than five years.

Chairing the 26th meeting of the Central Zonal Council (CZC) in Jagdalpur, headquarters of Chhattisgarh's Bastar district, Shah also said timely DNA testing in cases registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and rape cases could raise conviction rates in these offences to "100 per cent".

The meeting was attended by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami along

with senior officials, said an official release.

Shah said it was a matter of "great joy" that the meeting was being held in Bastar after achieving the "historic milestone" of a Naxal-free India.

The entire credit for making India Naxal-free goes to the hard work and bravery of the jawans of our security forces, he said, adding that coordinated efforts by intelligence agencies, state police and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) ensured timely and decisive action against Naxalites.

He said development initiatives were simultaneously carried out in areas freed from Naxalism under the "Whole of Government Approach", with state governments and central departments working together.

"Our fight is not over yet because Naxal-affected areas have been lagging behind in the race for development for nearly five decades. The effort would continue until these regions matched the rest of the country in terms of development," the release quoted Shah as saying.

After resolving all contentious issues between the states (in the central zonal council) as well as those between the states and the Centre, the meeting was being held in a very positive and cordial atmosphere, he said.

The meeting focused mainly on monitoring development works, including Jal Jeevan Mission-2, nutrition, health, education, financial inclusion and power sector reforms.

Union Home Minister said that if timely DNA testing is conducted in POCSO and rape cases,

the conviction rate in these cases can increase to 100 per cent.

The High Courts should establish special courts for the speedy disposal of cases pending in courts for more than five years, Shah said, adding that the administration must demonstrate seriousness in dealing with serious crimes.

He also called upon all the chief ministers and chief secretaries to join hands and move forward shoulder to shoulder with the Government of India in the fight against malnutrition.

The Union minister also stressed the need to reduce school dropout rates and improve the quality of education.

Ensuring banking facilities within a five-kilometre radius was a major achievement as most welfare schemes are linked to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), he said.

Shah also urged states to implement their 1930 cybercrime helplines in line with the Union Home Ministry's model format, and modernise their call centres. On food adulteration cases, he said penalties imposed on guilty establishments should be widely publicised to create public awareness.

Referring to the implementation of the new criminal laws, Shah said the three "Naveen Nyaya Sanhitas" had been implemented effectively but further emphasis was needed on certain aspects.

The government should aim to ensure disposal of every criminal case, including those reaching the Supreme Court, within three years before 2029, he said.

Highlighting the functioning

of Zonal Councils, Shah said India's federal structure had become stronger under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, and regular council meetings had helped resolve disputes among states and between states and the Centre.

Only 11 Zonal Council meetings were held between 2004 and 2014, compared to 32 meetings between 2014 and 2026, he said while also pointing out that Standing Committee meetings increased from 14 to 35 during the same period. Between 2004 and 2014, discussions were held on just 569 issues at these meetings, whereas from 2014 to 2026, discussions have taken place on 1,729 issues, out of which nearly 80 per cent have also been resolved, he said.

A large number of the pending issues are related to monitoring, in which there is no dispute of any kind, he added. The Central Zonal Council comprises the states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Shah said the region, stretching from the Himalayas to the Gangetic plains and mineral-rich central Indian plateaus, was strategically important for the country's food security, economic development and cultural heritage.

Chhattisgarh connects nearly seven states, which gives the entire Central Zone immense strategic importance. Today this entire region has become not only Naxal-free but also free from disputes, which is a matter of great joy for all of us, he said.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### SC Allows

authorities could resort to euthanasia in areas where stray dog populations had reached "alarming proportions" and where repeated dog bite incidents or aggressive attacks posed a continuing threat to human life.

The court clarified that any such action must be based on assessment by veterinary experts and carried out strictly in accordance with provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, and other applicable legal protocols.

The directions came in a suo motu case initiated by the apex court on July 28 last year after media reports highlighted rising rabies-linked deaths and dog bite incidents, particularly involving children in Delhi.

The court also dismissed petitions seeking recall of its earlier order relating to relocation and sterilisation of stray dogs.

Observing that the right to live with dignity includes the right to move freely without fear of dog attacks, the bench directed all states and Union Territories to implement its earlier order that stray dogs picked up from public places should not be returned to the same locations after sterilisation and vaccination.

The apex court further directed all states and UTs to strengthen the Animal Birth Control (ABC) framework.

"Ensure establishment of at least one fully functional ABC centre in each district duly equipped with requisite infrastructure and trained personnel, surgical facilities and supporting logistics," the bench directed.

The court said it could not remain "oblivious to harsh ground realities" where children, elderly citizens and even international tourists had become victims of stray dog attacks.

On November 7 last year, the Supreme Court had taken note of what it termed an "alarming rise" in dog bite cases near schools, hospitals and railway stations, and directed that stray dogs be relocated to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination.

### Right To Life

ground realities where children, international travellers and old age people have fallen victim to dog bite incidents," a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria said in response to the petitions by animal rights activists and others.

The court also issued a slew of directions to states, union territories and other statutory bodies to augment infrastructure to deal with stray dogs.

On November 7 last year, the court took note of the "alarming rise" in dog-bite incidents in areas such as educational institutions, hospitals and railway stations and directed that stray dogs be relocated to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination. Stray dogs picked up shall not be released back to their original place, the court said.

