

J&K Power Bills Likely To Rise From Sept 1

JERC approves 6.83% average hike; revised rates to remain in force till March 2027

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Consumers across Jammu and Kashmir will have to pay more for electricity from September 1 after the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) approved an average 6.83 per cent hike in power tariffs for the Union Territory.

In its tariff order for 2026-27, the JERC approved an increase that is 1.83 percentage points higher than the 5 per cent hike proposed separately by the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) and Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL).

The revised tariff will come into effect from



September 1, 2026, and will remain applicable until issuance of the next tariff order or until further orders of the Commission, unless amended, modified or extended earlier.

For metered domestic consumers, the energy charge has been fixed at 2.45 per unit for consumption up to 200 units,

4.20 per unit for 201 to 400 units and 4.60 per unit beyond 400 units. A fixed charge of 10 per kW per month will also apply.

The Commission has retained concessional rates for BPL households and small agricultural consumers. Eligible BPL consumers using up to 30 units a month will pay 1.40 per

unit, with a fixed charge of 5 per kW per month. Agricultural connections up to 20 HP will be charged 1.05 per unit and a fixed charge of 23 per HP per month.

Commercial consumers will also face revised rates, with single-phase non-domestic consumers paying 3.75 per unit up to 200 units and 5.70 per unit thereafter, besides a fixed charge of 75 per kW per month.

The JERC has approved a combined Annual Revenue Requirement of 10,275.72 crore for KPDCL and JPDCL for 2026-27.

According to the order, revenue under the existing tariff was estimated at 7,352.87 crore, while the revised tariff | [More on P6](#)

Tariff Hike Puts NC's 200-Unit Promise Under Spotlight

Opposition: traders oppose the move, saying it will burden consumers further

Observer News Service

The 6.83 per cent average hike in electricity tariff approved for Jammu and Kashmir has triggered criticism from opposition parties, an NC MP and the business community, with leaders accusing the government of failing to honour its 2024 election

promise of providing 200 units of free electricity to households. The revised tariff, approved by the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC), will come into effect from September 1. Leader of Opposition in the J&K Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma described the hike as a "betrayal" of the | [More on P6](#)



LG Meets PM Modi, Briefs Him On J&K Situation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, on Saturday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and briefed him on the overall situation in the Union Territory.

The meeting focused on various matters concerning Jammu and Kashmir, including the prevailing situation and key issues related to the Union Territory.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor apprised the Prime Minister of the latest developments and the overall security, administrative and developmental scenario in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was held at New Delhi, with both leaders discussing matters of importance concerning the Union Territory.

Further details regarding the meeting were not immediately available.

IIM Jammu Must Aim Among The World's Best: LG

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday called upon IIM Jammu to build a distinctive academic identity and aim for global excellence as the institute marked its 10th anniversary. Addressing the celebrations, Sinha said IIM Jammu | [More on P6](#)

Fake J&K Bank Job Order Crime Branch Files Chargesheet

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Jammu and Kashmir Crime Branch has filed a chargesheet against a "habitual offender" in a job fraud case, officials said on Saturday.

The chargesheet was filed against Abdul Majeed Mir, a resident of Lashtiyal Kalaroos in Kupwara district, before the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate in FIR No. 18/2026 under various sections of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), they said.

According to the complaint, Mir allegedly cheated the complainant of lakhs of rupees on the pretext of securing him a government job.

In furtherance of the alleged deception, he also furnished the complainant with a forged appointment order purportedly issued by the chairman and CEO of J&K Bank, officials said.

Following the complaint, a probe was ordered. During the investigation, the allegations were found to be supported by the facts and evidence collected, officials said.

The chargesheet was subsequently presented before the court for judicial determination.

Officials said Mir has been involved in 15 criminal cases across the Valley. He was arrested on July 18 and is currently lodged in Central Jail here. | [More on P6](#)

Cross-Border Terror Case NIA Conducts Searches At 10 Locations In J&K

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at 10 locations across Jammu and Kashmir as part of its probe into a cross-border terror conspiracy involving Pakistan-based handlers and a network of local Over Ground Workers (OGWs), the agency said.

The searches were carried out across Srinagar, Kupwara, Anantnag, Pulwama and Budgam to collect further documentary, digital and material evidence linked to



the alleged conspiracy and ascertain the roles of individuals associated with the local support network.

The case was initiated following the arrest of an alleged OGW linked to the proscribed

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) during the late hours of March 31, 2026, at a naka point. A hand grenade and live ammunition were recovered from his possession, the NIA said.

During the investigation, Pakistani | [More on P6](#)

2019 Pulwama Attack Case

NIA Court Denies Bail To Accused

KO Web Desk

A special NIA court here has rejected the bail plea of Ansha Jan, an accused in the 2019 Pulwama suicide attack that killed 40 CRPF personnel, observing that there was sufficient material on record to presume that the allegations against her were prima facie true. In a 15-page order delivered on August 20, Special Judge Prem Sagar held that the statutory bar under Section 43-D(5) of the Unlawful Activities | [More on P6](#)

'Judicial Insensitivity': HC On Child Custody Order

Questions Family Court's authority to issue a search warrant to recover a five-year-old girl from her father

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has flagged "legal shortcoming" and "insensitivity" on the part of a family court here for deploying police and issuing a search warrant to recover a five-year-old girl from her father.

Hearing a petition filed under Article 227 of the Constitution by Shadab Hussain Mir, a single bench of Justice Rahul Bharti observed that a father's custody of his child "by



no stretch of imagination could be illegal per se".

The petitioner and respondent had dissolved their marriage through a settlement agreement that granted custody of their minor daughter to the mother, subject to

the condition that custody would revert to the father if she remarried.

After the mother remarried, the father took the child into his care. The mother then approached the 4th Additional District Judge (Family Court), Srinagar.

On June 29, 2026, the Family Court ordered the SHO of Chanapora police station to execute a search warrant, recover the child and return her to the mother.

However, the High Court | [More on P6](#)

Rain Brings Brief Relief From Heat

Showers Likely In J&K Through August 28

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness intermittent rain and thundershowers over the coming days, with the Meteorological Centre warning of possible flash floods, mudslides and landslides in vulnerable areas following intense showers.

The weather remained generally hot and humid across the Union Territory on Saturday, with scattered to many places receiving rain and thundershowers. Brief spells of intense rainfall were likely at isolated places, particularly in parts of the Jammu division, mainly during the morning and afternoon hours, the Met said.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 32.2 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 20.6 degrees, while Jammu recorded a maximum of 32.7 degrees and a minimum of 24.9 degrees.

Pahalgam recorded a maximum of 25.5 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 15.4 degrees, while Gulmarg remained the coolest among the stations with a maximum of 20.8 degrees and a minimum of 11.4 degrees.

Qazigund recorded 30.4 degrees Celsius as the maximum and 18 degrees as the minimum, Kupwara 31 degrees and 17.9 degrees, and Kokernag 30.6 degrees and 17.6 degrees.

Banihal recorded a maximum of 28.4 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 18.5 degrees, Batote 27.4 degrees and 19 degrees, Katra 31 degrees and 23.5 degrees, and Bhaderwah 29.6 degrees and 18 degrees.

During the 24 hours ending 8:30 am, Pahalgam received 1 mm of rainfall and Jammu 3.2 mm, while Srinagar recorded | [More on P6](#)

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2

Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents
scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: Reliance Foundation Postgraduate Scholarships 2026-27

Description: The Reliance Foundation Postgraduate Scholarships aim to enable and propel India's future leaders who can think big, think green, and think digital for the benefit of society.

Eligibility: Students who are enrolled in the first-year full-time regular postgraduation programmes pursuing select future-ready courses from Engineering, Technology, Energy and Life Sciences

Must have secured 550 to 1,000 in the GATE examination, OR must have a CGPA of 7.5 or above in their undergraduate studies (or equivalent percentage normalised to CGPA) if the student has not attempted GATE

Open to resident Indian citizens only

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 6,00,000 over the duration of the degree

Last Date to Apply: 05-10-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/RFS15

er/RFS15

QR Code: <https://d9e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/2026-271787032072.png>

Scholarship Name 2: Reliance Foundation Undergraduate Scholarships 2026-27

Description: The Reliance Foundation Undergraduate Scholarships support meritorious students from all corners of the country in pursuing their undergraduate education. This empowers them to continue their studies, become successful professionals, and realise their dreams, unlocking their potential to uplift themselves and their communities and contribute towards India's future socio-economic development.

Eligibility: Students must be enrolled in the first year of a full-time regular undergraduate (UG) degree in any stream at a recognised Indian institute

Must have passed Class 12 with a minimum of 60% marks

The annual household income



should be up to INR 15,00,000 per year (preference will be given to those students whose family income is less than INR 2,50,000)

Open to resident Indian citizens only. An aptitude test is mandatory

Prizes & Rewards: Up to INR 2,00,000 over the duration of the degree

Last Date to Apply: 05-10-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/RFS14

QR Code: <https://d9e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/2026-271787032064.png>

Scholarship Name 3: Luxury Connect Business School Scholarship Program 2026-27

Description: The Luxury Connect Business School Scholarship

Program 2026-27 is an initiative by Luxury Connect Business School (LCBS) to support aspiring professionals planning to pursue careers in the luxury industry. Students admitted to the MBA in Luxury Brand Management or the Advanced Diploma in Luxury Retail Management & Client Experience can receive tuition fee waivers for their studies at LCBS, making specialised luxury education more accessible.

Eligibility: For an MBA in Luxury Brand Management

Must have completed a bachelor's degree from a recognised university/institution.

Final-year UG students may also apply, subject to LCBS admission norms and submission of final academic documents before enrolment.

Annual parental income from all sources must not exceed INR 8,00,000.

For the Advanced Diploma in Luxury Retail Management & Client Experience

Must have passed Class 12 or equivalent from a recognised board.

Must be a second-year/final-year UG student or a graduate.

Candidates with prior exposure to retail, hospitality, fashion, lifestyle, beauty, luxury sales, customer service, or related sectors are encouraged to apply.

Annual parental income from all sources must not exceed INR 8,00,000.

Prizes & Rewards: Tuition fee waiver up to INR 2,00,000 for MBA or up to INR 25,000 for Advanced Diploma, based on graduation percentage.

Note: Scholarships apply only to students who secure admission to the eligible LCBS program and fulfil all applicable eligibility criteria.

The maximum tuition fee waiver of up to INR 2,00,000 is applicable only for the Offline (Campus) MBA in Luxury Brand Management program, where the course fee is INR 9.5 lakh.

Last Date to Apply: 26-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/LCBS14

QR Code: <https://d9e9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/luxury-connect-business-school-scholarship-program-2026-271784610098.png>

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Nisar Ahmad Wani S/o Sonaulah Wani, R/o Takiya Batapora, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, do hereby declare that my daughter Asmat Jan was born at home on 18-10-2010. Her birth has not been registered in the office of the Registrar, Births & Deaths, Block Kunzer. I intend to register her birth with the concerned authority for issuance of her Birth Certificate. Any person having any objection to the said registration may communicate the same to the Registrar, Births & Deaths, Block Kunzer, within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. In case of any false or incorrect information, I shall be personally responsible.

Nisar Ahmad Wani S/o Sonaulah Wani FKO
R/o Takiya Batapora, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla

PUBLIC NOTICE

The electricity connection with consumer id 0203010016115 with installation no. 24948-R2 registered in the name of welfare wisher public school R/o gousia colony beminia to be transferred to Alameen first step international school chairman Mr imtiyaz ahmad wani S/o wali mohd wani R/O Rawalpore if any person having any objection in this regard may contact AEE sub div watalakadal with in 7days

INFO

PUBLIC NOTICE

The electricity connection with consumer id 0203010026696 with installation no.6120347475 registered in the name of mst waheda Rehman w/o shabir ahmad narwari R/o Ibrahim colony beminia to be transferred to Mahmooda Banoo W/O Rajab Ali NRC beminia if any person having any objection may contact AEE sub div watalakadal with in seven days

INFO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Nazir Ahmad Baba, son of Gulam Hussain Baba, resident of Shalhar, Dab, Ganderbal, hereby declare that my parentage has been incorrectly recorded in my Service Book.

