

KO Classifieds

BOOK ONLINE
ads.kashmiobserver.net

You can
do it all
here

- PUBLIC NOTICES • NAME CHANGE • SALE/ PURCHASE • BIRTHDAY WISHES • OBITUARIES

Kashmir Police Confront A Crime Wave Without Borders

A month-long study of five Srinagar police stations finds officers increasingly pursuing digital trails instead of suspects on city streets.

Samiya Keen & Shahid Shafi

Srinagar: The call reached a police station in Srinagar shortly after noon. A man had shared a one-time password with someone claiming to represent his bank. His savings disappeared within minutes. Investigators gathered around computer screens instead of heading to a crime

scene. They traced bank transfers, anonymous phone numbers and digital footprints that faded almost as quickly as they appeared. A mobile phone had become both the scene of the crime and the most valuable piece of evidence. Cases like this have become routine in Kashmir, where police say the internet has transformed both the nature of crime



and the work needed to solve it. That shift forms the central finding of a month-long field study conducted by "The Achievers," a ten-member student research group from Amar Singh College, Srinagar, under a Skill Enhancement Course in Cybercrime Administration. The team visited Shaheed Gunj, Saddar, Chanapora, Karan Nagar and Rajbagh

police stations under the SP South Office, interviewing officers responsible for investigating cybercrime and conventional offences. "Our interactions showed that cyber elements now appear in almost every category of crime," the researchers revealed. Police officials described complaint registers that look very different from those of a

decade ago. Financial fraud, phishing attacks, online blackmail, fake shopping websites, fraudulent job advertisements, cyberbullying and OTP scams now compete with theft, robbery and physical assault for investigators' attention. "People are living more of their lives online, while many still | More on P6

Flash Floods, Landslides Batter Chenab Valley

Highway Blocked, Vehicles Buried Near Kwar Power Project; Machail Yatra Traffic Hit



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Flash floods and landslides triggered by heavy overnight rainfall battered parts of the Chenab Valley on Monday, damaging the Doda-Kishtwar highway, burying several vehicles near an under-construction hydropower project and disrupting traffic, including movement linked to the annual Machail Yatra.

Officials said floodwaters carrying huge quantities of mud, rocks and boulders swept across the Doda-Kishtwar National Highway at Prem Nagar in Doda district, damaging a portion of the road and forcing suspension of vehicular traffic.

Several vehicles parked along the roadside were trapped in the debris, while traffic remained stranded on both sides of the highway. No loss of life or injuries were reported.

Road clearance and restoration work was launched, with commuters advised to avoid the highway and follow official traffic advisories until the route is reopened.

The disruption also affected traffic linked to the ongoing Machail Yatra, prompting

authorities to advise pilgrims and other commuters against using the route until it is declared safe.

In neighbouring Kishtwar district, heavy rainfall triggered a major landslide and mudslide near the tunnel area of the under-construction 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Power Project.

Flash floods carried large volumes of mud and boulders into the project area, burying several vehicles, including trucks, dozers and other construction equipment, besides damaging construction material.

Officials said multiple vehicles suffered extensive damage and remained trapped under debris. Clearance operations were underway to retrieve the vehicles and restore the affected site.

Minor flash flood incidents were also reported from high-altitude areas of Reasi district.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department forecast generally cloudy weather with intermittent light to moderate rain and thunder-showers across Jammu and Kashmir over the next few days. It said a | More on P6

Identify Root Causes Of Substance Abuse Among Women: LG Sinha

Says Women's Empowerment Key to Viksit J&K; Felicitates 32 KWO Fellows

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday called for a comprehensive, region-specific study to identify the root causes of rising substance abuse among women in Jammu and Kashmir, saying such an analysis could help strengthen rehabilitation frameworks.

Addressing a felicitation ceremony for recipients of the Kashmir Women's Organization (KWO) Fellowship at Lok Bhavan here, Sinha asked the fellows to study the factors driving women towards drug addiction and help develop better support mechanisms for victims.

He said a region-specific analysis would provide vital support to women affected by



substance abuse and strengthen existing rehabilitation efforts.

The Lieutenant Governor felicitated 32 recipients of the KWO Fellowship and hailed them as symbols of Jammu and Kashmir's transformation towards a future built on

self-confidence, equal opportunities and dignity.

"By challenging deeply entrenched stereotypes, these fellows have redefined what is possible. They have paved a new path for future generations and their contributions would serve as a foundation of inspiration, confidence and guidance for years to come," Sinha said.

He lauded Dr Fida Firdous and members of the Kashmir Women's Organization for creating a platform that enables women from the region to embrace their talent, ideas and identities and contribute to Jammu and Kashmir's development.

Sinha said women's empowerment was key to a "Viksit J&K", asserting that the progress of women ensures the progress of society.

"I envision a Jammu Kashmir where women lead in academia, industry, social organizations and governance, shaping policies, driving entrepreneurship, and enriching our culture through art and literature," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said he also envisioned a Jammu and Kashmir where every young girl grows up believing that her dreams are valuable, her voice is powerful and her future holds limitless possibilities.

Paying homage to historical figures including Rani Didda, Kota Rani, Lal Ded, Habba Khatoon and Mata Rupa Bhawani, Sinha said women have played a significant role in shaping the consciousness and development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have | More on P6

Amarnath Yatra Footfall Crosses 85,000 In 4 Days

Agencies

Srinagar: The annual Amarnath Yatra continued to witness a heavy influx of pilgrims, with 28,818 devotees paying obeisance at the holy cave shrine on the fourth day of the pilgrimage, taking the cumulative number of yatis who have performed darshan since the commencement of the Yatra on July 3 to 85,779, official figures said.

According to the official data, the devotees who performed darshan on Sunday included 20,420 men, 7,554 women, 243 children, 249 sadhus, 32 sadhvis, nine transgender pilgrims and 311 security personnel.

With the steady flow of pilgrims, the cumulative number of devotees is expected to cross the one lakh mark on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, amid elaborate security arrangements, the fifth | More on P6

Art 370 Abrogation Fulfilled Mookerjee's Dream: PM

Press Trust Of India

Kolkata: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the abrogation of Article 370 had fulfilled the dream of Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee while asserting that his ideology and principles continue to shape the BJP's governance agenda and guide "New India".

Addressing a commemorative programme through a



video message on Mookerjee's 125th birth anniversary, Modi described him as | More on P6

Day Not Far When BJP Will Form Govt In J&K: BJP Chief

Agencies

BJP's "lotus will bloom in the Kashmir Valley" as well, party's national president Nitin Nabin said on Monday, asserting that the saffron party would soon form its own government in Jammu | More on P6

Millions Mourn Iran's Late Leader In Historic Funeral

Agencies

Tehran - Millions of mourners thronged the streets of Tehran on Monday as the coffin of Iran's slain leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei was carried in a massive funeral procession through the capital, with observers describing it as the largest public gathering in the region's modern history.

Dressed in black and beating their chests in mourning, mourners packed a 10-kilometre route leading to Azadi Square, chanting slogans in support of resistance and demanding punishment for those responsible for the assassination of the martyred



leader. Many waved red flags of revenge, carried portraits of the slain leader and showered flowers on the flag-draped coffins as they moved through

the capital. President Masoud Pezeshkian and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and | More on P6

Always Online, Still Alone: Inside Gen Z's Loneliness Paradox

Surrounded by messages, followers and endless digital interaction, a generation raised online is confronting a peculiar paradox: being constantly connected without always feeling close to anyone.

Malika Salim & Mudabir Jehan

Srinagar: The phone does not stop buzzing.

A meme lands in one group chat. Someone replies to an Instagram story. Unread messages wait on WhatsApp. A friend uploads photographs from an evening out, while another posts a late-night update about work. The screen is crowded with people.

Yet the room can still feel painfully quiet.

"I talk to people all day, but



sometimes I realise I have no one I actually want to call when I am upset," says Munaza, a

19-year-old NEET aspirant from Chanapora Srinagar. "There are always messages, but that does not mean you feel close to someone."

For young Indians, the experience appears to be far from unusual.

A nationwide survey of 4,527 young people aged 15 to 29 across 24 Indian states found that three in four felt lonely even when surrounded by friends. Nearly 80 per cent said they turned first to friends, rather than | Full story on kashmiobserver.net

Clear Shah Kul Encroachments Or Appear In Person: HC

Court Warns LCMA VC, Srinagar DC Over Failure To Act
M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has given authorities a final opportunity regarding removal of encroachments from the historic Shah Kul here, warning that the Vice Chairman of the Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) and the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, shall appear in person in case of failure.

The direction was passed by a Division Bench comprising

Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani while hearing a Public Interest Litigation seeking restoration of the centuries-old canal, a protected monument that historically supplied water to the Mughal-era Nishat Garden.

The Bench expressed dissatisfaction with the latest status report filed by the authorities, describing it as "inconclusive" and observed that it failed to address the core issue of removing encroachments from the canal.

"The entire responsibility has been shifted to the Revenue Department, which, as per the committee | More on P6

Dal PIL After 24 Years

HC Directs Amicus To Outline Progress, Remaining Challenges

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has directed the Amicus Curiae to submit a concise factual note outlining the progress made in the 24-year-old Public Interest Litigation (PIL) concerning Dal Lake and the challenges that still remain to be addressed.

The direction was passed by a Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar and Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani while observing that the PIL has been pending for the last 24 years and has resulted in numerous judicial orders aimed at improving the condition of the lake, the flagship of Kashmir's tourism.

"This Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been pending in this Court for the last 24 years and many developments have taken place. There are multiple orders passed from time to time, including those relating to improving the condition of the Dal Lake," the court said, adding, "With a view to have a complete perspective of the litigation, we request the learned Amicus Curiae (senior advocate Z A Shah) to put up a brief factual note indicating as to how this public interest litigation has proceeded and what more is required to be done in the matter. May do so by the next date of hearing."

The PIL, filed | More on P6

Water Crisis Worsens in Many City Localities

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The drinking water crisis has deepened in several parts of Srinagar leaving the people in lurch.

Residents from multiple localities including Habba Kadal, Fateh Kadal, Chotta Bazar, Guru Bazar, Karfali Mohalla, Qamarwari and adjoining areas, besides several uptown localities such as Karan Nagar, Batmaloo and Natipora, told KNO that prolonged disruption in potable water supply has left them to fend on their own amid the scorching summer.

They said that they have been receiving little to no drinking water for the past several days, forcing families to fetch water from private sources, rely on neighbours or purchase water for daily use.

Shafiq Ahmed Mir, of Karfali Mohalla, said, "There has been no proper water supply in our area. People are facing immense hardship and are struggling even for drinking water. The authorities must restore the supply without any further delay."

Ashiq Khan, another resident of Chotta Bazar, said the crisis has affected every aspect of life. "We have no drinking water in our homes and now have to rely on packaged drinking water purchased from outside. What is the point of having tap connections in our homes and paying water bills?" he asked.

Residents of Guru Bazar

and Karan Nagar further alleged that despite repeated complaints, the situation remains unchanged.

Mukhtar Wani, of Qamarwari, said many households have exhausted their stored water.

"Routine household work has come to a standstill. People are struggling even for drinking water and are depending on private arrangements. The authorities must act immediately," he said.

Residents from Batmaloo, Natipora and Rawalpura also voiced similar grievances, alleging that unreliable water supply has become a routine affair during the peak summer season.