On Tuesday, the apex court rejected petitions challenging the validity of SOPs on dealing with stray animals issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI). It observed that there has been a "discernible absence" of sustained efforts on the part of states and UTs to build infrastructure to deal with the rising population of stray dogs.

Implementation of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) framework, it said, remains largely sporadic, underfunded and uneven across jurisdictions. The framework includes sterilisation, vaccination, sheltering, and overall scientific management of state animals. Prolonged inaction coupled with the absence of institutional commitment to the effective implementation of the ABC framework has led to aggravation of the problem, which has now assumed

dimensions "warranting urgent and systemic intervention", the apex court said.

"The right to live with dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution of India necessarily encompasses the right of every citizen to move freely and access public spaces without living under a constant apprehension of physical harm, attack, or exposure to life-threatening events, such as dog bites in public areas," the court ruled. "The state cannot remain a passive spectator where preventable threats to human life continue to proliferate in the face of statutory mechanisms specifically designed to address them," it added.

States and union territories, it stressed, are under continued constitutional obligation to ensure the protection of the fundamental right to life and safety of citizens under Article 21a.

"This obligation is not very passive in nature, but casts an affirmative duty upon the states and union territories to take all necessary and effective measures to prevent conditions that pose a threat to public safety, health, and well-being," the bench directed.

The failure to adopt a proactive, structured, and sustained approach to the problem has resulted in a "largely reactive and crisis-driven response necessitated by the escalation of the problem rather than its prevention", the court said.

Such an approach is neither efficient nor capable of yielding durable resolutions, particularly in a matter involving public health, human safety and ecological balance.

The bench said in its three-part order that after reserving judgment on January 29 in the present matter, it has been informed of multiple reports indicating that the incidence of dog bites and stray dog attacks continue to occur across the country with alarming frequency and severity.

It also referred to media reports on dog bite incidents in Rajasthan and other places and said they highlighted deeply disturbing incidents in which young children suffered previous injuries, including mauling of the faces and limbs by the street dogs.

"Such incidents not only endanger the safety and dignity of the citizens and visitors, but also adversely affect public confidence in civic administration and in urban governance. The whole set of figures reveal staggering dimensions of the problem... the harm caused by such incidents is not mainly statistical in nature but has great human societal and public health consequences..." the bench said.

Continued non-compliance and non-implementation of the directions issued by the apex court and thereafter by the jurisdictional high court, "shall be viewed seriously".

In November last year, the court directed authorities to ensure the removal of all cattle and other stray animals from the state highways, national highways and expressways.

The top court is hearing a suo motu case, initiated on July 28 last year, over a media report on stray dog bites leading to rabies, particularly among children, in the national capital. (PTI)

### We Will Tear

abuse and drug trafficking. He claimed that FIRs had been registered against 48 drug smugglers in the district, while 56 alleged traffickers had been arrested.

"These figures show we are striking directly at the roots of terror," he said.

Calling drug smugglers and terrorists "two sides of the same coin," the Lieutenant Governor said the proceeds from narcotics were being used to fund terrorism and radicalisation in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Every deal a drug peddler makes not only wrecks a young life but also finances the killing of innocent citizens," he said, adding that when

smugglers earn money, "our youth lose their future and that money arms terrorists against innocents."

Sinha said authorities had significantly intensified action against drug networks since April 11 this year.

According to official figures shared during the event, around 897 drug smugglers and peddlers have been arrested across Jammu and Kashmir in the past month. Authorities have also recommended cancellation of passports of 18 alleged traffickers, while driving licences of 382 accused and registrations of 386 vehicles have been cancelled.

Officials said 49 immovable properties linked to alleged traffickers had been seized and 45 structures demolished.

The administration has also carried out inspections of nearly 5,045 drug stores across Jammu and Kashmir, suspending licences of 225 shops and cancelling 27 others. FIRs were also registered against six drug stores, officials said.

Sinha said nearly 3.93 lakh awareness programmes had been organised across the Union Territory since April 11, with millions participating in outreach activities.

To strengthen grassroots monitoring and rehabilitation, authorities have formed 6,646 village women's committees and 2,997 youth clubs across Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor added that de-addiction helplines were receiving over 100 calls daily, while more than 52,000 patients had so far received treatment at addiction treatment facilities.

"As this 100-day campaign advances, we must fuel its momentum. Stay vigilant. Stay united," Sinha said.

"A month ago, we dreamed of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir. Today, we are proving it is real," he added.

### J&K Logs 1.5 Lakh

Kashmir. As per details submitted before the court, the FIR originated from a complaint filed in 2020 by the then Chief Executive Officer of Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association alleging that Dar had falsely projected his date of birth as December 30, 1978 instead of December 30, 1970 in order to obtain registration and benefits related to the Ranji Trophy.

During the hearing, the court noted that an internal inquiry conducted by JKCA had found the allegations to be baseless and motivated by internal disputes within the association. The Sub-Committee of JKCA had informed the Crime Branch that no material supporting the allegations could be traced in official records and recommended closure of the complaint.

The court also took note of the statement of Brigadier Anil Gupta (Retd.), Member Administration of JKCA, who stated before the Registrar Judicial that the association did not wish to pursue the prosecution any further and sought closure of the case.

The Court observed that once the complainant association itself had concluded that the allegations were unfounded and unsupported by official records, continuation of criminal proceedings would amount to abuse of the process of law.