In the Service Book, my father's name has been recorded as Ghulam Hassan Baba, whereas in all my educational certificates and other official documents, my father's name is correctly recorded as Gulam Hussain Baba. Therefore, my actual and correct parentage is:

Nazir Ahmad Baba
S/o Gulam Hussain Baba
R/o Shalhar, Dab, Ganderbal

Any person having any objection regarding the proposed correction of my father's name in the Service Book may submit the same before the concerned authorities within one week from the date of publication of this notice. After the expiry of the stipulated period, no objection shall be entertained.

Sd/
Nazir Ahmad Baba
S/o Gulam Hussain Baba
R/o Shalhar, Dab, Ganderbal

x

از نیابت گوئیگم با اجلاس نذیر احمد بونائب تصدیق اور گوئیگم
اشتبہار برادر گامی ہر خاص و عام نسبت ابرائی ڈیپنڈنٹ سر تقیٹ

معاذ مہدی عنوان الصدر کے نسبت دفتر ہذا میں ایک مثل سہایت تائیدہ جان دختر عبد الغنی
چو پان سا کیہ متع او گمہ تحصیل کو ارباہم ضلع بارہمولہ کے طرف سے پیش ہوئی ہے جس میں
مکملہ بلاک ڈیپنڈنٹ افسر کزن کے اجراء کردہ ڈیپنڈنٹ سر تقیٹ کے مطابق سائل کا والد
عبد الغنی چو پان ولد غلام محمد چو پان مورخہ 23-05-2026 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے متونی
بجوں و منیر گرامین بنگ راج او گمہ میں کام کرتا تھا۔ متونی کا کنبہ مندر ذیل افراد پر مشتمل

ہے
تائیدہ خان 21 سال دختر
رفعت جان 28 سال --
سانغی 23 سال -
زیبہ بیگم 51 سال -
عرفان بیچو پان 30 سال پسر
نام محمد چو پان 66 سال والد
ذو بیگم 64 سال والدہ

اس کے علاوہ او کوئی افراد نہیں ہیں ہے سر تقیٹ کے زیر بحث ابراہم کے میں اگر کسی شخص کو
کوئی عزریا اعتراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمل اخبارات دن کے اندر اندر اعتراض پذیر یا اعتراض عدالت
ہذا کو دفتر یا اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد رز سے میعاد کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں
ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

The DOB of my daughter Hafsan Mushtaq Has been wrongly written in her school records as 21-08-2018 While her correct DOB is 21-08-2017 as Block Medical Officer Magam. Now I have applied for the correction of the same. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Model Educational Institute Utkioo Bangil within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mushtaq Ahamd Bhat
F/o Hafsa Mushtaq
R/o Tarhama Tehsil Karhama Baramulla fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Gh. Nabi Mir S/o Gh. Rasool Mir R/o Andergam Pattan, have misplaced the number plate of my Bike bearing Registration No. JK05L 7416 while travelling from Andergam To Sumbal And Sangrama

I am applying for a duplicate number plate from the concerned authorities. Any person having objection may contact the concerned department within seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

Bike Owner: GH. NABI MIR
Vehicle Number Plate: JK05L 7416 fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

it is hereby notified for the general public that my name has been wrongly recorded as Arif Majeed instead of Ariful Majid Bhat in my aadhaar card bearing number 6756 0050 9609.

i have applied for the correction/rectification of my name to Ariful Majid Bhat. any person having any objection regarding this correction may file it in writing before the concerned Aadhaar centre/authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

Ariful Majid Bhat S/o Ab Majid Bhat
R/o Chitlora Rohama Baramulla J&K 193301 FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Umer Mushtaq Muttoo, hereby give notice that the data submitted by me at the time of admission of my ward, Mehreen Umer, student of 9th Class at Iqra Educational Institute, Bemina, Srinagar, contains an error in her mother's name.

The details submitted are as under:

Name: Mehreen Umer Father's Name: Umer Mushtaq Muttoo
Mother's Name: Uroola

The correct details are:

Name: Mehreen Umer Father's Name: Umer Mushtaq Muttoo
Mother's Name: Arooja Muttoo

It is requested that the necessary correction may kindly be carried out in the school records.

Any person having any objection to the proposed correction may communicate the same to the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Srinagar / Principal, Iqra Educational Institute, Bemina, Srinagar, within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice.

Umer Mushtaq Muttoo
Parent/Applicant FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of general public that a Handicrafts business establishment under the name & style M/s Kashmiri Galerie at Baghwanpora Lal Bazar, Srinagar duly Registered with Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir under the Jammu & Kashmir Tourist Trade Act 1978, vide No. No. HD/DC/CTA/R/08 Dated 08.04.2026 under joint partnership of (1) Suhail Ahmad Wangnoo & (2) Mohammad Suhail Wangnoo both S/o Mohammad Sobra Wangnoo R/o Baghwanpora Lal Bazar, Sgr. Whereas change in its constitution has to be taken in place due to one new partners namely (as partner 3) Mohammad Sobra Wangnoo S/o Ghulam Mohammad Wangnoo R/o Baghwanpora Lal Bazar Srinagar has been entered in the said business by virtue of partnership stands duly executed. The necessary changes in the proprietorship of the said business establishment are to be incorporated in the Tourist Trade records maintained by Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir and issuance of joint registration certificate. Any person's, Departments, Banks and Financial institutions having any objections regarding the matter may submit the same in the office of Deputy Director Quality Control Division solina Srinagar within a period of 7 days, the case will thereafter be processed under the relevant provisions of Jammu & Kashmir Tourist Trade Act 1978.

(1) Suhail Ahmad Wangnoo
(2) Mohammad Suhail Wangnoo
Both Sons of Mohammad Sobra Wangnoo
Both R/o Baghwanpora Lal Bazar, Srinagar
Phone No 9596555554, 9796112345 Media Line Advt

PUBLIC NOTICE

The mother's name in Matric Marks Card of my daughter bearing roll no: 132004205 has been written as Sakeena instead of Sheikh Sagina . Now I have applied for the correction of the same . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file the same in the concerned office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Raja Sameer Hussain S/o Gh Nabi Sheikh
R/o New Pulwama rkor

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420130019680 issued in favour of FAROOQ AHMAD GANIE Parentage MOHAMMAD RAJAB GANIE Whereas an application has been received by one FAROOQ AHMAD GANIE Parentage MOHAMMAD RAJAB GANIE wherein he claimed that the Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as FEOZ AHMAD GANIE Parentage MOHD RAJAB GANIE Which needs to be changed as FAROOQ AHMAD GANIE Parentage MOHAMMAD RAJAB GANIE.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Hamid Ullah Sohail S/o Mohd Amir Sohail R/o Wagan Tehsil Banihal District Ramban J and k employed as Head Constable in Jand K Police Department ID No 931732 it is hereby notified for information of all concerned that my date of birth has been wrongly recorded in my service records as 03 03 1973 which is incorrect while my actual date of birth is 30 07 1973 now I am applying for the date of birth correction if any one has any objection to the Proposed correction he/she may file an objection in writing with proof to office of the Commandant 23 JKAP IR Lethpora 192122 within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice No objection received after the expiry of the said period shall be entertained.

Hamid Ullah Sohail S/o Mohd Amir Sohail
R/o Wagan Tehsil Banihal District Ramban x

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Birth Certificate of my Son the name is entered as HASHIM BIN ASHRAF while actual name is HASHIM BIN ASHRAF BHAT. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BUDGAM with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

MOHAMMAD ASHRAF BHAT
F/o HASHIM BIN ASHRAF BHAT
R/o HARDU WAIL KHANSAHIB BUDGAM mcb
CELL. 7006798372

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Birth Certificate of my Son the name is entered as USMAN while actual name is USMAN AHMAD LONE. Now I want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BUDGAM with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.

SHAKEEL AHMAD LONE
F/o USMAN AHMAD LONE
R/o LAKHRIPORA BUDGAM mcb
CELL. 7780899713

اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو بذریعہ اشتہار مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ مجھے اپنی پیدائشی سر تقیٹ نکالنی مطلوب ہے۔ جبکہ میری تاریخ پیدائش 2008-01-07 ہے۔ جبکہ میں نے آج تک کسی بھی ادارہ سے کوئی بھی سر تقیٹ نہیں نکالی ہے اور نہ ہی کہیں پر اندراج کیا ہے۔ لہذا سر تقیٹ نکالنے پر اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دنوں کے اندر اندر اعتراض متعلقہ محکمہ میں سات دن کے اندر اندر پیش کریں۔ یہ عدا گڈ کرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

منشاء بشیر بشیر احمد ذرا ساکن بہر تھن سیرودہ بڈ گام۔

mcb

Final Leg of Amarnath Yatra Begins, Chhari Mubarak Leaves Srinagar

Agencies

Srinagar: The annual journey of the holy Chhari Mubarak, the sacred mace of Lord Shiva, began from Srinagar on Saturday.

According to the details available with KNO, the Chhari Mubarak left Dashnami Akhara Building for Pahalgam, marking the final and spiritually significant leg of the Amarnath Yatra.

The Chhari Mubarak was taken out after traditional prayers and rituals at the Dashnami Akhara, with devotees and followers participating in the ceremonies as the sacred mace embarked on its customary route towards the Holy Cave.

Custodian of Chhari Mubarak, Mahant Deependra Giri, said the sacred mace would reach Pahalgam on Saturday after symbolic prayers at traditional stopovers along the route.

The Chhari Mubarak will halt at Chandanwari on August 24 and Sheshnag on August 25 before proceeding towards Panchtarni, where it will stay on the nights of August 26 and 27.

On August 28, coinciding

with Raksha Bandhan, the sacred mace will be taken to the Holy Amarnath Cave Shrine, nestled in Himalayas, and installed amid traditional prayers and Vedic chanting.

The rituals at the Holy Cave are associated with the age-old belief that Lord Shiva narrated the tale of immortality to Goddess Parvati at the sacred site. Following the prayers and rituals at the cave, the Chhari Mubarak will return to Panchtarni on August 28 for the night halt. On August 29, it will proceed back via Sheshnag and Chandanwari to Pahalgam.

The traditional journey will conclude on August 30 with prayers and the Visarjan ceremony of the Chhari Mubarak at Pahalgam, bringing the annual sacred pilgrimage to an end.

Pertinently, the Chhari Mubarak procession is a centuries-old tradition and remains an important part of the annual Amarnath pilgrimage, with the sacred mace being carried to the holy cave shrine through the traditional route and religious ceremonies performed along the way.

JK HOPE & HEALTH, KASHMER Join Hands for Children’s Cardiac Surgery

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant step towards saving the lives of children living with congenital heart disease, JK HOPE & HEALTH Foundation and KASHMER (Kashmiri American Society for Healthcare, Medical Education and Research) have announced a strategic collaboration to help children in need access timely, specialized cardiac care and life-saving surgery.

At the heart of the partnership is a shared commitment to ensuring that children who require cardiac surgery are identified for appropriate treatment and are supported in reaching the right medical care at the right time. The collaboration will focus particularly on children from families who may struggle to meet the medical and financial demands associated with complex cardiac procedures.

For many children with congenital heart disease, timely surgery can make the difference between a life constrained by a serious cardiac condition and the opportunity to grow, learn and live a healthier life. Through this partnership, HOPE & HEALTH and KASHMER will work together to facilitate access to appropriate cardiac treatment and support deserving children through the surgical journey.

The collaboration will bring together the strengths of both organizations, including healthcare professionals, medical experts,

community networks and philanthropic resources, to help bridge gaps between children in need and specialized cardiac services.