When contacted, a Superintending Engineer of the Jal Shakti Department told KNO that there was no major issue with the overall water supply system.

Meanwhile, an official from the PHE wing said the grievance mechanism receives around 10 to 20 complaints every day regarding water supply.

"The highest number of complaints are received from areas fed by the Dodhganga Water Treatment Plant, including Rawalpura, Rajbagh, Kursu Rajbagh and the Batmaloo belt. Around 10 to 20 water tankers are dispatched daily to localities from where complaints are received. As far as Downtown is concerned, there is no water supply issue at the departmental level," the official said.

Sagar Reviews Preparations for Madar-e-Meharban Death Anniversary Observance

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference General Secretary and MLA Khanyar Ali Muhammad Sagar Monday chaired a meeting of party functionaries and office bearers of Khanyar A and Khanyar B at the party headquarters, Nawa-e-Subha, Srinagar. MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar was also present.

The meeting deliberated on various organizational matters, party affairs, and the issues confronting the Khanyar constituency. Discussions focused on strengthening the party's organisational structure at the grassroots level, enhancing public outreach, and ensuring greater coordination among party workers to effectively address the aspirations and concerns of the people.

The participants reviewed the developmental works being undertaken in the constituency under the leadership of Haji Ali Muhammad Sagar and highlighted the various public welfare initiatives launched by the Omar Abdullah-led government. They appreciated the government's commitment to inclusive development and

people-centric governance while expressing satisfaction over the progress of ongoing developmental projects in the constituency.

As per KNS, addressing the meeting, Sagar emphasized the importance of unity, discipline, and sustained public outreach, urging party functionaries to remain actively engaged with the people and work tirelessly to strengthen the organization.

Calling upon the cadre to prepare for the upcoming observance of Madar-e-Meharban's death anniversary on July 11, Sagar said, "Madar-e-Meharban's life was a shining example of compassion, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Her legacy continues to inspire generations of National Conference workers. I urge all party functionaries and workers of Khanyar to begin preparations in earnest for the observance of her death anniversary on July 11 and ensure that the programme is commemorated with dignity, discipline, and active public participation. Let us pay tribute to her ideals by renewing our commitment to selfless public service and the welfare of our people."

NOTICE

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

NOTICE

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



SKIMS Faces Severe Manpower Shortage, RTI Reveals

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Despite grappling with a severe shortage of doctors, consultants and paramedical staff, the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences Srinagar (SKIMS) continues to provide advanced healthcare services to patients from across Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Information obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) by activist M M Shuja has revealed that the premier tertiary care institute is functioning with a large number of vacant posts. Nevertheless, SKIMS continues to perform almost all major surgical procedures and remains one of the region's leading referral hospitals for specialised treatment.

According to the RTI reply, accessed by KNO, 36 doctors retired from SKIMS between August 2020 and August 2025. During the same period, one faculty member applied for voluntary retirement (VRS), while three faculty

members resigned. The institute stated that these cases remain under submission before the competent authority.

The RTI response further shows that against 294 sanctioned faculty and consultant posts, only 166 are currently filled, leaving 128 vacancies. Similarly, the paramedical workforce is operating under considerable strain, with only 730 employees in position against 1,493 sanctioned posts, resulting in 763 vacancies.

Despite these shortages, hospital services have continued without interruption.

The institute receives thousands of patients annually not only from different districts of Jammu & Kashmir but also from the Union Territory of Ladakh, where patients depend on SKIMS for super-speciality medical care, advanced surgeries and critical treatment unavailable elsewhere.

The RTI documents also outline the measures initiated by the administration to address the man-

power deficit.

According to the response, 111 faculty vacancies have been referred to the Health and Medical Education Department for recruitment through the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission. Of these, 68 posts have already been advertised through JKPCSP notifications issued in February and July 2025, while advertisements for the remaining 43 posts are awaited.

The institute has also referred 845 non-gazetted and Class-IV vacancies to the Health and Medical Education Department for advertisement. In addition, proposals relating to the revival of 403 gazetted, non-gazetted and Class-IV posts are currently under process and will be forwarded to the Health and Medical Education Department for concurrence from the Finance Department.

Meanwhile, relating to surgical services indicates that SKIMS continues to perform almost all surgical procedures across its departments.

MLA Tanvir Visits Lal Bazar Fire Victims

Observer News Service

Srinagar: NC Chief Spokesperson and MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq Monday visited the families affected by the devastating fire incident at Amda Kadal in Lal Bazar to express his heartfelt sympathies and stand in solidarity with them during this difficult time.

Interacting with the affected families, Tanvir Sadiq assured them that they would not be left alone in their hour of need. He listened to their con-

cerns, assessed the extent of the damage caused by the blaze, and assured them that every possible effort would be made to facilitate timely relief and rehabilitation.

As an immediate relief measure, Tanvir Sadiq distributed financial assistance of Rs 30,000 among the affected families from his own resources. He also informed them that financial assistance of Rs 1.5 lakh per affected family under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) would be disbursed to the victims. In addition, he assured that Rs

1 lakh would be provided to each affected household through CDF.

As per KNS, he said that he is in constant touch with the district administration and other concerned departments, urging them to ensure prompt assessment of the losses and expedite the release of relief and rehabilitation assistance. He emphasized that all necessary measures should be taken to provide immediate support, including temporary shelter, essential supplies, and compensation to the affected families.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the Chief Education Officer, Ganderbal

Address: Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal-191201

Tel. No.: 0194-2416909 Fax:-0194-2416135 email:- ceo.ganderbal@jk.gov.in

Subject: - Tentative Seniority List in respect of Librarians.

NOTIFICATION

The tentative seniority list of 03 Librarians working in School Education Department District Ganderbal has been prepared on the basis records available in this office for inviting objections/ notifying the particulars of such officials.

Now therefore a tentative Seniority List of 03 Librarians is hereby circulated for information of all concerned for inviting objections (if any) which shall reach to this office within 07 days from the date of issuance of notification with documentary evidence through the DDO concerned failing which no such objection shall be entertained by this office after expiry of given period of time.

The list shall be available on the notice board and official Whatsapp group.

Chief Education Officer
Ganderbal

No:- CEO/Gbl/Estt-I/NT/2026/5840-50
DIPK-2903/26
Dated:- 06/07/2026

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the Chief Education Officer, Ganderbal

Address: Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal-191201

Tel. No.: 0194-2416909 Fax:-0194-2416135 email:- ceo.ganderbal@jk.gov.in

Subject: - Tentative Seniority List in respect of Junior Assistants.

NOTIFICATION

The tentative seniority list of 13 Junior Assistants working in School Education Department District Ganderbal has been prepared on the basis records available in this office for inviting objections/ notifying the particulars of such officials.

Now therefore a tentative Seniority List of 13 Junior Assistants is hereby circulated for information of all concerned for inviting objections (if any) which shall reach to this office within 07 days from the date of issuance of notification with documentary evidence through the DDO concerned failing which no such objection shall be entertained by this office after expiry of given period of time.

The list shall be available on the notice board and official Whatsapp group

Chief Education Officer
Ganderbal

No:- CEO/Gbl/Estt-I/NT/2026/5857-63.
DIPK-2902/26
Dated:- 06/07/2026

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200


AIRPORTS
SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



**HIJRI
CALENDAR**
21 Muharram
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	3: 42
ZUHR	12:36
ASR	5: 35
Magrib	7: 49
ISHA	9: 29

This Day In History

- 1777 - American Revolutionary War: Battle of Hubbardton
- 1798 - Quasi-War: the U.S. Congress rescinds treaties with France sparking the 'war.'
- 1807 - France, Russia & Prussia sign Peace of Tilsit
- 1898 - US President McKinley signs the Organic Act to annex Hawaii
- 1929 - Romania & Vatican sign concord
- 1941 - Nazis executed 5,000 Jews in Kovono, Lithuania
- 1941 - World War II: Beirut is occupied by Free France and British troops.
- 1943 - 3rd day of battle at Kursk: Germans occupy Dubrova
- 1950 - Korean War: UN Security Council establishes the United Nations Command to combat North Korean forces
- 1953 - Che Guevara sets out on a trip through Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador.
- 1973 - 78 drown as flash flood sweeps a bus into a river (India)
- 1978 - Solomon Islands declares independence from UK
- 1980 - Institution of Sharia law in Iran
- 1980 - The Sagra massacre in Lebanon.
- 1981 - The solar-powered aircraft, Solar Challenger, successfully completes a 163 mile flight across the English Channel
- 1986 - Jordan government shuts al-Fatah offices
- 1988 - Soviet Union launches Phobos 1 to probe Martian moon (unsuccessful)
- 1988 - Five prominent anti-apartheid activists are released in Cape Town, South Africa after being detained for up to two years under the Internal Security Act
- 1990 - FIFA World Cup: Italy beats England 2-1 in football's World Cup Third Place game
- 1990 - First Three Tenors concert featuring Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti at Baths of Caracalla in Rome - recording of is world's best-selling classical record
- 1995 - Space shuttle STS-71 (Atlantis 14), lands
- 1996 - Space Shuttle STS 78 (Columbia 20), lands
- 2002 - A scandal breaks out in the United Kingdom when news reports accuse MI6 of sheltering Abu Qatada, the supposed European Al Qaeda leader.
- 2003 - The United Communist Party of Armenia is formed.
- 2005 - Coordinated terrorist bomb blasts strike London's public transport system during the morning rush hour killing 52 and injuring 700
- 2005 - Influenced by Live 8, the G8 leaders pledge to double 2004 levels of aid to Africa from US\$25 to US\$50 billion by the year 2010.
- 2007 - Pope Benedict XVI issues the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum, removing restrictions on celebrating the old Tridentine Mass.
- 2007 - Worldwide performances by charity event Live Earth.
- 2014 - Israel launches a "counter-terrorist operation" dubbed Operation Protective Edge against Hamas in Gaza
- 2016 - Deadlock in battle for Aleppo broken when Russian air strikes cut rebel access to the city, 250,000 people put under seige
- 2017 - Tesla Motors produces its first mass-market car, the Model 3
- 2019- FIFA Women's World Cup Final, Parc Olympique Lyonnais, Décines-Charpieu: Defending champions US win record 4th title beating the Netherlands, 2-0, Megan Rapinoe Player of the Match
- 2019- Nigeria, Africa' biggest economy, joins the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in attempt to create world's largest free trade area
- 2020- India surpasses Russia to become the world's third-worst affected country, daily COVID-19 cases exceeding 20,000 and total cases over 700,000
- 2022- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announces his resignation at Downing Street after pressure from, and mass resignations of his ministers
- 2022- US scientists begin the search for dark matter with a device in a former gold mine in Lead, South Dakota
- 2023- World's first robot-human press conference

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

Capitalism's Dystopia Must Give Way to Equilibrium

The promise that free markets would dissolve conflict and create a global society has given way to alienation, populism and identity politics, demanding a new economic balance.



Wajahat Qazi



and take refuge in the cold and callous fake success and unsuccess metrics devised by Ayn Rand.

In other words, he or she, by choice, accepted that something was wrong with him or her, not the context or the dominant economic paradigm.

That is, he or she accepted that he or she was a failure or, in the vogueish term, 'loser', thus dropping out of and from the system.