"This Court cannot overlook that criminal law cannot be permitted to be used as an instrument of harassment or for settling internal disputes of an institution," the court said, adding, "Once the complainant itself, after examining the entire matter through its internal mechanism, has found the allegations to be baseless, unfounded and unsupported by the official record, continuation of criminal proceedings would serve no useful purpose and would amount to abuse of the process of law."

The Court said that it was also conscious of the settled principle that criminal law cannot be permitted to degenerate into a weapon of persecution or be utilized for oblique purposes arising out of personal or institutional rivalries.

"The material brought on record prima facie reflects that the impugned proceedings stemmed from internal disputes prevailing within the Association at the relevant point of time rather than from any genuine criminal misconduct attributable to the petitioner (Dar)," the court said and quashed the FIR.

### Fuel Prices

crude oil prices have surged by over 50 per cent since late February following US-Israeli strikes on Iran and disruptions in shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's key oil transit routes.

Despite rising international crude prices, fuel retailers had earlier kept domestic pump prices unchanged, with the Centre maintaining that the move was aimed at shielding consumers from inflationary pressures. Opposition parties, however, accused the government of delaying the price hike until after key state and Union Territory elections.

Friday's hike came shortly after the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party registered victories in three out of five Assembly and UT elections, including West Bengal.

Even after the recent hikes, state-run oil firms continue to face heavy under-recoveries. Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma said on Monday that while the May 15 revision had reduced losses by nearly one-fourth, oil companies were still incurring losses of around Rs 750 crore per day.

According to a report by CRISIL, oil marketing companies were losing nearly Rs 10 per litre on petrol and Rs 13 per litre on diesel even after the earlier increase.

Petrol and diesel prices are now at their highest levels since May 2022. Fuel rates had remained largely unchanged since April 2022, except for a Rs 2-per-litre cut announced in March 2024 ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Fuel prices continue to vary across states due to differences in local taxes and levies.

In Mumbai, petrol now costs Rs 107.59 per litre and diesel Rs 94.08. Kolkata recorded petrol prices at Rs 109.70 and diesel at Rs 96.07 per litre, while in Chennai, petrol is priced at Rs 104.49 and diesel at Rs 96.11.

The rise in fuel prices comes amid broader efforts by the Centre to contain India's oil import bill and reduce fuel consumption.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week urged citizens and government departments to conserve fuel, promote remote working and avoid non-essential travel as elevated energy prices put pressure on foreign exchange reserves and threaten to widen the current account deficit.

Several state governments have also reportedly directed departments to reduce travel and limit office attendance to cut fuel consumption.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) prices have also increased twice in recent days, including a Re 1-per-kg hike on Sunday after a Rs 2 increase on May 15 in cities such as Delhi and Mumbai.

Private fuel retailers had earlier moved ahead with price revisions. Nayara Energy had increased petrol and diesel prices by up to Rs 5 and Rs 3 per litre respectively in March, while Shell plc raised petrol prices by Rs 7.41 and diesel by Rs 25 per litre from April 1.

Industry officials said the latest revisions appeared calibrated to ease pressure on oil firms without triggering a sharp inflationary shock, though they acknowledged that rising fuel costs would likely add to broader price pressures.

India's retail inflation rose to 3.48 per cent

in April from 3.40 per cent in March, while wholesale inflation climbed to a 42-month high of 8.3 per cent, driven largely by rising fuel and energy costs.

The opposition Indian National Congress intensified its criticism of the government over rising fuel prices and inflation.

"Abhi toh ye angai hai, aage aur mehngai hai" ("This is just the beginning, more inflation lies ahead"), the party said in a post on X while reacting to the latest hike.

### UP Teen's Conversion

17 years of age. According to the complaint, on May 15, a cleric at the Markaziya Jamia mosque in Ganderbal allegedly made Vishal recite the 'kalima', following which his religion was changed.

Kumar also stated that during a phone conversation, Vishal told him that he had "come too far" and would not return to Hinduism.

A Binor Police officer said a video related to the incident has also gone viral on social media. The complainant alleged that after the alleged conversion, his son was given the new name Mohammad Hamza, the officer added.

Binor Police have registered an FIR against Wasim and some unidentified persons and initiated an investigation into the matter, Singh said.

Meanwhile, Kupwara Police in Jammu and Kashmir had earlier registered a case to probe the matter.

Further investigation is underway, the officials said.

### J&K Logs 1.5 Lakh

of the Census 2027 through the official self-enumeration portal," Sharma told reporters in Jammu.

He said all districts of the Union Territory were witnessing enthusiastic participation in the exercise, including remote areas of the Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

"Far-flung districts in Kashmir, including Kulgam, Baramulla and Kupwara, besides remote areas of Jammu division, have recorded remarkable participation," he said.

According to officials, support systems and facilitation arrangements have been put in place at district and field levels to help residents complete the online process smoothly. Sharma said special arrangements had also been made to ensure coverage of migratory and nomadic tribal populations, including Gujjars and Bakarwals.

"No person from the tribal or migratory population will be left out of the Census enumeration exercise," he said.

He added that departments including Forest, School Education, Tribal Affairs and Sheep Husbandry were coordinating to ensure coverage of migratory routes and remote settlements.

Special deployment of enumerators and supervisors has also been made in hilly and difficult terrain, officials said.

The Census mobile applications and self-enumeration portal have been designed to function even in low-connectivity areas through offline and synchronisation-based mechanisms, Sharma added.