While life-saving cardiac care for children remains the immediate and central focus of the collaboration, the partnership also opens the door to a wider engagement in the areas that form an integral part of KASHMER’s mandate — particularly medical education, knowledge exchange and healthcare research. These areas will help create opportunities for professional collaboration, sharing of expertise and a deeper understanding of healthcare challenges affecting communities in the region.

The initiative is grounded in the shared values of Care, Educate, Research and Serve, with a clear emphasis on translating compassion and collective effort into tangible outcomes for patients.

The partnership was formally announced on August 22, 2026, in Srinagar, marking the beginning of a joint effort to help more children receive the critical cardiac interventions they need and to build a broader platform for collaboration in healthcare, medical education and research.

For JK HOPE & HEALTH and KASHMER, the message is simple: when a child’s life depends on timely cardiac care, access to that care cannot wait. This collaboration seeks to turn that belief into action — one child, one surgery and one family at a time.



CM Omar Says Confidence in Our Girl Students Augurs Well for J&K’s Future

Attends Annual Day ‘The Clock Tower Cosmos’ function of Presentation Convent School Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said that educational institutions are not merely producing educated girls but are nurturing confident young women, whose confidence provides a strong assurance that the future of Jammu and Kashmir is secure.

The Chief Minister was addressing the Annual Day function, titled ‘Clock Tower Cosmos’, organised by Presentation Convent Higher Secondary School, Rajbagh, Srinagar. The school is also commemorating 250 years of the Presentation Congregation and its own 90-year legacy in Kashmir.

Former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, Provincial Leader-North India Sister Gleetus Rani, Principal Presentation Convent Higher Secondary School Mary Jarsi, faculty members, parents, students and other dignitaries attended the function.

Reflecting on the role of the institution in shaping generations of students, the Chief Minister said, “We are not just producing educated girls. We are producing confident girls. And this confidence gives me the confidence that the future of Jammu and Kashmir will be secure.”

Recalling his association with

the institution, the Chief Minister said he had started his schooling here as a kindergarten student nearly five decades ago, when the school was a co-education school. He remarked that this often comes as a surprise to many, as Presentation Convent in Kashmir has long been perceived as an institution that has been exclusively for girls.

Expressing happiness at returning to his alma mater, Omar Abdullah said it was particularly heartening to witness the confidence, talent and composure of the students today.

“Fifty years ago, I was a student of this great institution,” he recalled.

The Chief Minister also acknowledged the rich history of the Presentation Congregation and the institution, saying that the ideals with which the congregation was founded 250 years ago and the ethos that led to the establishment of Presentation Convent School in Srinagar continue to remain alive.

He said the school had transformed over nine decades from being merely a school into a distinguished institution, with its reputation reflected in the demand for admission.

“Presentation Convent Higher Secondary School is one of those institutions where people seek recommendations for admission. That is a testament to the success that

Presentation Convent School has been able to attain in its 90 years of history here,” he said.

Recalling his school days, the Chief Minister fondly remembered the school grounds where students assembled and marched to music, besides recalling the teachers and Sisters who had led the institution over the years.

He said Presentation Convent has contributed significantly to society by producing civil servants, doctors, police officers, engineers, business leaders, sportspersons and lawmakers.

The Chief Minister stressed that education must go beyond academic achievement and should encourage young people to think independently and speak up.

“We have to teach our children not just to follow, not just to obey, but to question, to ask, to demand,” he said.

Referring to the cultural performances presented by the students, Omar Abdullah said one of the most powerful messages of the evening came through a musical skit that questioned whether society was truly equitable and fair to its daughters.

The skit highlighted several serious social issues concerning women and girls, including child marriage, acid attacks, female foeticide, domestic violence, and gender based violence.

Paras Health to Hold Free Multi-Speciality Health Camp Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Paras Health Srinagar will organise a free multi-speciality health camp today, offering people an opportunity to avail themselves of consultations with specialists, health screenings and guidance on treatment and preventive healthcare.

The camp will bring together specialists from several departments, including oncology, cardiology and cardiac surgery, while special discounts will also be offered on investigations, officials said.

Addressing a press conference here, Medical Superintendent, Paras Health Srinagar, Dr Shafaad, said the initiative was aimed at improving access to specialist health-

care and encouraging people to seek medical advice at an early stage.

“The initiative is aimed at improving access to specialist healthcare and encouraging people to seek timely medical advice,” he said.

Dr Shafaad said the camp would provide health screening, treatment guidance and awareness services under one roof.

“This is a big camp and a great opportunity for people to meet specialists and avail themselves of this opportunity,” he said.

He said the hospital was also placing emphasis on awareness and early detection, particularly in cases where people delay seeking medical help or rely on over-the-counter medication.

“We urge people not to take over-the-counter medications. Con-

sult a specialist. You have tertiary care facilities available, and Paras Hospital is with you,” he said.

Dr Shafaad said Paras Health was seeking to expand its outreach beyond Srinagar and connect with patients living in far-flung areas through free medical services and regular outreach programmes.

“We want to expand our reach to patients, not only in Srinagar but in far-flung areas also, so that people can come to us and we can help them with their problems,” he said.

He added that the hospital regularly conducts outreach OPDs and health camps in different areas, organising around two camps every month, and would continue efforts to strengthen its engagement with people in remote regions.



- 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

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBHERA: 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
9 Rabi-ul-Awwal
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 27
ZUHR	12:35
ASR	5: 17
Magrib	7: 16
ISHA	8: 41

- 1441 - Holland & Hanzesteden sign cease fire treaty
- 1514 - Battle of Chaldiran ended with a decisive victory for the Sultan Selim I, Ottoman Empire, over the Shah Ismail I, Safavids founder.Discovery
- 1789 - French Revolution: The National Assembly proclaims freedom of religious opinions
- 1799 - Napoleon leaves Egypt for France en route to seize power.
- 1866 - Treaty of Prague ends Austro-Prussian war
- 1911 - British Prime Minister H. H. Asquith holds secret meeting about British strategy in case of war with Germany
- 1914 - Japan declares war on Germany in World War I
- 1915 - Tsar Nicolaas II takes control of Russian Army
- 1921 - Austria and the US formally end war; the US does the same with Germany on the 25th, and Hungary on the 29th
- 1924 - Mars' closest approach to Earth since 10th century
- 1933 - Mahatma Gandhi released from Indian jail following another hunger strike
- 1939 - Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agree the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact and secretly divide Poland between themselves, setting the stage for World War II
- 1942 - World War II: last cavalry charge in history takes place at Isbushenskij, Russia; the Italian Savoia Cavalleria charges Soviet infantry
- 1943 - Red army recaptures Charkow
- 1944 - Allied troops capture Marseille, France
- 1952 - Arab League security pact goes into effect
- 1960 - World's largest frog (3.3 kg) caught (Equatorial Guinea)
- 1961 - US lunar probe Ranger 1 reaches 190 km from Earth, falls back
- 1974 - Zaheer Abbas scores 240 Pakistan v England at The Cricket Oval
- 1975 - Communists take over Laos
- 1976 - Heavy earthquake strikes China, 1,000s die
- 1978 - Iranian students occupies Iranian embassy at Wassenaar
- 1982- Lebanese falangist leader Bechir Gemayel elected as president
- 1982- USSR performs nuclear test at the Semipalatinsk Test Site in northeast Kazakhstan
- 1985- Paul Hornung awarded \$1,160,000 by a Louisville court against NCAA who barred him as a college football analyst for betting on games

First Phase of Psy-STEM Project Completed at GCW M.A. Road

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The first phase of the Jammu & Kashmir Science, Technology and Innovation Council (SREP 2025-26)-funded Psy-STEM Project, titled “Psychology-Driven STEM Learning to Build Scientific Temper in the Border Villages of Kashmir,” has been successfully completed at Government College for Women (GCW), M.A. Road, Srinagar.

The project, led by Dr. Eshrat Ara, Principal Investigator, GCW M.A. Road,

in collaboration with Dr. Dinesh Kumar Rajendran, Co-Principal Investigator, NIT Srinagar, seeks to integrate psychological approaches with STEM education to promote scientific temper, creativity and problem-solving among students.

The first phase began with a three-day Master Training Programme for 35 teachers, followed by three student-training batches involving 165 students.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE TRAL

Email id: ghulamnabisha.8239@jk.gov.in Ph./Fax: 01933296293 web: www.ititral.com

Subject: Open Bid for the sale of walnut Crop (Standing) situated in the campus of Industrial Training Institute Tral, College Road Bajwani Tral for the year 2026

Open Bid Notice

This is for the information of general public that an open bid for the sale of walnut crop(standing) for the year 2026 shall be held in the campus of Industrial Training Institute Tral on 27-08-2026 (Thursday) at 11:30 AM. The minimum reserve bid for the crop is fixed as Rs. 20, 000/= (Rupees Twenty Thousand Only). The bidders shall have to deposit Rs: 2,000/= (Rupees two thousand only) in cash in advance as a security deposit/caution money which will be refunded to the concerned bidders soon after the bid is finalized. The successful bidder shall have to deposit the bid amount on the spot in one go. The bidder shall ensure that no damage to the trees happens while harvesting the crop. This Institution shall bear no responsibility for watch and ward of the crop after the bid is finalized/crop sold.

The intending bidders can visit the site before participating in the bid with proper permission from the Institute authorities.

No: ITI/Tral/Estt/2026/157-59
DIPK-4870/26
Dated 22-08-2026

(Er. G. N. Shah)
Superintendent
Industrial Training Institute
Tral Kashmir

DPHQ Udhampur

Dated: - 21.08.2026

No: - CB/Look Out Notice/2026/ 56629-40

LOOK OUT NOTICE

As requested by Dy.SP Hqrs. Udhampur that on 17.08.2026 it was learnt from reliable sources at PP Roun Domail (P/S Udhampur) that one un-identified dead body of male person is found lying at Dudhar Nallah, railway track near Kali Mata Mandir under suspicious circumstances. In order to ascertain the actual cause of death of the deceased, an inquest proceeding U/S 194 BNSS has been initiated by PP Roun Domail (P/S Udhampur) vide DDR No. 17 dated 17.08.2026 and enquiry initiated. The dead body of the deceased is kept at mortuary room of GMC Udhampur for identification/post-mortem. The Photograph with descriptive roll of deceased is as under:-

Photo	Description
	Age: About 22/23 years
	Complexion: Wheatish
	Height: 5'7"
	Wearing: Black Colour shirt & blue pant

It is therefore requested that, if any missing report of such person has been entered in your respective police units/jurisdiction or any clue leading to the identification of said deceased person, immediate information may kindly be shared on the below mentioned Telephone Nos./Fax/e-mail address for further course of action.

Email: sspoudh@ jkpolice.gov.in

Fax: 01992-270027

Phone: 01992-2270210

PCR Udhampur: 01992-276915

SHO P/S Udhampur: 9469707070

DIPK-4879/26
dated: 22-08-2026


SSP Udhampur.

The Trouble With Grand Ideas

Dostoevsky's fictional figure and Kashmir's most consequential political leader share a troubling lesson about the limits of certainty.



Mirza Gazanfar Ali

“
Raskolnikov's punishment ended in Siberian exile, a physical distance that matched his moral one. Abdullah's punishment took a subtler form, a diminished chair in a system he had once hoped to keep at arm's length.

There is a type of ruin that comes from believing your own good intentions are enough.

Dostoevsky spent an entire novel tracing that ruin through Raskolnikov, a young man who convinces himself that extraordinary purpose excuses an ordinary mistakes.

Kashmir's political history holds a subtler but no less instructive version of the same story, and its central figure is Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the leader who staked an entire region's future on the strength of his own conviction.

Raskolnikov's theory was seductive in its simplicity. He believed certain men stand outside conventional morality when their purpose is large enough, and he tested that belief by murdering an old pawnbroker for money he told himself would serve a greater good.

The guilt that followed proved impossible to outrun.

His confession, delivered first to Sonya and later to the police, became the only route back to something like a livable conscience.

Abdullah's decision held a different texture but a similar structure.