Howard Roark, Ayn Rand's hero, who epitomized strength, valour, courage, and non-conformism, became the ideal of a few. This false ideal may have been distilled and repeated through 'soft power' subtle propaganda soaps like 'The Bold and the Beautiful'.

While the illusion was internalized by many, the 'ideal' remained elusive for all, except perhaps the 'Davos Man'.

The Davos Man, glorified by the high priests of untrammelled capitalism like Thomas Friedman of the The New York Times, was the quintessential rootless billionaire, who socialized and networked among his own ilk.

Delphic Oracles for the same, the late Alan Greenspan, were the real powers behind the 'scheme'.

The Davos Man had access to power, political networks and, by virtue of the mobility made possible by the multiple passports he had, was called the 'cosmocrat'.

While the old aristocracy that often derived its power and perks from land ownership and allied feudal titles had been killed, the Davos men (women) were the new aristocrats or feudal lords.

The Davos man (woman) loathed any form of identity. He or she had no sense of belonging or fidelity to a given identity. His cosmos lay in capital markets, and his or her fundamental yearning was the Rate of Return and the gyrations of the yield curve.

The sleeping pill, or the soporific, for the rest was 'trickle-down economics' allied to 'middle-class' status. But both remained aspirations for many, if not most.

An aspirational matter, middle-class status in America meant incurring student debt, getting a 'good job', usually in the corporate sector, working for the rest of life to pay debts and mortgages, and sending kids to college.

Again, this was restricted to a narrow subset of persons. The 'rest', or as Democrats called them, 'deplorables', had to wallow in misery, struggles, and at times take refuge in opioids.

All this may be traced to the loss of an anchor and an identity. Because the United States had taken the 'Great Leap Forward' in denuding people of iden-

tity and rendering them as objects who only sought 'pleasure maximization and pain avoidance', the proverbial chicken came home to roost there.

Does the discussion delineated in this essay mean a critique of capitalism?

Yes, indeed.

Should capitalism be jettisoned then? Should 'workers of the world liberate themselves from the shackles of capitalism'?

This is a very difficult question to answer.

While capitalist modernity in and across the Western world, in varying forms, loosely led to the 'rule of law', even civil society, neither can be a surrogate for identity and belonging.

Property rights, for example, can satiate the 'homo economicus' side of human nature. And the great American philosopher John Locke's 'social contract' may be an intervening variable here.

But it is, given perhaps the abiding features of human nature, the English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, who wins.

Hobbes' bleak assessment of human nature and the context can perhaps best be given short shrift through an identity matrix.

What does this mean and imply for capitalism? It entails putting the extreme variant and form of the capitalist genie back into the bottle.

It also means restraining market fundamentalism, putting people first and their well-being, not just welfare.

In practical terms, it may mean the primacy of the 'regulatory state', the state as the carrier, semiotically, symbolically, and in real terms, of people's identity and political communities with clear boundaries.

It surely should not mean the market forces of supply and demand inflating people as mere 'utils' who seek pleasure and avoid pain, and deflating identity and its markers.

It also means balanced trade, and correspondingly balanced capital flows.

How, the question is, can this be achieved?

To borrow a phrase from 'market economics', the world needs equilibrium to attain equipoise.

How can this be attained?

By setting new standards and norms in the nation from where the wellsprings of the primacy of market fundamentalism emerged, the United States!

The author holds a Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen and combines scholarship with real-world engagement. He has worked in academia and media, including as Associate Editor at Kashmir Observer.

KO VIEW

The Apple Paradox

Kashmir's apple economy has reached a point where producing more fruit is no longer the biggest challenge. Creating more value is.

The valley supplies over 70 percent of India's apples and powers one of the country's largest horticulture economies. Still, the biggest profits rarely stay where the fruit is grown.

Truckloads of apples leave Kashmir soon after harvest, while the industries that transform them into premium products flourish elsewhere.

That economic equation has gone unquestioned for far too long.

Harvest season brings a signature sight. Apples with cosmetic defects or lower grades fetch poor returns because buyers want fresh fruit rather than raw material for processing. Large quantities never reach consumers at all.

Those apples could become juice, cider, vinegar, concentrates, puree, dried fruit, pectin or natural ingredients for the food industry.

Instead, much of that value slips away before it has a chance to exist.

Ironically, shops across Kashmir stock apple juice and vinegar manufactured outside the valley. India's apple capital imports products made from the same crop that grows in its own orchards. Few examples capture wasted economic potential more clearly.

This is where Kashmir's startup movement faces its defining test.

Incubation centres, innovation hubs, business mentors and entrepreneurship programmes have multiplied during recent years. Pitch competitions, panel discussions and startup festivals have become regular events.

Their greatest opportunity, however, sits inside apple boxes rather than conference halls.

Entrepreneurs searching for the next breakthrough do not have to invent another delivery app or software platform. A world-class food-processing industry already has its foundation growing on millions of trees.

One successful processing cluster could generate work in manufacturing, packaging, branding, logistics, quality testing, marketing and exports.

Farmers would earn better returns, young graduates would find skilled employment, and local brands could compete on supermarket shelves in India and overseas instead of watching outsiders build businesses around Kashmiri produce.

Government policy also has a decisive role through modern processing parks, easier finance, reliable cold-chain infrastructure and investment incentives. Private investors, universities and industry associations should treat this as an economic priority rather than another development catchword.

Consumer demand for natural beverages, premium fruit products and healthy foods continues to rise worldwide. Kashmir already possesses the raw ingredient, the farming expertise and the reputation. Missing links lie in processing, branding and manufacturing.

Economic history rarely rewards regions that remain suppliers of raw material while others capture the premium.

Kashmir has debated unemployment for years. It has searched for investment, spoken about startups and celebrated innovation. Here lies an opportunity that connects all three.

Another harvest will soon arrive, and another convoy of apple trucks will roll out of the valley. Kashmir can continue exporting raw fruit and importing finished products, or it can finally build industries that keep wealth, jobs and enterprise close to the orchards where that prosperity begins.

The choice has never been clearer, and the moment has never been more important.

Capitalism, a uniquely Western concept and practice, wedded to democracy, was supposed to be the panacea to the world's ills'.

In combination, the 'capitalist nirvana' would usher in a world where the individual would reign supreme, his (her) needs supplanted by pleasures and desires, all determined by the market forces of supply and demand.

The 'equilibrium' ensuing from this schema would lead to 'a settled' and a 'global society'. All conflicts, cultural, identity, ideational, and so on, would dissipate and disappear into the vortex of market forces. The free movement of capital, people, and goods would complete the process and mark 'history's end'.

The attendant homogeneity of the world and ubiquity of consumption, and the sameness inhering in that, would entail a 'world' or 'global culture'. Identity and belonging would no longer matter, both dissolved in the miasma of market forces.

The sameness of airports across the world, and shopping malls that would sell similar goods and services, similar urban patterns, embeddedness of technology into the sinews of society, and so on, would lead to an economic paradigm where only experience and titillation mattered.

In the entire framework, identity and belonging would be a matter of 'choice'.

While the 'identity menu' was almost endless, mostly and in the main, it was a Western one, with other identity and ethnic matrices tacked on to it. American-Indian, African-American, Indian-American, Pakistani-American, Lebanese-Australian, British African, and other hyphenated identities comprised this menu.

But while identity and belonging may or may not be layered concepts and even practices, primary, secondary, and tertiary, it appears humankind is wired for seeking certainty.

This is evidenced by the remarkable and tenacious quest for the same in the United States, the 'second home' of capitalism and industrialism.

Emblemized by the electoral victories of Donald Trump in 2016 and 2024, most Americans, the descendants of 'pioneer-settlers' and even many others, chose the 'identity first' mantra over the crude and vulgar promise of neo-liberal economics.

Regarding layered identities of individuals, one may hold himself or herself to be an AI expert, a technocrat, a doctor, an artiste, a family person, or a member of a micro-community, an ethnic group, or a larger community.

But key here is the larger political community, we can even call it a tribe, that has clear and decisive boundaries.

That's what gives certainty and other markers to individuals. And this was the clear signal and message of the faith reposed in Donald Trump by the people of America.

Contrarily, neo-liberal informed globalism sought to render the market forces of supply and demand the arbiter of humanness and human welfare.

For example, if person A from a certain context, say the third world, had a certain skill, and if this skill had demand in the US, he or she would get preference over an unskilled or blue-collar American. Given the absence of generous and vigorous social security in the US, the blue-collar worker had to suffer

No one ever taught him how savings could grow or how planning could bring some peace.

In another part of Srinagar, Sana Aziz sits in her rented room after work, scrolling through her phone. She has a good degree and a steady job.

Every month, her salary arrives on time and disappears just as quickly. Rent, transport, family needs and medical expenses take their share.

She tells herself she will start saving next month. That month keeps moving forward.

Aijaz and Sana live different lives, but they share the same problem.

They were taught how to study, earn and adjust. But they were never taught how money works.

This story is quite common in Kashmir. People work long hours and make careful choices, but many live with constant money worries. Schools focus on marks and degrees. Homes focus on getting through the month.

Conversations about budgeting, saving or investing rarely happen. Money remains something to manage by instinct.

Financial literacy sounds like a big term, but it is simple at heart. It means knowing

where your money goes, how to save some of it, and plan for the future.

It means understanding debt before it grows heavy. It also means learning how time can help money grow, even in small amounts.

The lack of this knowledge shows up in everyday pain.

A sudden illness pushes families into loans they spend years repaying. Young people earn decent salaries and still live one emer-



A sudden illness pushes families into loans they spend years repaying. Young people earn decent salaries and still live one emergency away from trouble. Older adults worry about how they will cope once work is no longer possible.

gency away from trouble. Older adults worry about how they will cope once work is no longer possible.

One evening, a small hall in Srinagar fills with young men and women attending a free workshop on money. The first exercise sounds harmless. Write down what you spend in a month. Pens hover. A few people smile awkwardly. Many realize they have never really counted it all before.

As the session continues, the room changes. People lean forward. Hands go up. Questions come quickly. Simple ideas begin to settle in. Save before you spend. Start early, even if the amount feels small. Allow time to carry some of the weight.

What once felt overwhelming starts to feel manageable.

The idea of compounding catches many by surprise. Small, steady savings over years can become real support later in life. Waiting too long makes everything harder.

In a place where jobs can pause without notice and incomes can disappear overnight, this lesson carries real weight.

Families also shape how people deal with money. In many homes, adults hide financial

stress from children. The intention is protection. The result is silence.

When families talk openly about income, expenses and priorities, children grow up better prepared for real life.

Some teachers have started filling this gap on their own. They explain bank accounts, insurance and basic budgeting in simple ways.

These are small steps, but they leave lasting impressions.

Financial literacy offers clarity. It helps people feel less anxious and more in control. It turns money from a constant worry into something that can be planned, even if resources are limited.

Aijaz recently opened a small savings account. The amount is modest, but it feels like a beginning. Sana has started tracking her spending and setting aside money the day her salary arrives. For the first time, she feels she is moving forward, not standing still.

Learning how to manage money helps people turn hard work into security and hope into a plan.

The author is a Srinagar-based financial educator.

Kashmir's Silent Money Crisis

The absence of financial literacy leaves families vulnerable to debt, emergencies and an uncertain future.



Irshad Mushtaq

Aijaz Mir pushes his shikara into Dal Lake before the sun rises over the hills. On good days, tourists fill his boat and the tips are generous. On slow days, he counts every note twice.