Appealing to residents to complete the process within the notified timeline, Sharma said accurate demographic data was essential for governance, welfare schemes, infrastructure planning and policy formulation.

He also clarified that all information collected during the Census exercise remains confidential under the provisions of the Census Act, 1948.

"No bank account details, PAN details, financial transaction information or similar sensitive personal information are collected during the exercise," he said.

# Heatwave Drives Tourists Towards Kashmir's Cooler Offbeat Valleys

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** As large parts of the country continue to reel under an intense heatwave, tourists are flocking to Kashmir's offbeat destinations such as Razdan Top in Gurez, Tulail Valley, Bangus Valley and Sonamarg, seeking relief from soaring temperatures in the plains.

According to the details available with KNO with temperatures crossing 45 degrees Celsius in several states tourists are thronging the Valley in large numbers.

At Razdan Top, the high-altitude mountain pass connecting Bandipora with Gurez Valley, tourists were seen enjoying fresh snow, an uncommon sight during the month of May.

"It feels unbelievable to see snow in May. We came from Delhi where temperatures are extremely high, and here we are playing in snow and wearing jackets," said Rohan Sharma, a tourist from New Delhi visiting Gurez with his family.

Another tourist, Mehak Gupta from Punjab, said the weather in



Kashmir was a "huge relief" from the scorching heat in the plains.

"We had seen videos of Razdan Top on social media, but witnessing snow here in May is completely different. The beauty of this place is unmatched," she said.

Tourist movement has also increased in Sonamarg and Bangus Valley, where visitors are spend-

ing time near snow-covered peaks, streams and vast green pastures.

At Sonamarg, tourists were seen taking pony rides and enjoying the cool breeze along the Sindh stream.

"Back home in Rajasthan, it is impossible to step outside during daytime because of the heat. Kashmir's weather is pleasant

and refreshing," said tourist Ankit Verma.

In North Kashmir's Bangus Valley, known for its dense forests and sprawling meadows, tourists described the landscape as peaceful and untouched.

"The natural beauty of Bangus is extraordinary. It is less crowded and feels very close to nature," said Sana Khan, a tourist

from Mumbai.

Local tourism stakeholders said offbeat destinations in Kashmir were witnessing increased footfall this season as more tourists explored lesser-known locations beyond Srinagar and Gulmarg.

"Tourists are now looking for unexplored places. Gurez, Tulail and Bangus are attracting visitors because of their natural beauty, pleasant weather and peaceful atmosphere," said local tourist guide Hilal Ahmad in Gurez.

Another guide in Sonamarg, Mushtaq Ahmed, said many tourists were extending their stays due to the cool weather conditions.

"People arriving from Delhi, Rajasthan and Punjab are enjoying the climate here. Many tourists are surprised to witness snow at Razdan Top during May," he said.

Officials in the tourism sector said the recent weather conditions and social media promotion of offbeat destinations had contributed to the rise in tourist arrivals across the Valley.

## Airtel Unveils Priority Postpaid, Upgrades 5G Network

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Bharti Airtel announced the launch of Priority Postpaid, a new service that leverages 5G slicing technology to deliver superior and more consistent experience to customers on postpaid. This service is specially built for busy customers who depend on uninterrupted connectivity for work, entertainment, or online collaboration.

For this service, Airtel has upgraded its 5G network with advanced capabilities of slicing technology. This makes the network more efficient; creates more capacity; and provides the capability to use this capacity in a targeted manner for delivery of superior experience for Priority customers. By intelligently and dynamically segmenting network capacity, Airtel is offering stable and dependable experience for postpaid customers, even when traffic demand is high.

Over the past year, slicing-based 5G services have been launched in many countries like USA, Singapore, United Kingdom and Malaysia. Airtel's launch is the first such launch in India, reflecting Airtel's continued investment in building a smarter, more resilient, and future-ready digital network and reinforces its commitment to combining advanced technology with customer-centric innovation.

Commenting on the



launch, Shashwat Sharma, MD & CEO - Airtel India, said, "Our focus at Airtel is on delivering meaningful innovations that enhance our customers' experience. Priority Postpaid is our latest innovation powered by the 5G slicing technology. It provides a superior, more reliable, and dependable experience to our customers - whether they are attending a client call in traffic, or streaming at a packed concert, or booking a cab in a crowded market."

Airtel Priority service is available for customers on all our postpaid plans. Existing customers will start enjoying the benefit automatically. Prepaid customers or customers wanting to switch to Airtel Priority postpaid can do so easily through the Airtel App or by visiting any Airtel Store.

Customers can enjoy our Priority service on any 5G SA-enabled smartphone, with their latest software upgrades. Customers for whom an upgrade is pending, will see a pending action showing in the 'Settings' section of their phones. Customers can also check their phone readiness for Airtel Priority services by logging on to the Airtel App.

## Zamin Foundation Extends Support to 'Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan'

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Sheikh Idrees Ahmed, Chairman of Zamin Foundation, on Monday submitted a Letter of Support to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, reaffirming the Foundation's commitment to the "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan."

The letter was handed over to M.K. Bandari, reflecting the growing cooperation between civil society organisations and government institutions in addressing the issue of substance abuse in the Union Territory.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Idrees Ahmed said the increasing menace of drug addiction poses a serious threat to the future of youth and the social fabric of Jammu & Kashmir.

"Zamin Foundation stands firmly with the government's initiative to eliminate this challenge and build



a healthier and more resilient society," he said.