He threw his weight behind Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India in 1947, trusting his personal rapport with Jawaharlal Nehru and a shared belief in secular governance to protect Kashmiri Muslims over the long run.

Concrete, unalterable safeguards for the region's autonomy weighed less with him than the strength of that relationship and his own sense of what history would allow.



Pride played a part too, since consolidating his authority meant sidelining rivals like the Muslim Conference and the Maharaja along the way.

Central authorities began eroding Article 370 soon after, and by 1953 Abdullah found himself arrested by the state he had helped build, a consequence his earlier certainty had not accounted for.

What followed looked, on the surface, like redemption.

The Big Landed Estates Abolition Act of 1950, remembered locally as Land to the Tiller, transferred more than four and a half lakh acres from landlords to the peasants who worked them, with no compensation paid to the landlords who lost everything.

It was genuine economic justice, delivered at a scale few Indian states attempted. But it also functioned as something closer to cover.

A population grateful for land was a population less inclined to scrutinize how unsettled the legal footing of the accession itself had become.

The reform earned Abdullah decades of popular loyalty even as the political ground beneath Kashmir kept shifting.

That loyalty could not settle the deeper account.

Abdullah spent twenty-two years moving in and out of prison while leading the Plebiscite Front, known among Kashmiris as Mahaz-e-Rai-Shuri, pressing for the

self-determination his own earlier choice had made harder to reach.

Geopolitical reality proved unmovable during those years, and by 1974 he accepted terms that bore little resemblance to the vision he had once held.

The Indira-Sheikh Accord of that year functions as his confession, more restrained than Raskolnikov's but no less final.

He returned to power as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, a subordinate post within the Indian union, having once governed as Prime Minister of a state that considered itself autonomous.

Raskolnikov's punishment ended in Siberian exile, a physical distance that matched his moral one. Abdullah's punishment took a

subtler form, a diminished chair in a system he had once hoped to keep at arm's length.

Both men discovered that a grand theory, however sincerely held, eventually meets a bill someone has to pay.

The comparison breaks down at one crucial point, and it is worth sitting with.

Raskolnikov's act cost a single life, while Abdullah's decision helped set in motion decades of instability that Kashmir still lives inside today, a cycle of promise and disappointment that has outlasted the man who set it running.

Land to the Tiller did leave a lasting legacy, as rural poverty in Jammu and Kashmir stayed lower than in much of India for generations, but land reform could never replace constitutional safeguards, and the popularity Abdullah gained from it could only hide the deeper political loss for so long.

Leaders throughout the developing world keep repeating some version of Abdullah's act, mistaking personal conviction for institutional safeguard and treating good intentions as sufficient protection against a future they cannot control.

His story, set beside Dostoevsky's, leaves behind a lesson that has outlived them both.

Certainty without structure tends to collapse eventually, and when it does, the people who trusted that certainty are usually the ones left holding what remains.

—
The author is a Srinagar-based activist and can be reached at mirzagazanfarali@gmail.com.

The Diplomatic Din

Washington has not rewritten its Kashmir policy, but Gor's visit suggests that security and economic realities are gaining greater weight in America's view of the region.



Omkar Dattatray

Sergio Gor arrived in Jammu and Kashmir on August 19 as a diplomat, and left behind a political argument.

The U.S. ambassador to India came to meet Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, inspect the security apparatus and visit a region that senior American officials have largely avoided for decades.

His description of Jammu and Kashmir as an important part of India triggered a swift response from Islamabad, which summoned the American charge d'affaires and lodged a formal protest within hours.

Pakistan's reaction revealed the significance of the visit.

Islamabad has spent decades presenting Kashmir as an international dispute whose final status remains open. Its diplomatic campaign at the United Nations depends heavily on keeping foreign governments engaged with Kashmir as unfinished business.

Gor's visit presented a different picture. He sat with an elected chief minister and discussed tourism, education and economic cooperation as practical questions of governance and development.

That distinction has real consequences. Kashmir's political status can remain a subject of disagreement between governments while the daily reality of administration moves in another direction.

Elections, public institutions, infrastructure projects, tourism and foreign engagement create their own evidence about how a place functions.

Gor's presence in Srinagar placed that evidence before an influential foreign government in a way that diplomatic statements from New Delhi rarely can.

His comments on security added another dimension.

Gor credited New Delhi and the local administration with progress in stabilizing the region and raised the possibility that Washington could ease its long-standing travel advisory for Jammu and Kashmir.

Such an adjustment would reach well beyond

diplomatic language.

Travel advisories influence airline decisions, insurance calculations, foreign investment and the choices made by tourists.

A more favourable American assessment could encourage hotel bookings, business delegations and institutional visits that have remained limited since the insurgency of the 1990s.

Pakistan understands that practical change can weaken a political narrative.

A Kashmir presented primarily through violence leaves little room for tourism, investment, education or international business. An American ambassador praising its scenery, discussing economic cooperation and assessing its security situation presents a more complicated reality.

Tourists filling hotels, students attending colleges and elected officials meeting foreign diplomats give substance to that alternative picture.

The episode still falls short of an American policy shift.

Washington has issued no new policy paper on Kashmir, and one ambassador's words cannot erase decades of diplomatic caution.

Gor's visit, however, deserves attention precisely because of its setting.

He spoke in Srinagar during an official trip that also took him to Ladakh, placing Jammu and Kashmir within a broader American interest in South and Central Asian stability.

India should also resist the temptation to treat Gor's remarks as foreign validation. New Delhi's position ultimately stands on its own record.

Elections, infrastructure investment, security conditions, employment and economic growth will carry far greater weight over time than a visiting diplomat's sentence.

Foreign recognition can strengthen an existing reality, but it cannot create one.

The stakes are more immediate for Kashmiris than the diplomatic exchange suggests.

Three decades of militancy, curfews and conflict-focused international coverage have left deep political and economic scars. A senior American official speaking about tourism, education, investment and improved security introduces a different vocabulary into the conversation.

That shift will gain credibility only if daily life continues moving toward opportunity.

—
The author is a columnist, social and KP activist, and freelancer. He can be reached at onkoul2019@gmail.com.

Jobs at Stake

Allegations over jobs have exposed a larger test of Omar Abdullah's government: whether public confidence will rest on political assurances or an impartial examination of the facts.



Girdhari Lal Raina

The anger among Jammu and Kashmir's unemployed youth has reached a point where the government can no longer answer questions about recruitment with political dismissals.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah lately described allegations of corruption in recruitment process as "baseless," while the BJP has taken the issue to the streets.

The central question, however, lies beyond party politics: was merit followed in recent recruitment, or did influence enter the process?

That question calls for an impartial investigation.

A probe would give the government a chance to establish the integrity of its recruitment system and give applicants a credible account of what happened.

If the allegations prove false, the findings can settle the dispute. But if investigators uncover wrongdoing, those responsible can face the law.

A government confident about its process should welcome such scrutiny rather than treat questions as an attack on its authority.

The allegations extend beyond one selection exercise. They concern recruitment procedures, outsourcing of jobs and the apparent conflict of interest surrounding recent appointments under the sports category.

These issues strike directly at young people whose education and professional hopes depend heavily on public employment.

Recruitment holds an unusual public responsibility because a disputed selection can affect careers, families and confidence in institutions for years.

Omar Abdullah has argued that he does not directly control the police or investigative agencies. That distinction may

have constitutional significance, though it does not remove his responsibility as head of the government.

He can recommend an appropriate investigation and place its findings before the public. Political leadership begins with answering legitimate questions about the administration it heads.

The Chief Minister's own record makes the present debate especially sensitive.

The 2012 Jammu Kashmir Common Entrance Test scandal involved the leakage and sale of medical entrance papers and illegal admissions to MBBS courses during Abdullah's tenure as chief minister. The case later resulted in convictions.

The Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association case has also remained subject to investigation or judicial consideration.

Such episodes give the public ample reason to expect institutional scrutiny whenever serious allegations surface.



“
The allegations extend beyond one selection exercise. They concern recruitment procedures, outsourcing of jobs and the apparent conflict of interest surrounding recent appointments under the sports category.

Abdullah has also argued that political allegations should follow a formal complaint, registration of a case and investigation. That principle needs consistent application.

Chief Minister himself publicly accused legislators of horse-trading without waiting for a preliminary FIR before making those allegations.

A standard that permits political accusations from the chief minister should also permit political opponents to raise concerns about his government, provided the allegations then face proper investigation.

The government's five-year mandate creates another issue.

An electoral mandate gives a government time to govern, while accountability begins on the day that mandate is received. The National Conference manifesto promised to fill one lakh posts within one month of forming the government and introduce an Employment Act within three months. Those were specific commitments made to voters.

Abdullah has since suggested that issuing an election manifesto was a mistake while also invoking the five-year term as the period available to fulfil its promises. The contradiction needs a clear explanation.

Young people in Jammu and Kashmir are watching this exchange closely. They have little patience for arguments that turn questions about jobs into a contest between the BJP and the National Conference. Their concern is simpler: whether merit governs access to employment and whether institutions protect that principle.

The government can settle much of this dispute through one decision.

Order an impartial probe, publish its findings and act on them.

Political rhetoric can prolong an argument, while evidence can resolve it.

Jammu and Kashmir's youth have asked a direct question about their future. The government should answer with evidence.

—
The author is a former member of the Legislative Council of Jammu and Kashmir and spokesperson of BJP JK-UT. He can be reached at girdharraina@gmail.com.

A Rooster Under the Kashmiri Barber's Basket

An old Kashmiri circumcision ritual captures the ingenuity, intimacy and social importance of a profession that has nearly vanished.



Syed Nissar H Gilani

A woven willow basket, a frightened rooster beneath it, and a sharpened blade once formed an unlikely medical arrangement in Kashmir.

Before hospitals and local anaesthesia became commonplace, the village barber performed circumcision on infants using a method that now sounds almost surreal.

The child rested over a Kani Phout, while a rooster beneath the basket startled and fluttered when the procedure began.

Its cries distracted the child and covered some of the distress.

The bird, along with the basket in some families, became part of the barber's payment, accompanied by a small cash called Nazarana.

The scene tells us something larger than the ingenuity of an old procedure.

The Kashmiri Nai was once woven into the intimate life of a community. He cut hair, shaved heads, performed circumcisions and appeared at births, marriages and other family ceremonies. His work belonged as much to social life as to grooming.

The disappearance of that figure therefore marks a social change, rather than simply an occupational one.

Human grooming itself began as practical survival.

Stone Age people used flint, obsidian and sharp fragments of stone to cut hair that could obstruct vision, catch in vegetation or harbour parasites. Some used burning

embers to singe it.

Metalworking later turned grooming into a more developed practice. Ancient Egyptians used bronze razors and early shears, while Roman barbers eventually worked in public *tonstrinae*, where haircuts and shaving mixed with news and views.

South Asia and the Middle East gave the barber an even deeper social role.

Kashmir developed its own version of that institution, one that became particularly important as Islam took root in the valley.

Formal histories record the work of scholars and Sufi saints such as Mir Syed Ali Hamdani, known as Amir-e-Kabir, during the period when large numbers of Kashmiris embraced Islam. They tell us much less about the practical work that followed mass conversion.

Circumcision, or *Khutna*, became part of Muslim life, although the early local history of the practice remains poorly documented.

One plausible possibility is that barbers travelled among the learned men, artisans and craftspeople associated with Amir-e-Kabir and his wider cultural movement.