By evening, his thoughts turn to school fees, groceries and the long winter ahead.

He knows how to work hard, but what he never learned is how to plan his money beyond the next few weeks.

When visitors ask about life on the lake, Aijaz talks about the water and the view. He does not talk about the stress of uncertain income or the fear of an emergency wiping out whatever little he has saved.

The Day Kashmir Changed at Shopian

The Battle of Shopian altered the valley's political destiny, although its historic landscape remains absent from Kashmir's public memory.



Gurjeet Singh

Dust rose from the plains outside Shopian as two armies closed the final distance between them.

Sikh infantry pressed forward behind artillery, while Afghan cavalry answered with force of its own.

Cannon fire rolled through the valley while commanders searched for an advantage that would decide far more than a single day's fighting.

By sunset on 3 July 1819, the contest had ended.

Jabbar Khan's Afghan force had broken. Mir Diwan Chand's army, fighting under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had secured a victory whose consequences reached well beyond the battlefield.

Srinagar passed into Sikh control within days, and with that, sixty-seven years of Durrani rule came to an end, and twenty-seven years of Sikh administration followed.

Few battles changed Kashmir as profoundly as the Battle of Shopian. Public memory, however, has largely left it behind.

Travellers entering Shopian today encounter apple orchards, schools, villages and busy roads beneath the Pir Panjal. The landscape gives little hint that artillery once stood where fruit trees now grow.

One of Kashmir's decisive battlefields survives in books more than on the ground.

That absence stands in striking contrast with the battle's historical significance.

Kashmir occupied an exceptional position at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Mountain corridors linked the valley with Punjab, Ladakh, Tibet and Central Asia, making control of Kashmir a strategic objective for competing powers.

Commerce strengthened that importance.

Kashmir's celebrated shawl industry supplied markets extending from Lahore to Paris, placing the valley within commercial networks that reached well beyond the Himalayas.

Geography and wealth combined to make Kashmir one of the prized territories of northern India.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh understood that calculation way before his army marched toward Shopian. Following the consolidation of much of Punjab, securing Kashmir became central to the defence of his northern frontier.

The 1819 campaign emerged from careful military planning rather than sudden ambition.

Sikh forces crossed the formidable Pir Panjal, secured mountain routes and maintained supply lines through terrain that challenged even experienced armies. Success depended upon organisation as much as battlefield courage.

Shopian became the campaign's decisive encounter. Sikh commanders, including Hari Singh Nalwa, Akali Phula Singh and Prince Kharak Singh, supported Mir Diwan Chand during the advance.

Afghan forces under Jabbar Khan sought to halt them before the valley slipped beyond Durrani control.

But once Afghan resistance collapsed, the political map of Kashmir changed with remarkable speed.

Military victories earn historical significance through their consequences rather than casualty figures. Shopian transformed the government of Kashmir. Administration replaced warfare as the central question.

Sikh rule introduced a succession of governors charged with administering the valley through changing political and economic



MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES LATER, SHOPIAN'S BATTLEFIELD HAS FADED INTO ORCHARDS AND FARMLAND, though its place in Kashmir's history remains profound. Preserving it through rigorous research and documentation would strengthen both scholarship and public memory.

conditions.

Diwan Moti Ram, Hari Singh Nalwa, Mian Singh and the distinguished Muslim administrator Shaikh Ghulam Muhy-ud-Din all served during this period. Their appointments reveal an imperial administration that drew talent from different backgrounds while seeking to consolidate authority after conquest.

Government during those

twenty-seven years never followed a single model.

Revenue policies changed under different governors, while administrative practice evolved with circumstance.

Scholars continue examining this period through Persian chronicles, Sikh records, British travel accounts and official documents. Those sources present a richer and more complex picture than simplified

public narratives often suggest.

Historical understanding grows stronger when original evidence leads the discussion instead of inherited assumptions.

Kashmir's long political history invites precisely that approach.

Hindu dynasties, the Sultanate, the Mughals, the Afghans, the Sikhs and the Dogras all governed the valley at different moments. Those centuries produced monuments, manuscripts,

institutions and administrative traditions that still inform scholarly understanding of Kashmir.

Serious history studies those chapters together rather than treating one period as worthy of attention while another fades into obscurity.

Shopian illustrates that imbalance more clearly than almost any other historical site in the valley.

Historians continue writing about the battle, although the battlefield itself remains largely undocumented. Elsewhere, historic battlefields function as laboratories for historical research.

Waterloo in Belgium and Gettysburg in the United States continue yielding fresh discoveries more than two centuries after their defining battles. Archaeologists employ drones, satellite imagery, ground-penetrating radar and systematic field surveys to reconstruct troop movements and recover physical evidence buried beneath the soil.

Musket balls, artillery fragments, horse fittings and other remains often reveal details unavailable in written records.

Shopian merits the same scrutiny.

Persian chronicles, Sikh records, British travel accounts and revenue maps can be read alongside GIS mapping to reconstruct the battle with far greater precision.

Non-invasive surveys could uncover war remains without disturbing cultivated land.

Such work would enrich scholarship while preserving the battlefield.

Government agencies, universities, historians, heritage organisations and local communities can document the site, protect archival records and build a long-term conservation plan.

This is an effort to understand history rather than celebrate conquest.

—The author can be reached at gurjeetk@gmail.com.

The Kingdom Beyond the Pir Panjal

Sheltered by mountains and sustained by rivers, Parnotsa emerged as an early Himalayan state whose legacy still echoes in the landscape of Poonch.



When the battles shook the region, Vighararaja held the throne of Lohara. His line carried forward the legacy of hill rulers who guarded narrow passes, protected their valleys, and watched the fate of great empires unfold beyond their ridges.



Shahid Hakla Poonchi

Long before borders cut across the Pir Panjal, a fierce hill kingdom called Parnotsa ruled these heights. It rose 3,300 feet above the sea, held tight by ridges that stood like walls against the storms racing up from the plains.

The Poonch Tohi River shaped the early life of this land. Its small streams fed farms, guided settlements, and supported trade. People built homes close to the water and grew their societies in sheltered valleys.

Surrounded by hills and deep river systems, Parnotsa became organised early. It did not grow into a mighty empire, but it carried its own way of life with confidence.

When the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang reached the region in 633 A.D., he found a land already known to traders and pilgrims. He had walked across high passes and through sharp wind before entering the valley. His record shows that the kingdom had a calm and settled character. The mountains guarded it, and the rivers connected it to the world outside.

The region that we call Poonch today stood between the Jhelum and the Chenab. These two rivers were like long arms stretching through ancient trade routes.

Traders, soldiers, and wandering monks often passed through these hills on their way to Kashmir or the plains.

The old state of Parnotsa sat in the valleys of the Poonch Tohi and its many feeders. The Pir Panjal marked



the north, Rajapuri or Rajouri lay in the east, the Punjab plains opened in the south, and the Jhelum flowed in the west.

One of the most used old routes from Bhimbar to Kashmir cut through the southeasterly corner of this region. This gave Parnotsa natural importance. It became a gateway between two distinct worlds.

The town of Poonch grew on a gentle slope above the right bank of the Poonch Tohi, near its meeting point with the Bitarh. A traveller standing there could watch the valley stretch out like a large bowl surrounded by forested walls.

The town stood midway between Bhimbar and Srinagar, connected by a road that moved through the Suran valley and crossed the Haji Pir Pass. Kotli sat twenty miles away and could be reached by following the river or by climbing the Sona and Nandheri passes through Mankot.

In its present form, Poonch district has six tehsils: Haveli, Mendhar, Surankote, Mandi, Balakote, and

Mankote.

To the north and northeast lie Baramulla and Pulwama of the Kashmir valley. To the northwest lie parts now under Pakistan. Rajouri holds the southern side.

After 1947, half of Haveli tehsil and the entire Bagh and Sudhmutta tehsils of the old state went across the Line of Control.

The region carried many names through time. Parnotsa appears to be the earliest. Alexander Cunningham wrote Punacha or Punach. Kashmiris said Proons. Hiuen Tsang recorded Pun nu tso. Moorcroft wrote Prunch or Pruntz. General Court also used Prunch. Mirza Mogal Beg wrote Punja, and the traveller Vigne used PUNCH.

What we call Poonch today slowly grew out of these forms.

By the middle of the 19th century, Poonch had become a lively town with a mix of cultures. It had a government garden, two colleges for Hindu students, two mosques, and two shrines of Muslim saints, Sayed Gufur and Ali Parka Takia. People

of many faiths lived and worked together, sharing streets, festivals, and neighbourhoods.

The earliest known capital of this hill state was Lohara, now called Loran. It lies northeast of today's Poonch town. This region was known as Darvabhisara, stretching between the Jhelum and the Chenab. It was one of the early organised states in this mountain belt.

When Hiuen Tsang travelled down from Kashmir towards the plains, he passed through Poonch and Rajouri before moving towards Sialkot. He likely crossed through Akhnoor on his way. Poonch was under Kashmir's control at that time. He described the country as having a boundary of about two thousand li, nearly three hundred and thirty three miles. Although this was larger than the actual area, it showed how the landscape impressed him.

The ancient Kashmiri chronicle Rajataringini also mentions Parnotsa. It appears as a feudatory under Lalitaditya Muktapada of Kashmir in

the late seventh century A.D. He is said to have organised Parnotsa as part of his wider territory.

Sir Aurel Stein believed that the Lohara state, which included Poonch, was founded by Nara around 830 A.D. Nara was likely a local chief from the Khasha tribe. He ruled until nearly 870 A.D. His son Naravahana took the throne next and ruled until around 890 A.D.

Naravahana lived at the same time as Sankravarman, the powerful king of Kashmir. When Sankravarman returned from a campaign against the Gujars of the Punjab region, he suspected Naravahana of dishonesty and ordered him and his supporters killed.

After Naravahana, rulers named Phulla, Satavahana, Chanda, Chandaraja, and Sanha Raja held the throne.

Sanha Raja is remembered for his daughter Didda, who married into the royal family of Kashmir. Didda later became one of the most influential queens in Kashmir's history.

Sanha Raja's son Udayaraja died around 1000 A.D. and his son Vighararaja succeeded him.

This period saw the rise of Mahmud Ghaznavi from the west. The Hindu Shahi kings of Punjab, Jaipal, Anandpal, and Trilochanapala tried to stop him. They fought many battles near Peshawar and the Indus. When they lost ground in the plains, they moved into the hills and sometimes took shelter in the Poonch Tohi valley and Lohara. Some of their last stands took place near the meeting point of the Tohi and the Jhelum.

These defeats slowly ended the Shahi influence in the early eleventh century.

When these battles shook the region, Vighararaja held the throne of Lohara. His line carried forward the legacy of hill rulers who guarded narrow passes, protected their valleys, and watched the fate of great empires unfold beyond their ridges.

—The author is an independent researcher. He can be reached at shahidhakla360@gmail.com

MLAs Can Use Up to Rs 20 Lakh CDF For Poor Patients

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday amended the guidelines of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Scheme, allowing legislators to use up to Rs 20 lakh annually to provide financial assistance to poor patients suffering from life-threatening ailments.

An official spokesman said the decision taken by the Omar Abdullah-led government is

expected to provide significant relief to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and other notified economically weaker categories.

Under the revised guidelines, MLAs can utilise up to Rs 20 lakh from their annual CDF allocation exclusively for medical assistance to eligible patients.