The "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan" is a flagship campaign aimed at spreading awareness against drug abuse, mobilising communities and strengthening rehabilitation efforts across the Union Territory.

The Foundation's support is expected to further strengthen the campaign and encourage wider community participation in safeguarding youth from the dangers of substance abuse.

## GMC Jammu Issues Dengue Advisory

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu has issued a detailed public advisory on dengue management, urging people to remain vigilant against the mosquito-borne disease and seek immediate medical attention in case of worsening symptoms. The hospital has warned that re-infection with another strain of the virus can significantly increase the risk of severe complications, including internal bleeding and organ damage.

According to the advisory shared by GMC with KNO, dengue fever is caused by the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito carrying one of the four dengue virus types (DENV). The infection is not contagious from person to person, except in rare cases where it can spread from a pregnant woman to her baby.

Health experts at GMC Jammu warned that while the first dengue infection is usually mild, re-infection with another strain can significantly increase the risk of severe complica-



tions. Symptoms generally begin four to ten days after the mosquito bite and may continue for three to seven days, including high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, muscle and joint pain, nausea and vomiting, skin rash, and extreme weakness.

The advisory noted that nearly one in every 20 dengue patients may develop severe dengue after initial symptoms subside. People experiencing severe abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, difficulty breathing, bleeding from gums or nose, blood in vomit or stool, or excessive tiredness should not delay medical consultation.

GMC Jammu said that extensive arrangements have

with mild symptoms to monitor their fever regularly, take paracetamol only as advised by doctors, drink plenty of fluids, take adequate rest, and report immediately if symptoms worsen. The advisory cautioned against self-medication and unnecessary insistence on platelet transfusions, stating such decisions should only be taken by medical professionals.

Those suffering from diabetes, kidney ailments, liver disease, and other comorbidities must remain especially cautious and report to hospitals immediately if fever or warning signs appear.

GMC Jammu urged people to focus on mosquito control and personal protection, advising full-sleeved clothing, mosquito nets, especially at night, prevention of water stagnation in buckets, coolers, tyres, and containers, and maintaining cleanliness around homes and localities.

Officials said GMC Jammu is fully equipped with adequate platelet stock and infrastructure to manage dengue cases effectively during the season.

Doctors advised patients

## Parliamentary Panels Make Visits to J&K after Budget Session

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant development, Jammu & Kashmir has been witnessing frequent visits by parliamentary panels as part of their study tours.

Details available with KNO reveal that four Department-related Standing Committees have visited Kashmir Valley to discuss various issues at both the national level and those specific to J&K in the past 50 days.

The Department-related Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, led by MP Digvijaya Singh, visited Jammu & Kashmir immediately after the Budget Session. The committee undertook a two-day study tour to review educational reforms, youth engagement, and welfare initiatives in the Valley.

In the first week of May, the Department-related Standing Committee on Finance, headed by MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, visited Jammu & Kashmir to review key areas including financial literacy, digitalisation, GST reforms, pension regulation, MSME growth, insurance coverage, and grievance redressal.

Soon after, the Department-related Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs, chaired by Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, visited the Union Territory and assessed the progress of Smart City and other urban projects.

The Department-related Standing Committee on Home Affairs, headed by BJP MP Radha Mohan Das Aggarwal, visited Jammu & Kashmir from May 10 to May 15, to discuss several issues.

The Department-related Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment is also visiting Jammu & Kashmir as part of their study tour.

According to observers, these visits are significant as they enable MPs to gain firsthand information about the problems faced by Jammu & Kashmir, on the development and economic front.

They said these visits are also important from the perspective of tourism in Kashmir.

## Anti-Encroachment Drive Carried Out Near Mahamaya Temple



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** A joint team of the Forest Department and police on Tuesday carried out a major anti-encroachment drive in the Raika forest belt near Mahamaya Temple in the Bahu Fort area, demolishing multiple illegal structures and reclaiming prime forest land.

The operation was conducted early morning between 6:00 am and 7:00 am on forest land located on the lower side of Mohmaya Temple, opposite Environment Park in the Bandhi area, under the jurisdiction of Police Station Bagh-e-Bahu.

The drive was led by Divisional Forest Officer (Urban Forest) Ashwani Mittal and supported by local police and civil administration.

Senior police officers, including Vabhiav Meena, SP South Jammu, and Aana Sinha, SP Headquarters, were present on the spot, along with SDPO East and Station House Officers of Bagh-e-Bahu, Channi, Gangyal, Gandhi Nagar and Satwari.

Officials informed KNO that around 14 to 15 structures were demolished during the operation, while separate official inputs indicated that the broader drive in the Mahamaya forest belt resulted in the removal of nearly 20 to

30, including both mud and concrete constructions.

The operation led to the retrieval of approximately 60 kanals of forest land in the Raika Bandi area of the lower Shivalik range, land estimated to be worth crores of rupees.

"The drive was conducted peacefully and concluded without any immediate law and order issue," an official said. However, authorities acknowledged the possibility of backlash from affected families.

"There is a likelihood of protests, sloganeering or attempts to block roads in the coming hours or days. Preventive deployment and close monitoring have been put in place," the official added.

Residents whose structures were demolished staged protests, terming the action "unjustified" and alleging a lack of prior notice.

Officials, however, maintained that encroachments in the area had increased significantly over the past five to six years, with new constructions continuing to come up on forest land.