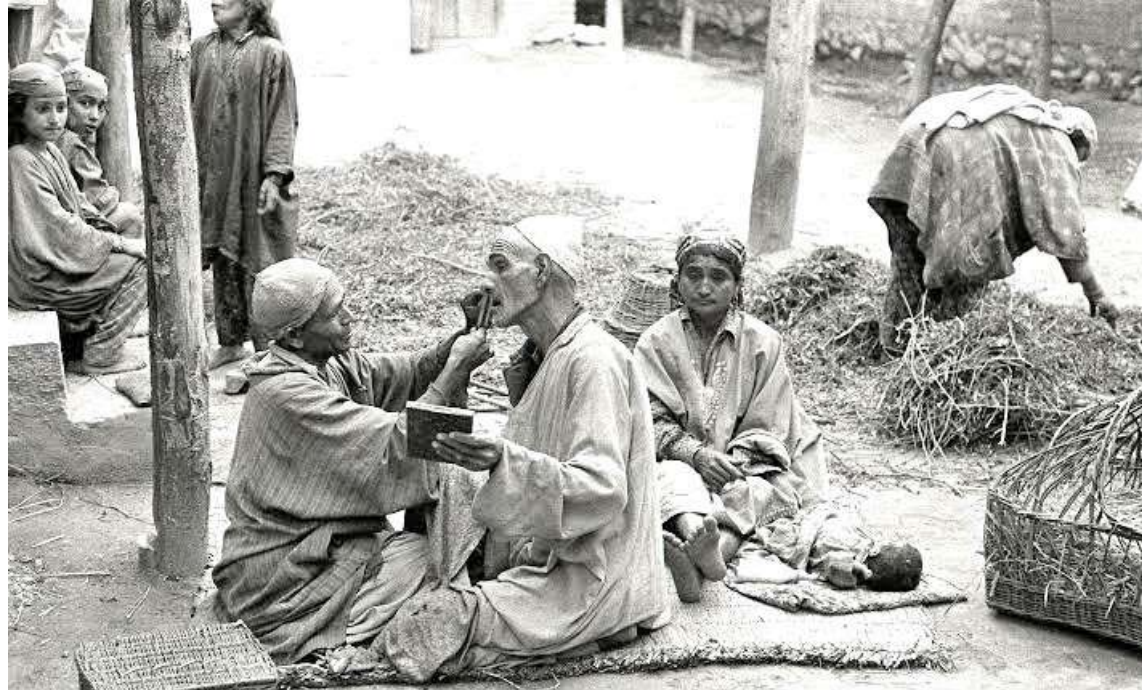
Such barbers could have performed circumcisions and taught local men the technique.

The record remains incomplete, and that gap itself reveals how much social history survives outside formal chronicles.

The old barber's work extended beyond circumcision. A newborn's first ceremonial head-shaving, known as *Zurr Kasun* or *Zurr u Kasney*, was another important occasion.

Families called the barber to perform the shave, and households with greater means marked the event with special food and family gatherings.

Circumcision held an even larger celebration. After the procedure, the boy wore new clothes and a turban and was presented as the *Khatan* Haji Mahraaz, the circumcised



THE OLD BARBER'S WORK EXTENDED BEYOND CIRCUMCISION. A newborn's first ceremonial head-shaving, known as *Zurr Kasun* or *Zurr u Kasney*, was another important occasion. Families called the barber to perform the shave, and households with greater means marked the event with special food and family gatherings.

groom.

Women from the family and neighbourhood gathered to sing *Wunwun*, turning an uncomfortable medical procedure into a communal ceremony.

Families with modest means

served steamed rice and local dishes. Wealthier households could host a full *Wazwan* for relatives and neighbours.

Medicine eventually changed this cultural scene, as hospitals, paediatric clinics and first-aid centres

started performing circumcision with sterile equipment and local anaesthesia.

The old home procedure has largely disappeared, and with it went a particular type of social theatre.

The change brought obvious medical advantages, while also moving a once communal practice into the clinical sphere.

The more complicated story concerns the barber himself.

Social stigma pushed many Kashmiri barbers to see their occupation as a mark of low status. Some families left the profession altogether. Some even changed the surname *Nayee* to *Hakim*, seeking the social prestige associated with medicine.

The irony runs deep because Islamic teaching places human beings on an equal social footing and rejects hereditary hierarchies of status.

Once local barbers began leaving the occupation, the valley still had customers who needed haircuts and grooming. Workers from other Indian states filled the void.

Their presence helped create the modern culture of unisex salons and beauty parlours now common in Kashmiri towns and cities.

These establishments belong to a different social economy, with new styles, services and expectations.

But something important was lost along the way.

The old barber knew families over generations. His leather pouch, his blades, his wicker basket and his presence at ceremonies placed him inside the ordinary architecture of community life. His occupation connected bodily care with kinship, celebration and custom.

Kashmiri barber therefore belongs to a history larger than hair.

The Nai stood beside the family at some of its most intimate thresholds, sometimes with a blade in his hand and a rooster beneath a basket.

That strange old arrangement has vanished, while the memory of the man who performed it still lies inside Kashmir's social history, waiting to be remembered.

— The author is a former civil servant from the administrative services. He can be reached at nisargilani57748@gmail.com.

The Kashmir I Knew Had a Red Atlas

A boy's first bicycle brings back a world of clay piggy banks, Lambretta rides, orchard lanes and hard-earned freedom.



Syed Majid Gilani

Somewhere in my childhood, a red Atlas bicycle became my first lesson in what Kashmir could give a child.

It gave me movement, responsibility and a sense of freedom.

Looking back, I also see something larger in that bicycle: a vanished version of Lalbazar, where orchard land remained open, traffic stayed sparse and children could ride through the streets without the city pressing in on them.

I was in the sixth standard when I began asking for a proper bicycle. My father had already bought me small tricycles and bicycles, and I had spent countless hours riding them. The next step seemed obvious to me.

I wanted a big bicycle, even though I had yet to learn how to balance one or set it moving.

I saved for it in the only way a child could. I had a small clay piggy bank, and coins gradually found their way into it.

One morning I took it to my grandfather, whom we called Abaji, and asked him to let me break it. He could have bought the bicycle himself. Instead, he let me use what I had saved.

Abaji picked up a small hammer. The clay broke, and coins and notes scattered around us.



I sorted the 10, 20, 25 and 50-paisa coins, along with the one-rupee coins, into little piles while Abaji counted the notes. The total came to about Rs 250.

That sum thrilled me because it represented patience in a form a child could understand. I had put aside small amounts until they became something substantial.

Abaji then took me by local bus towards a bicycle shop near Neelam Cinema. I still remember the cinema

hoardings and the big shop opposite them. It may have been Haji Amir Joo & Sons, though the name has faded from my memory.

The bicycle I chose was a medium-sized red Atlas. Its price was around Rs 850. My Rs 250 went into the purchase, and Abaji paid the remaining Rs 600.

Afterwards, he took me to a tea shop near his old office at Shaali Store, now occupied by the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs

department. We ate samosas and drank tea. He also bought me a lock.

That lock seems almost symbolic now. I had received something valuable, and I had to look after it.

A bigger challenge waited outside the shop. I had a bicycle, while the art of riding remained ahead of me.

Abaji held the handle and walked beside me as we made our way through the Eidgah side towards our home in Lalbazar. Somewhere on that journey, he bought me a pista

ice-cream bar for Rs 2, an extravagance for a child in those days.

When I reached home, I felt as if I had acquired a helicopter.

Papa had returned from work, and I told him proudly that he had always taken me around on his Lambretta scooter, while I could now go wherever I wanted on my own bicycle. He laughed and hugged me.

Within two or three days, my younger sister Yasmeen and I had learned to ride properly. The falls came soon enough. Cuts, bruises and blood became part of the education.

We got up, wiped ourselves and climbed back on.

That was how childhood taught us. A puncture meant attention, a loose chain called for repair, and broken brakes brought a scolding.

Parents paid for the repairs, and we learned to take better care of what we owned. The lesson came through experience.

That was part of the Kashmir I remember. Childhood was tied closely to family, money, streets and simple things we learned to protect. A bicycle gave us responsibility and freedom at the same time.

The red Atlas is gone now, so is its little lock. The orchards around Lalbazar have disappeared, and the streets where we rode have changed.

Still, I remember the Rs 250 I saved, Abaji's Rs 600, Papa's laughter, Yasmeen riding beside me, the samosas, the pista ice cream, the falls and the repairs. They all belong to that red bicycle.

To a boy in the sixth standard, it was my little helicopter. To me today, it is a memory of a Kashmir where childhood still had room to roam.

— The author is a government officer by profession and a storyteller by passion. He can be reached at syedmajid6676@gmail.com.

To a boy in the sixth standard, it was my little helicopter. To me today, it is a memory of a Kashmir where childhood still had room to roam.

Govt Restricts Cold Medicine Combinations For Children Below 4

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The government has restricted the manufacture, sale and distribution of all fixed dose combinations containing Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Phenylephrine Hydrochloride, directing manufacturers to carry a warning that the medicines should not be used in children below four years of age.

The latest notification extends an earlier restriction issued in April 2025 to all formulations containing the two ingredients.

The decision followed recommendations of an expert committee and the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), which examined the safety of such combinations for young children.

The government said the use of these combinations may pose risks to children below four years of age and

noted that safer alternatives are available.

Manufacturers have been directed to prominently display the warning, "Fixed Dose Combination shall not be used in children below four years of age", on the label, package insert and promotional literature associated with the formulations.

The notification has been issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and came into effect from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

The government had earlier, through a notification dated April 15, 2025, restricted certain fixed dose combinations containing Chlorpheniramine Maleate and Phenylephrine Hydrochloride, subject to the same age-specific warning.

The latest order extends the requirement to all formulations containing the two ingredients.

J&K Custodial-death Case

Excessive Force Can't be Used Against Citizens: Armed Forces Tribunal

Press Trust Of India

Chandigarh: The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) has upheld a "severe displeasure" censure awarded to a former Rashtriya Rifles sector commander over the December 2023 custodial deaths of three civilians in Dera Ki Gali in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

It has also held that excessive force cannot be used against civilians.

"Excessive force was used in violation of the law. It was, thus, a failure of command and control function. Failure to stop use of excessive force and failure to pass clear directions were the direct fallout thereof," the order of the tribunal read.

"The troops involved in follow-up operations face a dilemma. Having lost their brothers in arms and that too in a brutal manner, makes their blood boil and development of emotions of revenge is quite natural. On the other hand is discipline, instilled by rigorous training, commanding them

to exercise restraint and scrupulously follow plans to trace the culprits. Even in war, the Indian soldier is known for his discipline and adherence to the Geneva Conventions is the rule," the order said.

The tribunal, however, has directed authorities not to maintain a record of the punishment on the officer's file as the two-year penalty period has elapsed and ceased to be operative.

Dismissing the plea of Brigadier Padmasambhava Acharya, the tribunal held that even under intense emotional provocation following the loss of comrades in counter-insurgency operations, human emotions must yield to military discipline, constitutional mandates and strict human rights safeguards.

However, while addressing the specific policy provisions governing military censures, the tribunal directed the authorities not to maintain a record of the disciplinary action on the officer's administrative

file, treating it as an exception limited strictly to the facts of the case.

"This is a direction based on the facts of the instant case only and is not to be treated as a precedent or an exposition of the law," the tribunal said in its order that was passed recently.

It referred to the defence ministry's policy dated October 30, 2023, which stipulates that while a censure awarded to an officer typically remains part of his administrative record for 10 years, to be shared with selection and promotion boards, a "Severe Displeasure" issued by a corps commander remains operative for a maximum period of two years.

Noting that the censure awarded to Brigadier Acharya on July 8, 2024, had completed its two-year period and ceased to be operative, the tribunal ordered that the record of the punishment should not be retained, while clarifying that the directive was based solely on the specific circumstances of the case and would not serve as

a legal precedent.

The case relates to an operation launched on December 21, 2023, when a military convoy was ambushed near Dera Ki Gali (DKG), leaving four soldiers dead. The bodies of two of the dead soldiers were also mutilated. In the subsequent search operations, sub-units rounded up local civilian suspects for questioning to gather actionable intelligence.

During interrogation at the Company Operating Base in Mastan Dhara, three civilian suspects succumbed to their injuries. A Court of Inquiry convened by HQ 16 Corps led to administrative action against Brig. Acharya, the then commander of 13 Sector RR, for failing to exercise proper command and control, improper handling of civilians and failing to prevent excessive force.