Financial assistance of up to Rs 5 lakh can be sanctioned for organ transplantation, Rs 2.75 lakh for cancer treatment and Rs 1 lakh for chronic kidney disease requiring dialysis.

Assistance will also be available for other diseases notified by the government.

The government, however, said the assistance will cover only the portion of treatment costs not met under existing healthcare and medical aid schemes.

Patients will have to first exhaust benefits available under PM-JAY SEHAT, the Medical Aid Trust and the Cancer Treatment and Management Fund for Poor (CTMFFP) before becoming

eligible for assistance from the CDF.

The provision is aimed at ensuring optimum utilisation of resources and avoiding duplication of benefits, the spokesman said.

To ensure financial accountability and prevent misuse, the assistance will not be paid directly to beneficiaries.

All payments will instead be made directly to empanelled hospitals or medical institutions where the patient is undergoing treatment, the spokesman added.



Iranian women mourn during the funeral procession of slain leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran on Monday.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Police Confront

underestimate digital risks," the study noted. "That gap has created opportunities for cybercriminals."

Recent figures underline the scale of the challenge.

Jammu and Kashmir recorded nearly 18,000 cyber fraud complaints during 2025 involving losses of about 185 crore, according to the Cyber Investigation Centre for Excellence. Officials recovered more than 32 crore after victims reported cases quickly through the national cybercrime response system, illustrating how the first few hours often determine whether stolen money can be traced.

Police officers told researchers that smartphones and digital payments have expanded banking, commerce and communication while creating fertile ground for organised fraud.

"Criminals seldom rely on force," one officer said. "Trust has become their most effective weapon."

The study identifies three groups that face the greatest exposure.

Senior citizens frequently receive fraudulent banking calls, fake investment proposals, deceptive loan schemes and requests for one-time passwords. "Limited familiarity with digital security leaves many vulnerable to convincing scams that empty savings within minutes," the researchers revealed.

Young women encounter a different design of abuse.

Officers described complaints involving fake social media profiles, identity theft, cyberbullying, digital blackmail and fraudulent recruitment advertisements.

"Personal photographs and private information often become tools for intimidation, leaving victims to confront emotional distress alongside concerns about privacy and reputation," the study said.

High-income professionals have also become preferred targets.

Investigators said fraudsters study work routines before launching phishing campaigns, business email scams and fraudulent investment schemes. "Successful attacks can produce substantial financial losses while damaging professional credibility," the researchers noted.

Patterns documented during the field research remained remarkably consistent in all five police jurisdictions.

Officers described the same scams, similar investigative challenges and a growing dependence on digital evidence.

Fingerprints and eyewitness accounts still hold value, they said, while mobile phones, transaction records and server logs increasingly determine whether a case moves forward.

Investigating those crimes demands skills that traditional policing seldom required.

"Suspects routinely conceal their identities through forged documents, temporary SIM cards, encrypted applications and fabricated online profiles," the officers told researchers. "Digital evidence can disappear within seconds, placing enormous value on speed."

Jurisdictional boundaries make an already complex situation even more difficult.

Fraudsters frequently operate through bank accounts, servers and digital infrastructure spread across several states or countries. Investigators often coordinate with multiple agencies before tracing a transaction or securing user records.

Requests involving multinational technology companies move through legal channels that consume valuable time while electronic evidence continues to change.

"The shift from physical streets to digital networks represents more than a change in the location of crime," the researchers wrote. "It shows a broader transformation in the nature of security itself."

Kashmir Police have responded by expanding specialised cyber capabilities.

Financial fraud complaints receive immediate attention through the National Cybercrime Helpline, 1930, while complex investigations move to dedicated cyber cells equipped with digital forensic tools and trained investigators.

Officers told the research team that prompt reporting during the first few hours greatly improves the chances of freezing suspicious transactions before money passes through multiple accounts.

Investigations proceed under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Information Technology Act and laws governing electronic evidence.

Officers said continuous training has become a central part of policing as technology evolves and criminal methods change with it.

Digital forensics, financial intelligence and inter-agency coordination now occupy the same place once reserved for conventional investigative techniques.

Police officials stressed that enforcement alone cannot keep pace with cybercrime. Public awareness has become an equally important line of defence because many frauds succeed through deception rather than technical

sophistication.

Strong passwords, two-factor authentication, careful verification of websites and strict protection of banking credentials and one-time passwords remain among the most effective safeguards, officers said.

They also urged citizens to report suspicious activity immediately through nearby police stations, cyber cells, the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal or the 1930 helpline.

Findings from the five police jurisdictions point to a policing system adapting to a new criminal landscape rather than replacing an old one.

Conventional offences continue to demand attention, while cybercrime claims a growing share of investigative resources and technical expertise.

Officers described a profession that now moves seamlessly between neighbourhood patrols and digital forensics, often within the same shift.

One observation surfaced repeatedly during interviews with investigators: technology continues to evolve at remarkable speed, while public awareness develops more gradually.

That gap, the researchers concluded, has become the space where cybercriminals thrive.

"The battle against cybercrime begins before a complaint reaches a police station," the study concludes. "Prepared citizens remain the strongest defence in an increasingly digital society."

Flash Floods,

few places, particularly in the Jammu division, could receive heavy rainfall or brief intense showers during the late afternoon, evening and early morning hours.

Many parts of Kashmir are also likely to receive light to moderate rainfall with isolated intense showers. Similar weather conditions, accompanied by hot and humid weather between rain spells, are expected to continue from July 9 to 12.

The weather department warned that heavy rainfall between July 6 and 8 could trigger localised flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations, particularly in the Chenab Valley and Pir Panjal range.

People have been advised to stay away from streams, seasonal nallahs and landslide-prone areas.

Independent weather forecasters also warned that the interaction of a weak Western Disturbance with active monsoon winds could trigger sudden heavy showers across parts of Jammu and Kashmir over the next three days.

They said the risk of high-intensity rainfall along the Amarnath Yatra routes through Pahalgam and Sonamarg remained elevated, while isolated cloudburst-like events and landslides could not be ruled out.

According to the Meteorological Department, Samba recorded the highest rainfall in the Jammu region during the 24 hours ending 8.30 am Monday at 90 mm, followed by Kathua at 66.2 mm, Katra 44.4 mm, Doda 42 mm, Jammu 41.8 mm and Udhampur 40.6 mm.

Bhadrawah received 33.6 mm rainfall, Kishtwar 24 mm, Reasi 10.5 mm, Batote 4.7 mm, Ramban 4.5 mm and Banihal 0.4 mm.

Identify Root Causes

many such remarkable examples before us, and I wish for the women of Jammu Kashmir to lead the region's development," he said.

Sinha expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for empowering women in Jammu and Kashmir by granting them their rights and eliminating discrimination.

He expressed confidence that the KWO fellowship programme would promote equal and dignified participation of women across social, cultural, economic and political spheres.

"When women progress, society progresses; when women lead, the nation scales new heights; and when women realise their dreams, the entire world becomes more just, more compassionate and more prosperous," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also commended the guides who mentored the fellows and expressed hope that the Kashmir Women's Organization would continue to act as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of women.

On the occasion, Sinha released a book titled Panchayati Raj Institutions and Municipal Council in India, authored by Dr Nazrul Islam.

Dr Fida Firdous, President of the Kashmir Writers Association; Dr Darakshan Hassan Bhat, President of the Kashmir Women's Organization; members of the two organisations and senior officials attended the ceremony.

Footfall Crosses

batch of 5,794 pilgrims, which left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu in the early hours of Monday, reached the twin base camps in Kashmir safely.

Official figures revealed that 2,304 pilgrims opted for the shorter Baltal route, while 3,490 chose the traditional Pahalgam route.

The Baltal-bound convoy departed at 3:10 am, while the Pahalgam-bound convoy left at 3:50 am under the escort of the Police, CRPF and other security agencies.

The convoy comprised 267 vehicles, including 126 buses, 32 medium motor vehicles (MMVs), 104 light motor vehicles (LMVs) and five two-wheelers.

The administration has put in place extensive security, medical and logistical arrangements along both routes, including round-the-clock monitoring, traffic regulation, emergency medical services and deployment of security personnel to ensure the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

Under the CRPF's "May I Help You" initiative, women personnel are assisting pilgrims along the Baltal route by providing guidance, information, security, accommodation support, language assistance, connectivity help and emergency medical aid.

CRPF DIG Sudhir Kumar said pilgrims from different parts of the country participate in the Yatra, and many face language barriers. "CRPF is like a mini India, and we have deployed women personnel from different states so that pilgrims can communicate in their own language and receive the assistance they need," he said.

Officials said the Yatra has been progressing peacefully so far, with thousands of devotees visiting the holy cave shrine daily amid favourable weather conditions and tight security arrangements. "All necessary measures remain in place to ensure the safety and convenience of pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage. Several foreign nationals have also undertaken the pilgrimage so far," an official said.

The 57-day Yatra commenced on July 3, from both Baltal based camp in Ganderbal and Nunwan base camps in Pahalgam.(KNO)

Millions Mourn

other senior officials joined the funeral procession, which began early Monday morning and was expected to last up to 12 hours.

The procession carried not only the coffin of Ayatollah Khamenei but also those of several members of his family who were killed alongside him in the February 28 US-Israeli attack, including his son-in-law Dr Mesbah-ul-Hoda Baqeri-Kani, daughter-in-law Zahra Haddad-Adel, daughter Seyyedeh Boshra Hosseini-Khamenei and 14-month-old granddaughter Zahra.

On Sunday, Grand Ayatollah Ja'afar Sobhani led funeral prayers for the late leader and his family members before sea of mourners.

According to organisers, the funeral convoy travelled through Damavand Street, Imam Hossein Square, Enqelab Street, Enqelab Square, Azadi Street and Azadi Square before heading towards Shahid Lashqari Highway near Mehrabad Airport. Brigadier General Hassan Hassanzadeh, head of the funeral organising headquarters in Tehran, said the procession concluded at 5 p.m., after which the bodies were transferred to the holy city of Qom.

Punishing Aggressors

Meanwhile, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said calls by mourners for justice reflected the legitimate demand of the Iranian people and asserted that punishing those responsible for the assassination was a sovereign duty of the Islamic Republic.

In a post on social media platform X, Aref said the demand for accountability was consistent with international principles of self-defence.

"The rightful demand of the nation to punish the assassins, which was raised during the epic funeral procession, is a legitimate request and consistent with the international principles of self-defence," he wrote.

"The realisation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's right to definitive punishment of the perpetrators of this crime is a sovereign duty that will be fulfilled through strategic rationality," Aref added.

Farewell in Iraq

Organisers said funeral ceremonies will continue on Tuesday in the holy city of Qom before the bodies are taken to Iraq for farewell processions in the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala on Wednesday.

President Pezeshkian is expected to accompany the funeral cortege to Iraq along with Parliament Speaker Qalibaf and Ayatollah Khamenei's eldest son.

The final funeral rites are scheduled to take place on Thursday in the northeastern city of Mashhad, where Ayatollah Khamenei will be buried at the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in accordance with his will.

The multi-day funeral ceremonies have drawn mourners from across Iran and abroad, marking one of the largest state funerals in the country's history.

Art 370 Abrogation

a visionary, patriot and champion of national unity, and drew a direct ideological link between the Jana Sangh founder's political struggles and several of the BJP's signature policy decisions, including the revocation of Jammu

and Kashmir's special status.