The Forest Department reiterated its zero-tolerance policy towards encroachment. "We will not allow any forest land to be occupied illegally. Mapping, video-

## CS Reviews Arrangements for Smooth Conduct of Machail Mata Yatra

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the arrangements being put in place by the concerned Divisional and District Administrations for the smooth, safe and hassle-free conduct of the annual Machail Mata Yatra scheduled to commence in August this year in the mountainous region of Kishtwar.

The meeting, besides Additional Chief Secretary, PWD and Principal Secretary, Home, was attended by Director General, Fire & Emergency Services; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; IGP, Jammu; Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar; SSP, Kishtwar; Managing Director, JPDCL; Chief Engineer, Project Sampark and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took a detailed assessment of the arrangements being made for ensuring safe and smooth conduct of the pilgrimage this year, including sanitation measures entrusted to the Rural Development Department and arrangements related to water supply, power, medical facilities, transport management and emergency response by the concerned line departments.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the implementation of the directions issued in the aftermath of the last year's disaster incident along the yatra route. He took a detailed appraisal of measures such as introduction of online and RFID-based registration systems, disaster mitigation initiatives, installation of Automatic Rain Gauges (ARG) and Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) for real-time weather alerts and development of detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) aimed at ensuring safety and smooth movement of pilgrims throughout the Yatra period. (Observer News Service)

## Kakapora Man Walks to Srinagar With Giant Traditional Cap

**SRINAGAR:** Social activist Ali Mohammad Jan on Tuesday reached Lal Chowk after undertaking a foot march from Kakapora in Pulwama district, carrying a large traditional Kashmiri cap on a hand-operated cart addressed to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, seeking immediate operationalisation of the long-pending Sub-District Hospital Kakapora.

The unusual protest, which drew attention along the route, was aimed at highlighting what the activist called "years of delay despite almost complete infrastructure".

Jan, as per KNO, said the hospital building, constructed in 2018-19, is nearly ready but still non-functional, forcing patients to travel long distances for basic healthcare.

"SDH Kakapora is almost complete. Only 4 to 5 percent work is left. But unfortunately, people are suffering every day without healthcare facilities," he said. Ali said the protest was peaceful and symbolic, non-confrontational. "This big cap is a mark of respect for the Chief Minister. We want him to see the ground reality and start the hospital immediately," he added.

Jan said the cap was handcrafted over nearly a month, calling it a "symbol of dignity and appeal" from the people of Kakapora. "I have come on foot from Kakapora to Srinagar, as we want SDH Kakapora to be made functional without further delay. The hospital building is ready, but services are not starting. People are suffering, especially pregnant women and emergency patients," he said.

He further urged the government to personally intervene in resolving pending technical or administrative issues delaying the hospital's opening. (Observer News Service)

## 6 Drug Peddlers Arrested: Police

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing the intensified campaign against narcotics under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, J&K Police carried out series of anti-drug operations in Pulwama, Baramulla and Anantnag districts, leading to the arrest of six drug peddlers and the seizure of contraband substances.

According to a statement issued to KNO, in Pulwama, police conducted two separate naka checking operations at Nikas near Uzrampathri Bridge and Hakripora. During the operations, two persons identified as Muzamil Ahmad Mir of Lassipora and Aamir Ahmad Sheikh of Tangpuna were apprehended after approximately 8.5 grams and 5.5 grams of heroin-like substance respectively were recovered from their possession. Cases under relevant provisions of the NDPS Act have been registered at Police Stations Rajpora and Pulwama, and investigations are underway.

Meanwhile, in Baramulla, Police team during naka checking in the Fatehgarh area of Sheeri, apprehended one accused identified as Sajad Ahmad Malik of Fatehgarh. During search, charas-like substance wrapped in corn husk was recovered from his possession. Subsequent investigation led to the arrest of another accused, Mohd Shafi Lone of Malpora, an SRTC bus driver, from whom additional contraband was recovered. Preliminary investigation suggests that a government SRTC vehicle was being misused for transportation of narcotics. A case vide FIR No. 21/2026 of the NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Sheeri.

In Anantnag district, police registered three separate cases during anti-drug operations in Sangam and Aishmuqam areas. Acting on specific information, a police team raided a residential house in Ikhrajpora, Marhama, and recovered approximately 3.340 kilograms of charas powder-like substance. The accused identified as Manzoor Ahmad Shah, was not present during the raid and efforts are ongoing to trace him. (Observer News Service)

## Crime Branch Conducts Searches in Rs 93 Lakh Land Fraud Case

**Srinagar:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of the Crime Branch Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday conducted house searches in the Samsaan area of Budgam in connection with an alleged Rs 93 lakh land fraud case involving purported fake land and tree sale agreements, officials said.

The searches were carried out as part of the investigation into FIR No. 17/2026 registered at Police Station EOW Kashmir under Sections 31B(4), 336(3), 340 and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

According to Crime Branch officials, the case pertains to an alleged fraud involving the inducement of a complainant into purchasing five kanals of migrant land at Drusu in Pulwama and 300 standing trees at Bijbehara through allegedly forged and fraudulent agreements.

The investigation, officials said, revolves around an alleged transaction amounting to Rs 93 lakh.

Authorities identified the accused as Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Dar, a resident of Jawalpora Budgam, and Soom Nath Koul, stated to be associated with Bangalore North in Karnataka and Janipur Jammu. Officials said preliminary investigation revealed that one of the accused allegedly posed as an attorney holder of the original landowners, while another allegedly acted as a witness to the agreements.