Challenging the two-year censure issued by the general officer commanding of 16 Corps, the officer had argued that senior commanders, including the corps commander

and the GOC of counter-insurgency force "Romeo", were present at the DKG control room during the operations and should share responsibility. He had also contended that the corps commander had acted as a judge in his own cause.

Rejecting these arguments, the tribunal clarified the operational hierarchy of field forces, ruling that direct command and control over ground operations rests with the commanding officer and the sector commander. Higher commanders visiting forward control rooms to gain situational awareness do not exercise micro-level executive control over sub-unit tactical interrogations.

Citing landmark Supreme Court verdicts, the bench reiterated that internal-security duties require a distinct approach from conventional warfare, emphasising that Army guidelines strictly prohibiting physical force or third-degree methods during interrogation are legally-binding orders that must be scrupulously followed.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Power Bills

is expected to raise revenue to 7,854.94 crore.

The Commission said a revenue gap of 2,922.85 crore remained under the existing tariff structure. Of this, 2,420.78 crore is to be met through government subsidy and grant-in-aid, leaving a gap of around 502 crore.

The JERC said the government's financial support had helped contain the impact on consumers. It noted that meeting the entire revenue gap through tariff alone would have required a hike of around 40 per cent, which would have resulted in a "tariff shock".

The revised order also covers industrial consumers, EV charging stations, government departments, railway traction, bulk supply and temporary connections. The Green Power Tariff has been retained at 0.50 per kWh over and above the applicable category tariff.

The Commission has also approved the Business Plan and Multi-Year Tariff framework for KPDCCL and JPDCCL for 2026-27 to 2028-29.

The JERC directed KPDCCL and JPDCCL to take immediate steps for implementation of the revised tariff order.

Tariff Hike Puts

people, saying the National Conference had sought votes on the promise of providing 200 units of free electricity to every household.

"The NC government promised 200 units of free electricity to every household. But instead of fulfilling that commitment, people are now facing an increase in electricity tariffs. This is not relief; it is a betrayal of the trust placed in the government," Sharma said.

He said the increase would add to the burden on families already dealing with inflation and rising household expenses. Sharma said the BJP would continue to raise the issue and hold the NC-led government accountable for its election commitments.

Peoples Conference president Sajad Gani Lone also termed the tariff revision a "shock", particularly for consumers who had been promised 200 units of free electricity.

Lone said in a post on X that nearly two years had passed since the Assembly elections but consumers had not received any benefit under the free-power promise.

He further alleged that the government had increased the load in non-metered areas, resulting in higher monthly electricity bills.

NC Lok Sabha MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi also criticised the hike, saying it contradicted the promises made by the party ahead of the elections.

Ruhullah referred to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's earlier remarks on electricity meters and questioned the decision to raise tariffs instead of providing the promised 200 free units.

PDP MLA from Pulwama Waheed Ur Rehman Parra said the hike came at a time when unemployment and inflation were already putting pressure on ordinary families.

"At a time when unemployment is at a peak, inflation is biting hard and ordinary families are struggling to make ends meet, the government has imposed a 6.83 per cent power tariff hike," Parra said in a post on X.

He also questioned the NC government over its election promises of 200 units of free electricity, free gas and free ration.

Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari said the tariff hike would further burden people already facing economic difficulties.

Meanwhile, the Kashmir Trade Alliance (KTA) opposed the increase, warning that higher electricity costs could put additional pressure on traders and businesses.

The traders' body said the hike could have wider economic repercussions for the business community, which is already facing rising operational costs.

The JERC has approved an average 6.83 per cent increase in retail electricity tariffs for the Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited and Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited for 2026-27. The revised rates will remain applicable from September 1, 2026, to March 31, 2027.

IIM Jammu

had come a long way from its modest

beginnings with 56 students on a temporary campus on Canal Road a decade ago to becoming a nationally recognised and internationally engaged management institution.

"A decade ago, IIM Jammu began with 56 students and a temporary campus on Canal Road. Today, it stands among India's most dynamic, internationally engaged business schools," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the next decade should be driven by the same ambition and urged the institute to develop its own academic strengths instead of merely replicating models followed by established global business schools.

He called for greater emphasis on case studies rooted in Indian enterprise, particularly the logistical and entrepreneurial challenges specific to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Sinha also stressed the need for experiential learning, saying every student should undertake a tangible project before graduation through entrepreneurship initiatives, policy challenges or engagement with local businesses.

"Real examinations take place in corporate boardrooms, markets and in life itself, where the data is often incomplete, stakeholders have differing opinions and there is no teacher to provide readymade answers," he said.

He urged IIM Jammu to focus its research on border economies, sustainable development and frontier entrepreneurship, areas where he said the institute was uniquely positioned to contribute.

"IIM Jammu must ask itself what can be done in the fields of administration, sustainable development and entrepreneurship in the economies of border areas," Sinha said.

He also called for placements to be viewed as a nation-building exercise, expressing hope that IIM Jammu graduates would go on to reshape major companies and establish leading enterprises.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the institute's academic and research growth, noting that it is now the fifth IIM in the country to hold both AMBA and EFMD accreditation and has developed academic partnerships with institutions across several countries.

He said the institute's research output had grown from two published papers in 2017 to nearly 350 this year.

Sinha credited the faculty, Board of Governors and Director Professor B.S. Sahay for the institute's growth and said its achievements could serve as a model for other business schools.

"Great institutions are great because, when the nation faces difficult questions, it looks to them for answers," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor released seven coffee-table books of IIM Jammu.

Padma Shri Dr Milind Pralhad Kamble, Chairman, Board of Governors, IIM Jammu, former BoG chairman Sriram Dandekar, BoG member Anand Kripalu, Director Prof B.S. Sahay, Operating Partner at Advent International S Shivakumar, vice chancellors of various universities, faculty members, students and senior civil and police officials were present.

'Judicial Insensitivity

observed that the petitioner was acting as a concerned father under a mutually agreed written compromise dated January 25, 2025.

The agreement stipulated that custody would switch to the father if the mother remarried. Following the respondent's recent remarriage, the father's custody could not be prima facie branded as wrongful confinement or illegal custody, the court said.

Justice Bharti criticised the lower court for issuing an ex-parte search warrant without inviting the father's response or examining the facts "inside out".

The High Court said sending police to a father's home showed judicial insensitivity, noting that if recovery of the child was necessary, well-meaning measures or a Women Police Cell should have been engaged instead of directing the local police station.

The bench also questioned whether a Family Court has the authority under Section 7 of the Family Courts Act, 1984, to exercise powers under Section 100 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.

Justice Bharti noted that powers to issue search warrants under Section 100 of the BNSS are vested in District Magistrates, Sub-Divisional Magistrates or First-Class Magistrates, and not Family Courts.

NIA Conducts

terrorists allegedly linked to the conspiracy were arrested, while the identities and alleged roles of members of the local support network were also established, the agency said.

The investigation has so far indicated alleged links between Pakistan-based handlers and local associates who were allegedly being used for communication, logistical arrangements, movement and concealment of terrorists, shelter, reconnaissance and other forms of facilitation, it said.

The probe is also examining the financial trail, communication channels, movement of the accused and the source of arms and explosives to establish the full network and the extent of its activities.

The NIA said evidence relevant to the investigation had been secured during Saturday's searches and was being examined and

corroborated with other material collected in the case.

The searches form part of the continuing investigation into the larger conspiracy and the alleged mechanism used to facilitate cross-border terrorism, the agency said.

The NIA is continuing its investigation to identify all persons allegedly involved and ascertain their respective roles. Further legal action, including arrests or recoveries, may follow depending on the outcome of the probe, it added.

NIA Court Denies

(Prevention) Act (UAPA) also applied to Jan, preventing her release on bail at this stage.

Jan, a resident of Harkipora village in Pulwama district, was arrested along with her father Peer Tariq Ahmad Shah on March 3, 2020. She is facing trial under the Ranbir Penal Code, UAPA, Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act.

The court had framed charges against her on December 10, 2022.

According to the NIA chargesheet, Jan was allegedly involved in the terror conspiracy and remained in contact with Pakistani Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists Muhammad Umar Farooq and Mohd Kamran Ali, who were allegedly involved in planning the Pulwama attack.

She is also accused of providing food, shelter and other logistical support to the terrorists and other JeM operatives.

The NIA further alleged that a video of suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar, which surfaced after the February 14, 2019 attack, was recorded at Jan's house on January 28 and 29.

The defence had sought bail citing Jan's prolonged incarceration, alleged delay in the trial and her health condition. It submitted that she had remained in custody for more than six years and that 49 of 240 prosecution witnesses had been examined at the relevant stage.

The defence also claimed that the witnesses examined so far had not directly or indirectly connected Jan with the offences and that no incriminating material had been recovered from her.

Opposing the plea, the NIA said Jan and her father had provided safe shelter, food and other logistical support to JeM terrorists at their house.

The agency also relied on communications between Jan and Farooq, including WhatsApp calls, voice notes and photographs recovered from his mobile phone after his death.

The court held that there was sufficient evidence to presume that the accusations against Jan were prima facie true, attracting the restrictions under Section 43-D(5) of the UAPA.

It also rejected the argument that prolonged

incarceration and delay in trial warranted bail, noting that the trial was underway and witnesses were being examined.

The court observed that her release could create a possibility of her influencing key witnesses and hampering the trial.

On her health condition, the court said it did not warrant bail, observing that the ailments cited were not life-threatening, while directing the jail authorities to ensure that she received necessary medical care.

The court clarified that its observations while deciding the bail application would not affect the merits of the main criminal trial.

Rain Brings Brief

no rainfall. Between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm, Pahalgam received 4 mm, Srinagar 0.6 mm and Jammu 0.3 mm.

The MeT forecast mostly fine weather for August 23, with a possibility of thundershowers at a few places during the morning and afternoon. A short-duration shower is possible at a few places on August 24, with similar conditions likely on August 25 and from August 26 to 28, mainly during the afternoon.

From August 23 to 28, the overall weather is expected to remain largely hot and humid, with brief spells of rain and thundershowers at scattered places.

Another spell of light to moderate rain and thundershowers is likely at scattered to many places from August 29 to 31, with brief intense showers particularly possible in parts of the Jammu division.

The MeT cautioned that localised heavy rainfall could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides in vulnerable areas.

"Risk of high-intensity showers will continue. As such, flash floods are possible in a few spots," the department said, advising people to exercise caution during periods of intense rainfall.

Farmers have been advised to continue harvesting and other agricultural activities according to local weather conditions.

The department also advised orchardists to undertake spraying preferably during morning hours. In hilly areas, spraying should ideally be completed by late morning or noon to reduce the risk of showers developing during the afternoon.

In the plains, spraying may be extended into the afternoon if required, while farmers in hilly areas have been advised to complete the activity by late morning and, where possible, in installments.

The MeT said mostly dry conditions are expected over much of the coming week, although intermittent showers and the possibility of high-intensity rainfall at isolated locations will continue.



The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets. Kashmir Observer, with 29 years of experience in news gathering is now available 24x7 on all digital platforms like laptops, cell phones or via Bluetooth on your smart TV's across the world. Kashmir Observer is a one stop information bank for you. Watch live debates, talk shows and documentaries on critical issues facing Kashmir on KO youtube channel.

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OR SCAN



Modern Apple Grading, Packing Technology Brings Better Returns for Growers

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The growing adoption of modern apple grading and packing technology across Kashmir is bringing a significant change to the region's traditional fruit trade, with growers reporting better returns, improved quality control and more efficient post-harvest handling of their produce.

Horticulture remains one of the main pillars of Kashmir's rural economy, with thousands of farming families depending on apple cultivation either directly or through allied activities such as packaging, transportation, storage, trading and labour. However, despite producing large quantities of apples, growers have for years struggled to realise the full value of their produce, particularly because of inconsistent grading, packaging and quality standards.