"Today, the nation and West Bengal are remembering a great son of the soil, a great patriot who was dedicated to the integrity of India," Modi said while lauding the newly formed BJP government in West Bengal for honouring the nationalist leader's legacy.

In remarks carrying strong political and ideological overtones, the Prime Minister linked the BJP-led Centre's decision to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status in August 2019 with Mookerjee's long-standing opposition to Article 370 and his campaign for the complete integration of the erstwhile state with the rest of the country.

The constitutional arrangement allowed the state to maintain its own constitution, fly a separate state flag, and use distinct titles for its leaders -- Prime Minister, and not the chief minister, and Sadar-e-Riyasat in place of governor.

"Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee was completely dedicated to the vision of one India, supreme India."

He gave the nation the mantra that one country cannot have two constitutions, two heads and two symbols. This was not merely a slogan; it was a call for equal rights, an equal Constitution and an equal national consciousness," he added.

Recalling Mookerjee's arrest during his agitation against Jammu and Kashmir's special status and his death in custody in 1953, Modi said the Jana Sangh founder had fought for his convictions till the very end.

"He fought for his principles, went to jail and ultimately made the supreme sacrifice for Kashmir. Today, our government takes pride in the fact that by dismantling the wall of Article 370, we have fulfilled Dr Mookerjee's dream," the Prime Minister said.

He also used the occasion to stress Mookerjee's role during the Partition, particularly in safeguarding the interests of Bengal when, according to him, efforts were being made to include the entire province in Pakistan.

"Dr Mookerjee stood firm against these conspiracies. He mobilised public opinion, fought political battles and ensured that Bengal remained an integral part of India," Modi said.

"Congress divided the country, and I divided Pakistan," he quoted Mookerjee.

The PM repeatedly highlighted the role of the BJP government in West Bengal in commemorating the Jana Sangh founder, describing it as a reflection of a governance philosophy centred on "Nation First".

"Just a few days ago, on June 20, Paschimanga Divas was organised in a grand manner. It was a salute to the land of Bengal and its heritage. Today's programme is part of the same effort to honour our heritage. I congratulate the West Bengal government for organising such a grand event," he said.

Today's programme is also a testament to the fact that when there is a government committed to "Nation First", national heroes are honoured and every effort is made to work according to their vision, Modi said.

The Prime Minister noted that the Centre was observing Mookerjee's 125th birth anniversary as a two-year national commemoration.

"It began on July 6 last year and will continue till July 6 next year," he said.

Describing Mookerjee's life as an example of how conviction, ideological clarity and commitment could transform an idea into a mass movement, Modi said his journey represented the power of a deeply held belief backed by sustained public engagement.

Tracing the origins of the Jana Sangh, Modi said Mookerjee had introduced ideological diversity into Indian politics at a time when the Congress dominated the national landscape and alternative political viewpoints struggled to find space.

"It was when that Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee dared to embrace a new idea, challenging all those circumstances," he said.

According to Modi, the formation of the Jana Sangh represented far more than the launch of a political organisation.

"It was an expression of unwavering faith in ideological diversity in democracy, national reflection and public participation. It was from this very faith that the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was born," he said.

The PM also paid tribute to generations of Jana Sangh and BJP workers who, he said, dedicated their lives to preserving and nurturing that ideological movement through decades of political struggle.

"An ideology does not become immortal merely because it is founded. It becomes immortal when generations nurture and carry it forward. Several workers devoted their entire lives to keeping the ideology and principles of Jana Sangh alive," he said.

Modi drew a direct line from the Jana Sangh to the BJP, saying, "That same Bharatiya Jana Sangh is today serving the people as the Bharatiya Janata Party, the world's largest democratic force."

Day Not Far

and Kashmir.

Nabin arrived here on Monday on a two-day visit, his first after becoming the party president, to review the party's organisational affairs.

"The day is not far when the Bharatiya Janata Party will form its own government in Jammu and Kashmir," Nabin said while addressing party workers at a function organised to mark Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's 125th birth anniversary.

Reiterating the Centre's commitment towards the Union Territory, Nabin said the government in New Delhi was firmly committed to the development of Jammu and Kashmir and urged party workers to take the Centre's welfare schemes to every household.

"We are aware that the present government here continues to follow what we consider a dual approach towards Jammu and Kashmir. We have never viewed beneficiaries through the prism of religion. Every poor person is an Indian citizen whose welfare is our responsibility," he said.

Calling for sustained organisational work to realise the vision of a "developed India" by 2047, the BJP president exhorted party workers to strengthen the organisation through sustained effort, like the previous organisations, and realise the dream of Viksit Bharat.

"I am confident that by then we will also have transformed Jammu and Kashmir into a developed region," Nabin said.

Highlighting the Modi government's economic achievements, Nabin said India has emerged as the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer.

"There was a time when India was known merely as a source of manpower... Today, India is no longer just a manpower power—it is emerging as a manufacturing power," he said.

Recalling India's Operation Sindoor, in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, he said this is not the old India.

"If anyone attacks our citizens, India will respond firmly," he said, stressing that Jammu and Kashmir was an inseparable part of India.

Targeting the Congress over its stand on Jammu and Kashmir, Nabin asserted that the constitutional changes brought after the abrogation of Article 370 were irreversible.

"Those days are over. The temporary constitutional arrangements that once existed in Jammu and Kashmir have come to an end and cannot be restored," he said.

He also said the revival of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir reflected the improving security environment, adding that the sector was generating new employment opportunities for the youth and strengthening the local economy. (PTI)

Clear Shah Kul

constituted by the respondents (authorities), has to identify the encroached portion of the Shah Canal," the court said, adding, "There is enough documentary evidence on record to indicate the names of the encroachers and the area encroached and, therefore, it would not be difficult for the authorities to remove the encroachment."

On the request of Senior Additional Advocate General, appearing for the authorities, the Bench on July 1 granted ten days' time "to act in the matter and submit the report with regard to the removal of the encroachments."

"In case of failure, the Vice Chairman, LCMA, and the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, shall appear in person on the next date of hearing (22 July 2026)."

The PIL was filed in 2023 and seeks the court's intervention for the removal of all illegal encroachments and restoration of the original status of the historical canal.

It also seeks directions for the restoration of adjoining roads allegedly encroached upon by the two private persons.

The PIL also seeks directions for constituting a high-level committee comprising of an officer of ACB and other investigation wings to investigate the gross mismanagement of the official respondents (authorities). It also seeks an investigation by CBI to inquire into the conduct of the officials in the matter.

In support of his contention, the petitioner—Mohammad Shafi—has also referred to a communication by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir to Directorate Land Records way back in 2004 that Shah Kaul has been encroached upon, resulting into loss of lakhs of rupees "because the water required for Nishat Garden is being now lifted through mechanical pumps".

The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, had sought the removal of all types of encroachments on the canal and directed appropriate action against the "culprits". "However, no action has been taken," says the petitioner.

HC Directs Amicus

in 2002 by a then law student Syed Tahir Iqbal Geelani, has been postponed for hearing on August 31."

Much-Awaited ULB Polls in J&K Unlikely in 2026

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The much-awaited Urban Local Bodies (ULB) polls in Jammu & Kashmir are unlikely to be held in 2026 due to the absence of an updated electoral roll, which will only be available after Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is undertaken in the Union Territory.

Officials disclosed to KNO that the chances of holding the electoral exercise in the UT this year are almost nil, as the updated electoral roll required for these polls will only be prepared after the SIR exercise is completed. "Unlike Panchayat polls, the electoral roll for Urban Local Bodies is prepared on the basis of the electoral rolls of the Elec-

tion Commission of India. No revision of electoral rolls has been undertaken in Jammu & Kashmir by the ECI since the 2024 Assembly polls," they said, adding that this has made the conduct of ULB elections in 2026 highly unlikely.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) had said earlier this year that the SIR exercise in

Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, and Himachal Pradesh will be announced later, after considering the completion of Phase-II of the Census and weather conditions in snow-bound areas.

"After considering the completion of Phase-II of the Census in these three State/UTs and due consideration of the weather in the upper reaches/snow-bound areas, the SIR schedule for these three State/UTs will be announced later," the EC had said in a press note.

The five-year terms of elected Urban Local Bodies in Jammu & Kashmir ended between October and December 2023. The UT has 78 Urban Local Bodies, including two Municipal Corporations.

DGP Prabhat Orders Enhanced Vigil Along Amarnath Yatra Route



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Monday directed security agencies to intensify surveillance, strengthen area domination and maintain close co-ordination to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

The DGP, according to KNO, issued the directions during his visit to the Lakhanpur base camp in Kathua district, where he reviewed security arrangements, traffic management and convoy movement along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, officials said.

During the visit, senior police officers briefed him on the multi-layered security grid, access control measures, traffic regulation and implementation of standard operating procedures for the annual pilgrimage.

DGP Prabhat asked all agencies to maintain a high level of operational preparedness and ensure seamless coordination among the police, security forces and civil administration.

He directed officers to intensify area domination and night domination exercises, particularly along the National Highway, key road corridors and the pilgrimage route, to prevent any security breach.

The DGP also instructed field units to strengthen surveillance and maintain a close watch on suspicious activities across Kathua district to prevent any attempt to disturb peace, officials said.

He asked officers to ensure strict verification of the identity credentials of pilgrims and make effective use of the RFID-based tracking system for real-time monitoring of registered yatis.

DGP Prabhat further directed that cases involving unregistered pilgrims be handled proactively and in coordination with the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board while adhering to the prescribed protocols.

He said coordinated efforts, constant vigilance and effective synergy among all stakeholders are a key to ensuring the peaceful and successful conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

CM Omar Assures Resolution to Livestock Transport Issue

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday assured the Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association (KMDA) of taking up with the Punjab Government the issues faced by livestock transporters, with a high-level delegation set to visit Punjab within the next two days to seek an early resolution.

Speaking to KNO after meeting the Chief Minister, KMDA General Secretary Mehraj-ud-Din said the delegation apprised Omar Abdullah of the difficulties mutton dealers continue to face while transporting livestock through Punjab despite recent interventions.

"He listened to our concerns, and we handed over all the documents and communications issued by the Punjab Government. The Chief Minister immediately called the concerned minister and directed him to take note of the issue and ensure it is resolved at the earliest," Mehraj-ud-Din said.

He said the CM assured the delegation that a special committee would leave for Punjab within the next two days to take up the matter with the state's government.



"The delegation will comprise officials from the concerned department, representatives of the Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association and members of the Kashmir Economic Alliance (KEA). We have been assured that the issue will be resolved through official-level talks with the Punjab Government," he said.

Mehraj-ud-Din said the association is hopeful that the proposed visit will remove the hurdles being faced by livestock transporters and ensure hassle-free movement of livestock in the future.

According to an official statement, the Chief Minister assured the delegation that the government is fully committed to resolving the issue and that all bottlenecks affecting the movement of livestock through Punjab would be addressed.

"He informed the delegation that a high-level team from the Government of Jammu & Kashmir will visit Punjab in the coming days to engage with the concerned authorities and facilitate an early and amicable resolution," the statement said.

The development comes days after the Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association called off its 10-day strike following a communication issued by the Punjab Government regarding the movement of livestock vehicles. The strike had disrupted the transportation of sheep to Jammu & Kashmir and triggered concerns over mutton availability in Kashmir, particularly during the ongoing marriage season, prompting the J&K Government to intervene with the Punjab authorities.