The case assumes significance because the investigation reportedly found that neither the land nor the standing trees involved in the transaction belonged to the accused persons.

Crime Branch officials said the alleged fraud involved fabricated ownership claims and fake agreements used to convince the complainant to enter into the transaction. (Observer News Service)

# Iran Links Hormuz Control to National Security

Trans Asia News

**TEHRAN** - Iran said on Tuesday it would continue asserting control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz and warned it would respond forcefully to any attempt to challenge its influence in the waterway, as officials framed the chokepoint as a key lever of the country's economic, political and military power.

The remarks, made by senior lawmaker Ebrahim Azizi and echoed by military officials, come amid heightened tensions in the Gulf following recent confrontations involving Iran, the United States and Israel. Tehran has also signalled changes to how maritime traffic through the narrow passage could be managed, including a proposed mechanism involving designated routes and service fees.

"The Strait of Hormuz is not merely a maritime transit route; it is a strategic achievement for the Islamic Republic," Azizi, chairman of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said in an interview published on Tuesday.

He described the waterway as a "full-fledged economic, political and military lever" that would remain

under the management and control of the Iranian nation.

The Strait of Hormuz, located between Iran and Oman, is one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints, through which a substantial share of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies pass. Any disruption to shipping in the corridor can send shockwaves through energy markets and global trade.

Azizi warned countries seeking to project influence in the region that Iran would pursue what it described as its legal rights in the waterway with "full strength" and would show "no leniency" in defending its interests.

On Saturday, Azizi said in a post on X that Iran had developed a new mechanism to regulate maritime traffic through designated routes in the Strait of Hormuz and could impose charges for what he called 'specialised services'. He said the move was aimed at safeguarding Iran's sovereignty and ensuring trade security.

Iran has increasingly emphasized the waterway's strategic significance in recent months. Tehran says it tightened controls in the area after U.S. President Donald Trump announced the continuation of a naval



blockade targeting Iranian vessels and ports. Iranian officials have also cited regional military tensions as justification for enhanced security measures. Separately, Iran's Army said it had

maintained combat readiness despite a ceasefire period and warned adversaries against launching further attacks.

"If the enemy commits another folly and launches another aggression against our dear Iran, we will open new fronts against them with new tools and methods," Army spokesman Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia said during a gathering in Tehran, according to military public relations statements.

Akraminia said Iran's Armed Forces had treated the ceasefire period as "a time of war" and used it to bolster operational capabilities.

He added that Iranian forces retained full command over the Strait of Hormuz and suggested the security environment around the waterway had fundamentally changed.

Regional tensions involving Iran, Israel and the United States have repeatedly raised concerns over the security of Gulf shipping routes. The Strait of Hormuz has long been viewed by analysts as one of Tehran's most significant strategic pressure points, particularly during periods of confrontation with Western powers and regional rivals.

## Irish President Slams Israel Over Sister's Gaza Flotilla Abduction

Agencies

**DUBLIN** - The Irish president, Catherine Martina Ann Connolly, has denounced her sister's abduction from the Gaza-bound Sumud Flotilla by the Israeli armed forces.

"It is quite upsetting, and I am very worried about her, and I am also very concerned about her colleagues on board," Connolly told reporters on Tuesday, adding that she is "very proud" of her sister.

Margaret Connolly is one of at least six Irish citizens aboard a vessel that was part of the Sumud Spring Flotilla carrying aid to the besieged enclave. The Israeli forces seized the vessel along with 10 other boats off the coast of Cyprus.

The organisers of the Gaza-bound Global Sumud



Flotilla (GSF) said 10 ships are still sailing towards Gaza after Israeli forces intercepted 41 of its boats in international waters.

GSF reported on Monday that Israeli troops encircled the ships when they were 250 nautical miles from Gaza's coast, abducting some 300 activists on board.

GSF condemned the operation as "another illegal, high-seas aggression", saying the

occupying regime "continues to demonstrate a systematic disregard for international maritime law, freedom of navigation on the high seas, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea."

The Sumud Spring Flotilla set sail from France, Spain, and Italy on April 12, 2026, to break Israel's blockade of Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid to the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. -WANA

## CBSE Extends Class 12 Answer Book Deadline Till May 23

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has extended the last date for obtaining scanned copies of evaluated answer books for Class 12 board examinations by a day following technical issues on its website.

According to a CBSE circular issued on Tuesday, the deadline has been extended from May 22 to May 23.

"It is hereby informed to all stakeholders that due to a technical problem encountered on the CBSE website for Post-Verification Facilities and to ensure sufficient time to the students, the last date for obtaining scanned copies of evaluated answer books has been extended," the circular said.

Candidates have been advised to utilise the extended timeline and apply accordingly, while all other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

## UAE's Image as Business Haven Tested by Iran War

AP

**DUBAI** - The United Arab Emirates for decades has advertised itself as a haven for international business in a Middle East awash in violent upheaval. Those waves have now crashed into this nation, testing its economic model like never before.

The UAE, a close ally of the United States and Israel, faced more missile and drone attacks from Iran during the war than any other country.

The attacks - and Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz - have more than halved the Emirates' exports of crude oil and natural gas. Its tourism and conference sectors have also suffered.