Stakeholders in the industry believe the introduction of modern grading lines could help address several of these longstanding challenges. The technology enables apples to be mechanically sorted



according to size, quality and other parameters before they are packed, allowing growers and traders to present a more uniform product in the market.

Several modern grading facilities have now been established at different locations in the Valley, with some units coming up with government assistance. While such technology was earlier largely associated with large cold-storage and controlled-atmosphere facilities, its increasing availability at smaller and localised units is making mechanised grading accessible to a wider section of growers.

The shift is also expected to reduce the time and labour involved in traditional manual sorting and packing. More systematic han-

dling can help minimise damage to fruit, improve presentation and ensure that apples of similar quality are packed together, factors that can influence buyers and market prices.

"With modern grading lines, apples are sorted and packed in a much more organised manner. The fruit reaches the market in better condition and in less time. Properly graded and well-packed apples naturally attract buyers and can help farmers get better prices," Basit Ahmad, a grading-line unit holder in Pulwama, told KNO.

Growers and entrepreneurs associated with the sector said the benefits extend beyond the farm gate. Improved grading and packing are creating demand for skilled and

semi-skilled workers while also generating business for transporters, packaging suppliers, traders and other people associated with the horticulture supply chain.

Azhar Ahmad, owner of a cold-storage facility, said the difference between conventional and modern packing methods was becoming increasingly visible. "Earlier, growers had to depend largely on manual sorting and packing. It consumed considerable time and labour, while maintaining uniform quality was difficult. With grading lines, the process has become faster, more systematic and efficient," he said.

He added that the lack of adequate grading infrastructure had previously put Kashmir's growers at a disadvantage compared to producers in other parts of the country.

"For a long time, Kashmir was behind in terms of modern grading and packing facilities. Even when the quality of the fruit was good, inconsistent grading and packaging affected its market value. With more such units being established, that gap is gradually narrowing," Ahmad said.

Ruhullah Says NC Diluted Fight for Constitutional Rights



Agencies

SRINAGAR: National Conference (NC) Member Parliament (MP) Aga Ruhullah Mehdi on Saturday questioned his party leadership over its approach towards Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional rights, saying the party had given him a mandate to fight for those rights but was now asking him to resign for continuing the same fight. He challenged the leadership to issue him a show-cause notice if he had violated its ideology or stand.

Addressing reporters here, Ruhullah, as reported by KNO, said the party leadership should follow a formal process if it believed he had violated the party's ideology. "They are failing to face accountability. I ask them, why are we not able to fight, why are we not able to follow the principles we have promised people? I get the answer from them: resign," he said.

"If they want me to resign, at least they should issue a show-cause notice. They should ask me, 'You have violated the ideology of the party in various

places... you have violated the stand of the party,'" Ruhullah said, adding that he is ready to answer any such notice.

The Srinagar MP questioned the party's present political approach, alleging that it had diluted the larger fight for constitutional rights. "We have taken votes from the people. They are missing there. They have weakened the fight themselves. They have diluted it," he said. "Instead of 370, instead of constitutional rights and guarantees, they have come to statehood and business rules," he said.

Mehdi said his position was based on the mandate received from the people and not on any personal political interest. "If I wanted to deceive people, I would have changed my language. I am fighting to implement that mandate," he said, adding that he had received a people's mandate in addition to the party ticket.

Ruhullah said he had pursued the issue of constitutional guarantees both inside and outside Parliament, including through political advocacy and engagement with opposition parties. "For that, I have strived in Parliament, outside Parliament, on the streets, in Constitution Club, Jantar Mantar. I have tried lobbying with other political parties," he said.

GMC Employees Suspend Protest after Health Minister's Assurance on Recruitment Rules

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Coordinating Committee representing non-gazetted employees of the five newly established Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) of Jammu and Kashmir has decided to temporarily suspend its ongoing peaceful protest following the intervention and written assurance of Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo that the final Model Recruitment Rules for non-gazetted employees will be framed and published by September 30, 2026.

The decision comes after nearly a week of agitation by employees, who had launched their indefinite peaceful protest on August 17, seeking finalisation of recruitment rules governing their service conditions, recruitment, promotions and other related matters.

According to KNO, the employees welcomed the framing process of the final Model

Recruitment Rules and said they were suspending the protest in the larger interest of patients, students, medical education and uninterrupted healthcare services.

The issue came up for detailed discussion after Health Minister Sakina Itoo invited representatives of non-gazetted employees of the five new GMCs for a meeting on August 20. The meeting, chaired by the Health Minister on August 21, was attended by senior officials, including the Commissioner Secretary, ARI & Trainings; Additional Secretary, Health and Medical Education; Director Finance, HME; Under Secretary, HME; and representatives of the concerned Government Medical Colleges.

During the meeting, the minister directed the concerned authorities to finalise and publish a Model Recruitment Rule applicable uniformly to all the newly established Government Medical Colleges.

Dr Touseef Raises Alarm Over Anchar Lake's Deteriorating Condition

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Environmentalist and Kashmir Concern chairman Dr Touseef Ahmed has urged urgent intervention to save Anchar Lake, raising concerns over increasing pollution, encroachment and ecological degradation of the water body.

Dr Touseef submitted a memorandum to M.Y. Tarigami, Chairman of the House Committee on Environment of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, highlighting the deteriorating condition of the lake.

He said pollution, waste accumulation, shrinking water channels and encroachments posed a serious threat to Anchar Lake's fragile ecosystem, biodiversity and the surrounding communities.

Dr Touseef called for coordinated action by the concerned departments, including scientific res-



toration of the lake, removal of encroachments, prevention of sewage and solid-waste discharge, restoration of water channels and regular monitoring. He also stressed the need to involve local communities in conservation efforts.

Tarigami assured him that the concerns would receive due attention and that all possible measures would be taken for the protection of the lake.

Dr Touseef said Anchar Lake was an important part of Kashmir's ecological heritage and required urgent and sustained collective action for its restoration and protection.

Enrollment Rises in 106 Government Degree Colleges

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Phase-I of undergraduate admissions to the Government Degree Colleges of Jammu and Kashmir for the academic session 2026-27 has concluded with 47,150 candidates admitted, as against about 40,800 in the corresponding phase of the preceding session — an increase of about 16 per cent. Of these, 35,040 candidates were admitted through direct allocation and 12,110 through the walk-in mode.

Admissions were conducted on the basis of 10+2 merit through the Centralised Admission Portal, jkadmissions.in, developed in-house by the Directorate of Colleges, J&K. The portal placed a single Union Territory-wide merit list before every candidate, allowed continuous upgradation of the allotted seat through successive rounds, managed the migration of fee automatically, and enabled a meritorious candidate from any part of the Union Territory to compete for a seat in the programme of their choice. The entire process, from registration to payment, was completed online by the candidate.

As per the statement of Dr. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director Colleges, J&K, merit at every stage—whether allocation of college or allotment of Major, Minor, Multidisciplinary, and Skill Enhancement Courses—was the bedrock of the en-

tire admission process. He stated that 106 colleges recorded a rise in enrollment over the preceding session and most other colleges have retained their enrollment figures. This is a remarkable achievement in view of the national trend of declining enrollments across subject domains in higher education.

The Department of Higher Education, J&K, achieved this milestone under the visionary leadership of the Minister for Education, Saakeena Itoo. Her consistent reviews and directives that the admission process be conducted transparently, strictly on merit, and as per student convenience, gave the Department clear direction and confidence.

Decisive leadership by Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department, ensured the admission timeline remained on schedule throughout. His confidence in the Directorate empowered the team to fulfill its mandate and deliver these visible outcomes.

The dedication of college Principals, Admission coordinators, and verifiers ensured seamless execution on campus. Ultimately, strong student feedback regarding the quality teaching imparted by our hard-working faculty served as the biggest draw for prospective applicants—far outperforming traditional publicity.

MPs, MLAs Call on CM Omar at Raabita



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A number of public representatives, industrial representatives today called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at Raabita office here and discussed various matters of public importance.

Rajya Sabha MPs Chowdhary Mohammad Ramzan and Gurwinder Singh Oberoi called on the Chief Minister and discussed various matters of public importance.

MLAs Zafar Ali Khatana from Kokernag and Choudhary Mohd. Akram from Surankote also called on the Chief Minister and apprised him of various issues and matters pertaining to their respective constituencies.

President of the Federa-

tion Chamber of Industries, Kashmir (FCIK), Shahid Kamili, former FCIK President Shakeel Qalander and FCIK General Secretary Afaq Ahmad also called on the Chief Minister. During the meeting, the delegation raised key issues concerning the industrial sector and discussed measures to strengthen local production, support enterprises and boost economic activity across Jammu & Kashmir.

Several other individuals and delegations called on the chief minister and appraised him of several issues and grievances.

The Chief Minister heard the delegations and representatives and discussed the issues raised during the meetings.

Two Injured in Separate Bear Attacks in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Two people, including a 65-year-old woman, were injured in separate wild bear attacks in south and north Kashmir on Saturday, officials said.

In the first incident, a 65-year-old woman was attacked by a wild bear in Darpora Khundoor village of Achabal in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

The injured woman was identified as Mubeena Banoo, wife of late Mohammad Maqbool Mantoo and a resident of Darpora. She was shifted to Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag for treatment, officials said.

In a separate incident, a 50-year-old man was mauled by a wild bear in the Chaliwan Chittaybandy area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The man sustained injuries in the attack, following which officials from the Wildlife Department rushed to the area and installed a cage to trap the animal. Efforts are underway to trace and capture the bear, officials said, adding that investigations into both incidents have been initiated.

Man Found Dead in Ramgarh Field

SAMBA: The body of a man was found lying in a field at Keso village in the Ramgarh area of Samba district on Saturday, officials said.

An official told KNO that police reached the spot and took the body into custody.

The deceased was identified as Balkar Singh, a resident of Barota Camp, Ramgarh, he said.

Meanwhile, police have initiated an investigation into the incident—(KNO)

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE SRINAGAR

ADVERTISEMENT NOTIFICATION NO. 02 (TWO) DATED: 22-08-2026

Subject:- Filling up of the vacancies of Class IVth posts.

Offline applications are invited on the prescribed format, attached to this advertisement Notice as Annexure 'A' from the eligible candidates of UT of Jammu & Kashmir for filling up of vacancies of Class-IVth posts in the Courts of District Srinagar. The details with regard to Category & Number of posts, Pay level, Educational Qualification, Reservation, etc are as under;

Total Number of Posts: 17 (Seventeen).

S. No	Name of the Post	Minimum Educational qualification	OM	SC	ST1	ST2	RBA	OBC	EWS	ALC	TOTAL NO. OF POSTS
01	Process Server (19900-63100)	10+2	01	X	01	X	X	X	X	X	02
02	Orderly, Chowkidar (14800-47100)	10th Pass	08	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	15

Note:

A. The vacancy Position may increase or decrease depending upon the actual Availability of vacancies at the time of making final selection.

B. Candidates who had already applied under notification No. 04 of 2024 dated 16.05.2024 for the said posts need not to apply afresh.

Eligibility.

I) Educational Qualification:

- a) For the posts of Process server, the candidate must have passed 10+2 examination from any recognised Board.
- b) For the post Orderlies, Chowkidar the candidate must have passed 10th (Matric) examination from any recognised Board.

II) Domicile:

The candidate should be resident of UT of Jammu & Kashmir possessing a domicile certificate in terms of Notification issued by the General Administration Department of UT of J&K vide S.O. 166 dated 18.05.2020.

III) Age:

The requirement of age as on 01-01-2026 for open merit and various reserved categories is as under.