AMRUT 2.0:

J&K Implements 90 Projects for Urban Water Supply, Sewerage

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Government is implementing 90 projects worth Rs 1,002.38 crore under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0 to strengthen urban water supply, sewerage infrastructure, and rejuvenate water bodies across the Union Territory.

According to the Housing and Urban Development Department's Urban Insights newsletter for May 2026, the approved outlay includes nearly Rs 867 crore in Central assistance. The projects comprise 65 regional water supply schemes, three sewerage and septage management projects, and 22 water body rejuvenation works aimed at improving access to safe drinking water, sanitation and sustainable urban development.

The newsletter, accessed by KNO, states that all 22 water body rejuvenation projects have been completed. Water supply schemes in Ramgarh, Batote, Akhnoor, Jourian, Bari Brahmana, Kunzar and Devsar have also been completed, while major works such as the Dal Lake pollution abatement project, the Srinagar Extension Water Supply Scheme and the Udhampur Water Supply Scheme are nearing completion.

Under AMRUT 2.0, urban water supply capacity is expected to increase by 104.64 million litres per day (MLD), including 57.635 MLD in Kashmir Division and



47.05 MLD in Jammu Division. The programme also includes laying more than 1,211 kilometres of water pipelines, constructing 47 elevated overhead tanks, 31 ground-level storage reservoirs and 62 pumping stations to strengthen water distribution networks.

The department said the infrastructure will benefit more than 2.09 lakh existing urban households and provide over 64,663 new drinking water connections across the Union Territory.

The newsletter also highlights the Rs 306.05-crore Dal Lake environmental restoration and pollution abatement project, which includes the construction of a 30 MLD advanced sewage treatment plant along with a modern sewerage network. The project is aimed at reducing pollution in the lake while meeting the needs of more than two lakh future residents.

To improve wastewater management, 14 projects worth over Rs 10.50 crore are being taken up under the Jal Hi AMRIT (JHA) initiative. These projects focus on upgrading treatment facilities through advanced technologies,

SCADA-based monitoring systems and resource recovery practices.

The department further said GIS-based master plans are being prepared for 25 Class-II towns to support scientific and data-driven urban planning, improve infrastructure development and strengthen urban governance.

The newsletter also highlights community participation through the AMRUT MITRA initiative, under which women-led Self Help Groups have conducted more than 78,000 water quality tests in urban areas. According to the department, the initiative has strengthened water quality monitoring while encouraging greater public participation in protecting drinking water resources.

Besides expanding water supply infrastructure, AMRUT 2.0 also focuses on improving sewerage systems, restoring urban water bodies and introducing technology-driven service delivery. The department said the integrated approach is expected to create cleaner, healthier and more liveable cities while ensuring long-term water security across urban Jammu and Kashmir.

SANJY CRPF's 'May I Help You' Initiative Receives Overwhelming Response

Observer News Service

BALTAL: The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has intensified its 'May I Help You' initiative for the ongoing Shri Amarnath Yatra, with women personnel assisting pilgrims along the Baltal route by offering guidance, security, accommodation support, language assistance, connectivity help and emergency medical aid.

Speaking to reporters, CRPF DIG Sudhir Kumar, as reported by KNO, said the initiative received an overwhelming response from pilgrims during last year's Yatra, encouraging the force to strengthen it this year.

"Last year, people wholeheartedly appreciated the CRPF for the 'May I Help You' initiative, which encouraged us. This year, our women personnel are fully prepared. Even yesterday, when some pilgrims faced difficulties near the registration counter, our 'May I Help You' team extended prompt assistance," he said.

Highlighting the role of women personnel, Kumar said pilgrims from different parts of the country participate in the annual pilgrimage and many face language barriers. "CRPF is like a mini-India. We have deployed women personnel from different states so that pilgrims can communicate in their own language and receive the assistance they need," he said.

DIG Kumar added, "We have had



no issues so far. CRPF has taken care of all aspects of its duty. We are alert, and we hope that nobody will have any inconvenience from the CRPF's end. But I would like to request the pilgrims to come here only after registration. That will make their Yatra smooth...A cut-off time has been put in place; if pilgrims follow it, they won't face any issues."

CRPF woman constable Jyoti S. said the initiative, launched last year, has been expanded this year with a team of around 30 to 40 personnel. "Our only objective is to assist the pilgrims throughout their journey. We are here to serve people, and we take pride in helping them. Our focus is to resolve the problems faced by pilgrims," she said.

Another woman constable, Pushpa Verma, said personnel remain among the pilgrims to assist whenever required; pilgrims have come from across the country. "We have been deployed here to assist them in every possible way. Our officers train us on how to help pilgrims. It feels rewarding to support people during the Yatra," she said.

Budgam Court Seeks SSP's Report on Grazing Rights of Branwar Residents

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: In a significant development concerning the traditional grazing rights of tribal and other traditional forest dwelling communities, the Court of the Special Mobile Magistrate, Budgam, has directed the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Budgam, to submit a report on allegations that police authorities were interfering with the grazing activities of local residents of Branwar around Chaskaninad meadows in Doodh Ganga forest range bordering Poonch.

The direction came during the hearing of a civil suit filed by members of the local pastoral community of branwar Chadoora



seeking recognition of their community grazing rights under the

Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recogn-

ition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. The plaintiffs have sought a direction to the authorities to initiate the statutory process for recognition of these rights.

Appearing for the plaintiffs, Advocate Shakir Mushtaq Parray submitted before the Court that police officials were unlawfully preventing the community from grazing their livestock at Chaskaninad Meadow and were harassing them despite grazing being their traditional occupation and primary source of livelihood. It was argued that such interference was causing serious hardship to the pastoral families.

Taking note of the urgency of the matter, the Court directed the SSP, Budgam to file a report indi-

cating whether police authorities are interfering with the grazing activities of the plaintiffs' livestock at Chaskaninad Meadow. The report is to be submitted before the next date of hearing.

The matter has been listed for 13 July 2026, and a copy of the order has been forwarded to the SSP, Budgam, for compliance. The order is being seen as an important judicial intervention in a dispute involving the livelihood of tribal pastoral communities and the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, which recognises the customary rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers over community forest resources, including grazing areas.

Odd-Even Traffic Order Not Required Yet: MLA Gulmarg

SRINAGAR: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Gulmarg, Farooq Shah, on Monday said there was no immediate need to implement the recently notified odd-even traffic regulation in the renowned tourist destination, asserting that the present visitor footfall does not warrant such restrictions.

Speaking to reporters after laying the foundation stone of a clock tower at Tangmarg, MLA Shah, as reported by KNO said he has advised the concerned officials to review the order.

"There is no immediate need for implementing the odd-even traffic order as the tourist footfall is not that high at present. I have asked the officials concerned to review the decision," he said.

Shah said such measures could be considered in the future if tourist arrivals increase to a level where traffic regulation becomes necessary. "If, in future, the footfall increases and such a system is felt necessary, it can be implemented. But as of now, I don't think it is required," he said.

The MLAA said the priority should be to ensure visitors have a smooth and hassle-free travel experience in Gulmarg. "We are trying to ensure that tourists enjoy a smooth journey and do not feel cheated or inconvenienced. We should respect their decision to visit our tourist destinations and make every effort to ensure they return again and again," he said.

The Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) recently ordered the implementation of an odd-even vehicle entry system for private and commercial four-wheelers into Gulmarg on a pilot basis from July 5 to August 5 to reduce congestion and improve environmental conditions in the hill resort. (Observer News Service)

Experts Warn of Vegetable Fat-Based Desserts



SRINAGAR: As temperatures soar, consumption of frozen treats has increased significantly. However, health experts have advised consumers to carefully read product labels before purchasing, saying that not every frozen product sold in the market is actually ice cream. They said many consumers unknowingly purchase frozen desserts, assuming they are ice cream, despite both products differing considerably in ingredients, nutritional value, and fat composition.

Professor Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan, Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College Srinagar, told KNO that informed food choices are essential for maintaining good health and preventing lifestyle-related diseases. He advised consumers to always read the product name, ingredient list, manufacturing date, best-before date, and nutrition facts before making a purchase.

Health experts explained that ice cream is prepared using milk and cream, with milk fat serving as the primary source of fat. Under FSSAI norms, ice cream must contain at least 10 per cent milk fat. Its key ingredients include milk, cream, sugar, milk solids, stabilisers, emulsifiers, and natural or nature-identical flavours, providing nutrients such as calcium and protein derived from milk.

However, frozen desserts primarily use vegetable oils or fats, such as palm oil or coconut oil, instead of milk fat. They usually contain water, sugar, vegetable fat, milk solids, emulsifiers, stabilisers, colours, and artificial or nature-identical flavours, with milk fat content often less than 10 per cent or even absent.

Experts said milk-based ice cream generally provides around 180-230 kilocalories per 100 grams, containing 8-14 grams of total fat, 5-9 grams of saturated fat, 18-24 grams of carbohydrates, 14-20 grams of sugar, 3-5 grams of protein, and 100-150 milligrams of calcium. Frozen desserts typically contain 120-180 kilocalories, 3-8 grams of fat, 1-4 grams of saturated fat, with some products potentially containing trans fats, and provide lower amounts of protein and calcium.

Experts said that ice cream supplies calcium, protein, and other nutrients from milk, but excessive consumption can contribute to weight gain, dental cavities, and metabolic disorders. Frozen desserts are more affordable and available in a wider range of flavours but may contain more additives, colours, and artificial flavours, with regular overconsumption linked to obesity, fatty liver disease, and insulin resistance. (Observer News Service)

Boy Goes Missing after Being Swept Away in Gurez River

BANDIPORA: A 10-year-old boy was swept away by the strong currents of the Kishanganga River while bathing in the Gurez area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Monday evening, officials said.

An official told KNO, that the boy was bathing in the Kishanganga River when he was caught in the fast-flowing current and went missing.

Soon after the incident, Police, Army and local volunteers launched a search and rescue operation. Senior police officers are personally supervising the rescue efforts. The boy was later identified as Babar Bashir (10), a resident of Sheikhpora in Tulail.

Meanwhile, police have taken up an investigation. (Observer News Service)

Unidentified Body Recovered from Jhelum in Awantipora

PULWAMA: An unidentified body was recovered from the Jhelum River near Kawani in the Awantipora area of south Kashmir on Monday, officials said.

An official told KNO that locals spotted the body floating in the river and immediately informed the police.

A police team rushed to the spot and retrieved the body from the river, the official said. "The deceased is believed to be a non-local, although his identity has not yet been ascertained," he said.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident and further investigation has been initiated. (Observer News Service)

After World Cup Woes, Heads Roll Across Asia



AP

SEOUL: The fallout in Asian football continues as the continent comes to terms with an underwhelming World Cup performance.

On Monday, Chung Mong-gyu stepped down as president of the Korea Football Association.

His departure follows harsh criticism from the country's president and the resignation of coach Hong Myung-bo last week after South Korea's group-stage exit that culminated in a 1-0 loss to South Africa.

"There were moments when I lived up to expectations and moments when I left you deeply disappointed," said Chung, who has held the role since 2013. "All the success is thanks to our players and fans, and all the mistakes are my responsibility."

"I am convinced that Korean football will overcome adversity and reach great heights once again, as it always has."