The country, which sits just across the Persian Gulf from Iran, has portrayed itself as unfazed, even as it makes significant changes. It recently announced plans to build another pipeline to reduce its reliance on the strait,



and it dropped out of the OPEC oil cartel so it can boost energy production longer-term, something that had been under consideration since before the war.

While the US and Israel started the war, the UAE is firmly entangled. A drone attack Sunday on its Barakah nuclear power plant underlines the continued risks - even if a shaky ceasefire holds.

Because the Emirates boasts a large surplus of cash, the war's economic disruptions so far do

not appear to have caused major job losses or an exodus of foreign business.

The longer the standoff drags on and prevents business as usual in the Emirates, the greater the risk to its image that has been key to drawing international business and investment.

Emirati officials' increasingly accuse Iran of piracy and even terrorism, while threatening to take military action.

The UAE "will not tolerate any threat to its security and sovereignty under any circumstances," its Foreign Ministry said Sunday night. "It reserves its full, sovereign, legitimate, diplomatic, and military rights to respond to any threats, allegations or hostilities."

It's hard to know how the UAE will respond to the Barakah attack, which caused no radiological release and hasn't stopped the nuclear plant in Abu Dhabi's far western desert from operating.



# MI Securities

## POWER OF ₹5,000 SIP

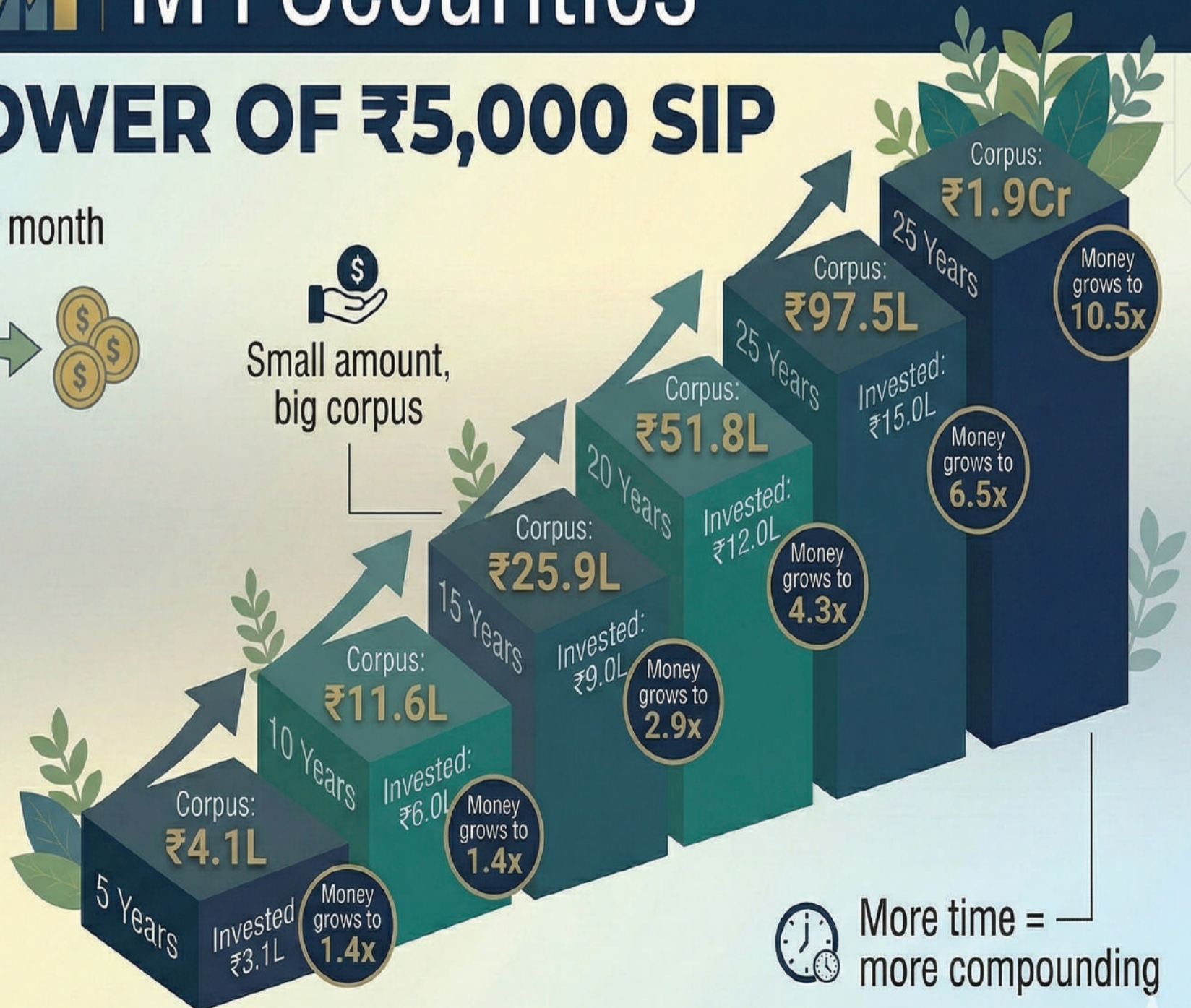
Step 1: You invest ₹5,000 every month



Step 2: You reinvest your total investment growth

Duration (Years)	Total Invested Amount
5	3.0L
10	6.0L
15	9.0L
20	12.0L
25	15.0L
30	18.0L

Small amount, big corpus



More time = more compounding

Mutual fund investments are subject to market risks. Read all scheme related documents carefully before investing.