S.No	Category	Maximum age limit	Not born before	Not born after
01	OM	40 Years	01-01-1986	01-01-2008
02	RBA	43 Years	01-01-1983	01-01-2008
03	SC	43 Years	01-01-1983	01-01-2008
04	ST	43 Years	01-01-1983	01-01-2008
05	OBC	43 years	01-01-1983	01-01-2008
06	EWS	43 Years	01-01-1983	01-01-2008
07	ALC/IB	43 Years	01-01-1983	01-01-2008

IV). The application forms for the aforementioned posts can be obtained from the office of Principal District & Sessions Judge Srinagar during office hours from 24th of August 2026 till 22nd of September, 2026 The application forms can be downloaded from the official website of District Court Srinagar (<https://srinagar.dcourts.gov.in>). If a candidate intends to apply for two or more posts, he/she shall apply separately for each post.

V). The duly filled up application forms shall be submitted in the office of Principal District 8& Sessions Judge, Srinagar (Administrative Section) during office hours and no application form shall be accepted after the cut off date i.e 22nd of September 2026. In case of applications submitted through Registered Post, the last date for submission shall be 25th of September, 2026. Application forms submitted other than the offline mode shall not be accepted.

Application forms shall be supported with the self attested copies of the following documents.

- a) Qualification/Marks Certificate
- b) Date of Birth Certificate (Matriculate)
- c) Domicile certificate
- d) Category Certificate (if any)
- VII) A candidate shall have to deposit fee of ₹300/- (Rupees. Three Hundred only) in the shape of Demand Draft from J&K Bank Ltd. Favouring Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar.

VIII) Qualification acquired after the last date of submission of application form shall not be taken into consideration.

IX) In-service candidates can route their application forms through proper channel.

X) Mode of selection. The selection for the said posts shall be made on the basis of merit obtained in interview/Viva Voce only.

XI) The reservation for various categories would be determined as per the provisions of S.O. 176 dated 15.03.2024 and S.O 305 dated 21.05.2024.

XII) No TA/DA shall be paid to the candidates for the aforesaid interview/Viva Voce.

XIII) The eligible candidates shall have to appear in the interview/Viva Voce on the date/s notified separately. No separate call letters shall be issued individually, however wide publicity shall be given through print and electronic media and official website (<https://srinagar.dcourts.gov.in>) of the court about venues, date of interview for the information of eligible candidates. The aspiring candidates on their own interest are impressed upon to keep track by visiting the aforementioned official website of District Court Srinagar. No claim of being unaware of the schedule dates for the interview shall be entertained.

No.4471-78/PDJS/Adm Dated: 22-08-26

(Haq Nawaz Zargar)
Pr. District Sessions Judge,
Srinagar

Annexure-A
APPLICATION FORM FOR FILLING OF CLASS Vth POSTS IN DISTRICT JUDICIARY SRINAGAR
Advertisement Notification No: _____ Date: _____
Name of the Post: _____
Name of the candidate: _____
(in Block Letters)
Fathers Name: _____
(in Block Letters)
Date of Birth (as per the matriculation certificate) ____/____/____
Permanent Address: _____
Village: _____ Tehsil: _____
District: _____ Pin code: _____
Present postal Address: _____

Contact details: Mobile No: _____ e-mail: _____
Reservation Category (if any): _____
Whether the candidate is the domicile of UT of J&K: Yes ☐ No ☐
Qualification details:

S. No	Qualification	Marks obtained	Board	Remarks

Documents Annexed:
a) Qualification Certificate. Yes ☐ No ☐
b) Date of Birth Certificate. Yes ☐ No ☐
c) Domicile certificate issued by the competent authority. Yes ☐ No ☐
e) Reservation Certificate Yes ☐ No ☐
Payment details:
Draft No: _____ Bank/Branch Name: _____
Dated: _____ Amount: _____
Declaration by the Candidate:
I hereby declare that the entries in this application form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. In case of any misrepresentation of facts or concealment of information, I shall be liable for cancellation of my candidature without any notice.
Signature of the candidate _____

Paste Your Photograph Here

Iran Declares Victory, Signals New Regional Order

Trans Asia News

DUBAI: Iran has declared that the world has effectively accepted its victory in the nearly six-month war with the United States, as Tehran signalled that a dramatic geopolitical realignment may be underway across the Middle East.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran was in a position of "power and dignity" and argued that the war should now end, claiming that Tehran had withstood military pressure, retained control over the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz and refused to bow to US demands.

His remarks came amid mounting international concern over the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz and reports that regional and European powers, including France and Saudi Arabia, are exploring alternatives to bypass the crucial maritime route.

"The entire world approved our victory and the US is hated," Pezeshkian was quoted as saying by Iran's official IRNA news agency.

For Tehran, the definition of victory appears increasingly clear: Iran has survived the conflict, maintained its political system, resisted Washington's demands and retained leverage over one of the world's most important energy chokepoints.

The Iranian president said the war should be brought to an end now rather than prolonged.

"It is better to end the war today, when we are in a position of power and dignity, when the whole world acknowledges our victory," he said, accusing the United States of attacking Iranian schools, hospitals and infrastructure in violation of international law.

'No Clause of Surrender'

Pezeshkian also strongly defended the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, describing it as an "honorable and valuable" outcome of negotiations and rejecting criticism that Iran had surrendered or made major concessions.

"They cannot find even a single clause in this agreement that indicates surrender," he said, insisting that Tehran had not compromised its fundamental position.



Pezeshkian says Tehran has emerged from six months of war with 'power and dignity'; Qalibaf reveals neighbouring states are sending proposals for new security and economic arrangements

He said the agreement had been approved by Iran's Supreme National Security Council and had been firmly defended by officials directly involved in the negotiations. But Pezeshkian made clear that any diplomatic understanding should not be mistaken for weakness.

"Of course, none of this means that if they want to attack us, we will surrender. These are two separate issues," he said.

"We will under no circumstances bow to bullying," he added, warning that Iran would continue to resist and respond forcefully to any fresh attack.

Iranian military commanders and armed forces, he said, remained fully prepared to defend the country, while national unity would remain essential in confronting external pressure.

Trump Unleashes 'Economic D-Day'

The Iranian declaration of victory comes as the Trump administration seeks to shift the battlefield from military confrontation to economic warfare.

US President Donald Trump has announced what his administration describes as an unprecedented campaign of financial pressure and isolation aimed at forcing Tehran to end its nuclear programme and fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz to international oil and natural gas shipping.

The administration has portrayed the new campaign as an

"economic D-Day" against Iran.

But Tehran has responded by portraying Washington's economic offensive as evidence that the United States has failed to achieve its objectives through military force.

Iranian officials argue that despite months of war, Washington has been unable to force Tehran into submission or regain normal access through the Strait.

The continued disruption of traffic through Hormuz has meanwhile sent shockwaves through global energy markets and intensified pressure on countries dependent on Gulf oil and gas supplies.

Qalibaf: Region Looking Beyond Washington

Adding a new dimension to Iran's increasingly confident rhetoric, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Tehran had received "numerous messages" from neighbouring countries seeking to discuss a new regional order.

In a post on X on Saturday, Qalibaf said countries across the region were exploring new security arrangements and expanded economic cooperation.

The message suggested that the fallout from the war may be pushing regional powers to reconsider their long-standing dependence on Washington for security.

Qalibaf accused the United States of sacrificing the interests and security of its own regional al-

lies for Israel.

"The United States put the security of every single one of its allies at such risk through bullying and pure disregard for their interests for the sake of Israel," he wrote.

According to Qalibaf, some regional states had briefly seen their very existence threatened by Washington's policies and decisions during the conflict.

His prescription was blunt: the Middle East should build its own security architecture.

"A homegrown, independent order is what will actually deliver peace and security," he said.

The statement marks one of Tehran's clearest attempts yet to convert its military confrontation with Washington into a broader diplomatic and geopolitical opportunity.

Trust Gap Widens

The push for a new regional framework comes amid signs of growing unease among some US allies over Washington's handling of the war.

An Arab diplomat told Iran's Press TV earlier this week that widespread dissatisfaction with Trump's decisions and what was described as his "condescending" approach towards allies had widened the trust gap between Washington and influential regional capitals.

According to the diplomat, countries in the region have increasingly concluded that the United States not only failed to achieve its military objectives against Iran but also lacks the ability and confidence to reach a sustainable diplomatic understanding with Tehran.

While such assessments remain deeply contested, the rhetoric from Tehran points to a potentially significant shift in Iran's strategy.

Rather than merely presenting itself as a country that survived a devastating war, Iran is now seeking to project itself as a central player in shaping what comes after it.

With the Strait of Hormuz still effectively closed, Washington escalating economic pressure and regional powers reportedly exploring new security and economic arrangements, the conflict appears to be moving into a new and potentially more unpredictable phase.

Canada to Impose Retaliatory Tariffs on US Goods as Trade Talks Collapse

AP

WASHINGTON: The United States imposed 50 per cent tariffs on USD 20 billion worth of Canadian products early Saturday, and Canada said it would retaliate beginning September 8 after last-ditch negotiations failed to resolve the latest strain in relations between the historic allies.

President Donald Trump's import taxes will hit about 5 per cent of what Canada ships to the United States every year, including products ranging from hockey sticks to tongue depressors.

Carney said that "in the coming days, we will release the details of these new tariff measures, which will come into force the Tuesday after Labor Day." The dollar-for-dollar retaliation would target steel, dairy, appliances, agricultural equipment, pulp and paper and electronics, he said from Ottawa.

He disclosed that Canada had been willing to drop remaining retaliatory tariffs on steel, aluminum and autos if



the United States substantially lowered its own, and to encourage provinces to restore US alcohol sales. But he said Washington's final demands went too far, saying, "They asked too much and offered too little," Carney said.

Trump's top trade negotiator, Jamieson Greer, said the Republican administration was offering to cut tariffs on steel, autos and lumber, "things that are sensitive for them. And they've always had the best deal, and they still would have an even better deal, but they didn't want that," he told "Fox & Friends Weekend." He added: "We're moving forward with measures that respond to Canadian retaliation."

The moves also call into

question the future of a North American trade agreement covering the United States, Canada and Mexico that is crucial to industry in all three countries.

Carney said the US added last-minute terms that would have reduced tariff relief for Canadian-made vehicles, restricted Canada's ability to strike trade deals with other countries and weakened protections for language, culture and sovereignty. He said such demands were "unacceptable."

But Greer, the US trade representative, said that after a year of retaliation by its long-time ally, "We've said enough, and so we've taken counter-measures. Our interest is in protecting American workers and protecting American supply chains."

No further talks are planned.

The breakdown in negotiations marked a sharp reversal from two days earlier, when officials from the two countries sounded as if they were headed toward a compromise.

Govt Cannot Force Private Landowners to Execute Sale Deeds: HC

Press Trust of India

LUCKNOW: The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court on Friday ruled that the government authorities cannot force private landowners to execute sale deeds for the acquisition of land.

The court said that land can be purchased through a sale deed only when the owner voluntarily agrees to sell and both sides mutually agree on the sale price and if no such consent is forthcoming, the state government will have to follow the statutory land acquisition procedure.

With this, the court directed the authorities not to harass the petitioners or forcibly obtain their consent for executing sale deeds. It also made it clear that voluntary sale and com-

pulsory acquisition are two distinct legal processes.

A bench of Justice Shekhar B Saraf and Justice Abdhesh Kumar Chaudhary passed the order on a petition filed by Akhilesh Kumar Pankaj and seven others concerning acquisition of their land in Devipatan Tulsi pur village of Balrampur district for road widening.

The state government told the court that the land was being purchased for widening the road. Nearly 80 per cent of the required land had already been purchased through sale deeds, with around 104 registrations executed by different landowners. However, the authorities had not been able to contact the petitioners or obtain their consent for the purchase of their land.

The petitioners, on the oth-

er hand, submitted that they were not willing to sell their land. They alleged that the authorities were pressuring them to sell their property at a rate which was unacceptable to them.

After considering the issue, the bench observed that the law on the issue was clear and hence, if the landowners were willing to sell and the state was able to negotiate and arrive at an agreement on the sale price, they could sell the property to the state. However, in the absence of such consent, the state would have to issue a notification under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, and acquire the land in accordance with law, the bench added.

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