South Korea's soccer superstar Son Heung-min apologized for the team's performance in a long social media post where he said he was "indiscribably hurt" and eager to "win the hearts" of the nation once again.

The day after Hong stood down as South Korea's coach, Yasser Al-Misehal quit as Saudi Arabia Football Federation president as the team fell at the first hurdle at its seventh appearance.

"The national team's failure to qualify for the next round of the World Cup is a result that falls short of all our ambitions," Al-Misehal wrote on social media. "I bear full responsibility for it,

apologizing to everyone who hoped to see our team in a better position."

Not enough wins

Teams from within the Asian Football Confederation managed just three wins in 29 matches at the expanded 48-team World Cup. Of the nine representatives, only Australia and Japan advanced from the group stage. Iran was unbeaten but three draws were not quite enough to take the team into the knockout stage.

Australia and Japan were eliminated in the round of 32, the very first stage of knockouts.

The Socceroos, the AFC's last hope, lost in a penalty shootout to Egypt. Australia head coach Tony Popovic's job was already safe after he signed a contract extension on the eve of his team's opening win over Turkey.

Japan was the best performer with a 4-0 win over Tunisia 4-0 and draws with the Netherlands and Sweden to place second in its group. Then after leading Brazil 1-0 at halftime, the Samurai Blue lost to a 96th minute goal from the five-time champion.

"Through the three group-stage matches and the hard-fought game against Brazil, I sensed that what we have built can compete on the world stage," coach Hajime Moriyasu said. "If we continue this growth steadily, a day will come when we can be the best in the world."

Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, president of the Asian Football Confederation, warned that there's a lot of work to do for the rest to catch up.

"While we celebrate our two qualified teams, we must also look realistically at the overall outcomes," Salman said of the knockout stages of the tournament. "Our teams are making strides and displaying great fighting spirit, the gap at the absolute top tier remains tight, and we must continue to work hard to bridge it."

South Korea's run to the semifinals in 2002 remains the continent's benchmark at the men's World Cup. Japan has lost four times in the knockout stages and Australia is 0-3 in World Cup knockout games.

Jordan lost all three games on its World Cup debut and parted ways with coach Jamal Sellami on Sunday. Sellami took the job in 2024 and helped Jordan secure its first World Cup qualification in June 2025.

There is still speculation about the future of the Qatar and Iraq coaches after both teams finished bottom of their respective groups.

Uzbekistan also failed to collect a single point in its first appearance at the global tournament but coach Fabio Cannavaro is set to stay.

Uzbekistan's last loss was to Congo, one of nine African nations to advance from the group stage.

"All my players realized just how difficult it is to play at this level," Cannavaro, who was captain of the World Cup-winning Italy team in 2006 title, said. "We gained valuable experience — not just the players, but myself, our staff and the federation as well."

"I hope this experience will give us more motivation for the future."

Furor at FIFA Decision to Meet Trump's Wish

AP

GENEVA: Furor at the World Cup saw Belgium tackle FIFA's ruling not to enforce a ban from Monday's game of United States forward Folarin Balogun, and U.S. President Donald Trump claim credit for swaying the soccer body's leader.

The on-field integrity of soccer's biggest event came under a shocking attack in what seemed a blatant case of political interference. A strict reading of FIFA statutes could see the U.S. suspended from the global game.

Trump defended calling FIFA President Gianni Infantino, saying he merely pointed out a "horrible" decision by a referee to issue Balogun a red card last Wednesday for an illegal tackle on a Bosnia-Herzegovina player when the U.S. won in the round of 32.

"All I did was ask for a review. I didn't think it was a foul," Trump told reporters Monday at the White House about lobbying Infantino, a close ally, not to impose a one-game ban on Balogun that is mandatory in soccer laws.

What has flared into an all-time controversy in the World Cup's 96-year history was raging just hours ahead of the U.S.-Belgium match in Seattle with a quarterfinals place at stake.

The Belgian soccer federation said it was "deeply concerned" in a statement that showed clear frustration with FIFA at what seemed to be a lack of good faith in shaping an urgent legal process to appeal the Balogun ruling.

European soccer body UEFA earlier criticized FIFA for an "incomprehensible and unjustifiable decision," that it said "crossed a red line" by not enforcing Balogun's mandatory one-game ban.

FIFA's ruling Sunday — to defer Balogun's ban for one year of probation — deviated from soccer's traditional rule of law and drew stinging criticism globally including from former World Cup stars and coaches at this tournament.

"It's a bad, bad, bad, bad, bad decision that will hurt the World Cup," Norway coach Ståle Solbakken said Sunday after his team beat Brazil to reach the quarterfinals.

UEFA, whose member federations include Belgium, insisted: "Sometimes rules are open to interpretation. In this case not."

"When the certainty of rules is no longer guaranteed by its guardians, the integrity of the game is at stake and the credibility of a competition is un-



dermined," said UEFA, which has often clashed with Infantino during his decade in FIFA power.

"We express our disbelief at such an unprecedented, incomprehensible and unjustifiable decision," said UEFA, where Infantino was its CEO-like general secretary from 2009 until being elected to lead FIFA in February 2016.

FIFA was asked Monday to comment on the UEFA criticism.

Infantino's predecessor Sepp Blatter, who was forced from office in 2015 in fallout from corruption scandals, posted Monday on social media: "Red cards are not overturned by political phone calls. They are overturned by rules, evidence and independent bodies."

Belgium's legal optionsBelgian officials prepared an appeal in Seattle through the night into Monday to get a hearing with a FIFA-appointed appeals judge. They said FIFA had not provided documents key to filing a valid appeal.

The round of 16 game against the U.S. is due to kick off at 5 p.m. local time.

"Regardless of the sporting outcome of the match," the Belgian federation said, "(we are) deeply concerned by the way these events have unfolded and will continue, in the hours, days and months ahead, to pursue every available avenue to uphold the fundamental principles of ethics, sporting fairness and the interests of football as a whole."

Soccer rules require teams ultimately judged to have fielded an ineligible player to default the game as a 3-0 loss. Belgium must first appeal to FIFA and then to the Court of Arbitration for Sport based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Balogun's tackleBalogun was sent off directly for planting his cleated foot

on the ankle of Bosnian defender Tarik Muharemovic during a 2-0 win for the U.S. in the round of 32.

That kind of challenge has been a routine red card all season in competitions worldwide, and Balogun could have expected a two-game ban for serious foul play under the FIFA disciplinary code.

Still, similar challenges by star players have gone unpunished at this World Cup — by Argentina's Lionel Messi against Algeria and Morocco's Achraf Hakimi vs. Brazil. Bernardo Silva of Portugal got just a yellow card against Congo.

"I think a yellow card would have been fair," Balogun later suggested.

FIFA's interventionsThis World Cup has been remarkable for FIFA under Infantino seeming to rewrite the norms of disciplinary action even before the tournament began.

A pattern of pardons opened FIFA to suggestions of executive intervention in the statutory independence of its judicial bodies, including the disciplinary committee that formally reprieved Balogun.

Cristiano Ronaldo was cleared to play in Portugal's opening World Cup game despite getting a red card for serious foul play in a qualifying game against Ireland last November. He struck an opponent with an elbow.

Ronaldo served his mandatory ban in Portugal's final qualifying game but he was reprieved from an expected two-game ban because FIFA introduced the idea of probation. An imposed three-game ban was less meaningful as two games were deferred during a one-year probationary period.

M I Securities

POWER OF ₹5,000 SIP

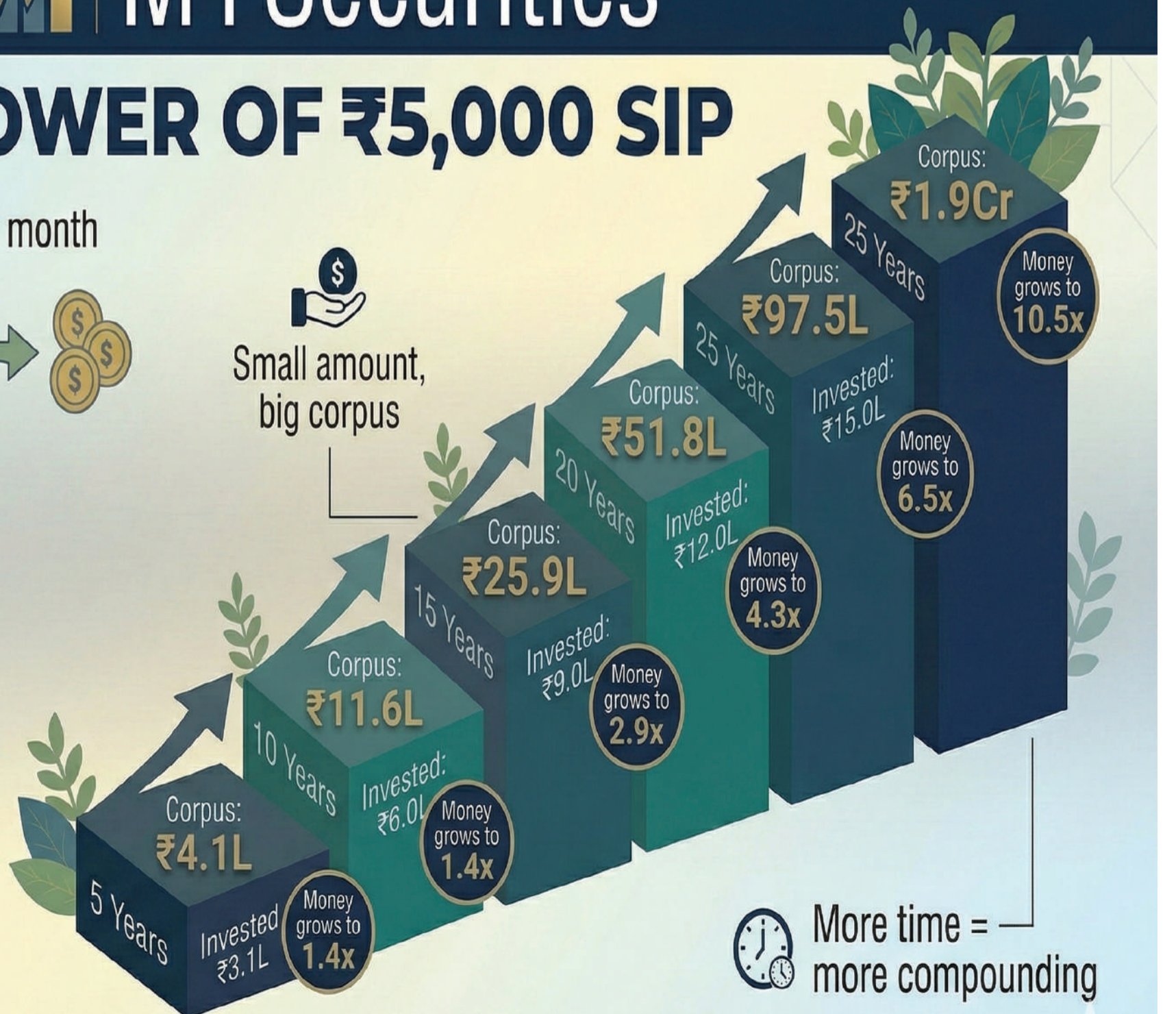
Step 1: You invest ₹5,000 every month



Small amount, big corpus

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



More time = more compounding

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