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2 POCSO Accused Escape From Central Jail

Police issue lookout notices, launch manhunt to trace duo

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Two men facing separate cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act have allegedly escaped from Central Jail Srinagar, prompting police to launch a manhunt and issue lookout notices across Kashmir.

A senior police officer confirmed the development, saying the two accused were lodged in Central Jail Srinagar in connection with separate POCSO cases before they allegedly fled from the prison.

Following the escape, Kashmir Zone Police issued lookout notices for the duo and appealed to the public to share any information that could help establish their whereabouts.

According to the notices issued by police, Mukhtar Ahmad Gujjar, son of Mohammad Rafiq Gujjar and a resident of Sanglan Chittergul in Anantnag district, is wanted in FIR No. 20/2026 registered at Police Station Saura.

The case has been registered under Sections 137(2) and 65(1)



of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Sections 3/4 of the POCSO Act, according to the notice.

The second accused, Farman Khan, son of Abdul Gani Khan and a resident of Sadanpora Ragistan, is wanted in FIR No. 19/2026 registered at Police Station Lar in Ganderbal district. Khan is booked under Sections 137(2) and 87 of the BNS and Sections 3/4 of the POCSO Act, the police notice said.

Earlier, officials identified Khan as a resident of Rajasthan and said both men were facing charges under Sections 3 and 4 of the POCSO Act, which relate to penetrative | [More on P6](#)

Industry Must Invest In J&K's Potential: LG

» Calls for tapping J&K's hydropower, horticulture, tourism and handicrafts potential » Says Viksit Bharat must be inclusive, rooted in tradition

Observer News Service

New Delhi: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday called upon industry leaders to actively invest in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the Union Territory's hydropower, horticulture, tourism, handicrafts and youth potential could make it a vital contributor to India's development story.

Addressing the World Wisdom Forum organised by the IIT Alumni Council in New Delhi, Sinha said Jammu and Kashmir had immense potential across several sectors and urged industry leaders to turn their attention towards the region.

"Hon'ble Prime Minister



Shri Narendra Modi has created confidence and opened new avenues for the youth in Jammu Kashmir. It is the collective responsibility of Industry now to make Jammu

Kashmir a subject of constructive action," Sinha said. "We must recognise its hydropower potential. Connect its horticulture, tourism and handicrafts with global

AI Cannot Replace Human Leadership: LG

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said artificial intelligence could accelerate business and management processes but could not alter the fundamentally human nature of leadership, trust and decision-making.

Addressing the valedictory function of the Induction and Orientation Programme at IIM Rohtak, Sinha said technological progress was advancing at an unprecedented pace, making lifelong learning essential for students to remain relevant in an evolving professional | [More on P6](#)

Nationwide Anti-Drug Drive From September

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Anti-drug trafficking agencies will launch a year-long nationwide enforcement drive from September to target absconding narcotics offenders, check diversion of pharmaceutical drugs and dismantle drug trafficking syndicates, officials said on Sunday.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has written to all states and various central agencies involved in combating drug crimes, asking them to undertake 24 special fortnight-long drives that will continue till August next year, officials told PTI.

An awareness programme for students in schools and colleges has already been underway since August 16, while enforcement drives will begin from September.

The first phase will include identification of foreign nationals involved in drug crimes across the country for deportation. Another fortnight-long drive will focus on tracing and apprehending absconding narcotics offenders.

From October, the NCB, along with Anti-Narcotics Task Forces of states and Union Territories, will inspect medical stores and pharmacies in coordination with drug controllers to check the diversion of pharmaceutical drugs for narcotics trafficking.

The action plan also includes preparation of dossiers on drug crime fugitives, | [More on P6](#)

18-year-old NCB Case

Drug Peddler Gets 3-Yr Jail Term

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A local court has sentenced a drug peddler to three years' imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000, bringing to conclusion an 18-year-old narcotics case, the Jammu unit of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) said on Sunday.

The NCB secured the conviction of Kunnu Bharti alias Abhinandan, who had jumped bail granted in 2010 and remained beyond the reach of the trial for several years, a spokesperson of the agency said.

On December 3, 2008, a team of NCB recovered 960 grams of charas, concealed in a polythene bag, from the | [More on P6](#)



LG Manoj Sinha Meets HM Amit Shah in New Delhi

Heavy Rains Lash Jammu, Waterlogging Disrupts Normal Life

Observer News Service

Jammu: Heavy rains lashed Jammu and adjoining areas on Sunday, disrupting normal life, causing widespread waterlogging and triggering a mudslide that blocked the Jammu-Kishtwar National Highway, officials said.

An abandoned house collapsed at Shaheedi Chowk in the heart of Jammu around 7.30 am amid heavy rainfall. The structure belonged to Rajni Salotra, who had shifted with her family to rented accommodation a few months ago after cracks developed in the old building.

The collapse damaged



household items, but no casualties were reported.

Residents said the incident could have caused casualties as the lane is densely populated and witnesses regular

movement. However, there was little movement at the time as people remained indoors due to the heavy rain.

Locals urged authorities to identify old, | [More on P6](#)

Monsoon Fevers: Doctors Warn Against Antibiotic Misuse

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Amid a spike in monsoon-related illnesses, doctors have advised people against self-medicating with antibiotics, stressing that fever is a symptom rather than a diagnosis and does not automatically indicate a bacterial infection.

Physicians said fever can occur due to a range of conditions, including viral infections, dengue, malaria and typhoid, and treatment should be based on clinical assessment, the duration of illness, associated symptoms and appropriate diagnostic investigations.

"Patients frequently come to



us after taking multiple medicines, including antibiotics, simply because they have developed fever. Fever by itself is not an indication for an antibiotic. The first step is to determine what is causing the fever," said Dr Sujeet K Choudhary, Chief Medical Officer, Internal

Medicine, Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research.

Antibiotics are designed to treat bacterial infections and do not work against viral illnesses, he said. Unnecessary use can cause avoidable side effects and contribute to the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), Swine Flu Cases Rise, No New Strain Identified: ICMR making infections harder to treat in the future.

Dr Neeraj Nischal, Professor in the Department of Medicine at AIIMS, Delhi, said symptoms of several monsoon-related illnesses can | [More on P6](#)

Ruhullah: NC Must Answer For Lost J&K Rights

Agencies

Srinagar: Member of Parliament for the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, Aga Ruhullah Mehdi, on Sunday said Jammu and Kashmir had continued to lose its powers over the years, while its political leadership had failed to regain them.

Speaking to reporters during an interaction in Baramulla, Ruhullah said that his criticism is not directed at any individual or political party but reflects the broader political situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

"J&K has always lost things and not gained, from statehood

to Article 370. Politically, J&K has not gained anything right from the outset," he said.

Questioning the National Conference's approach after it came to power, Ruhullah alleged that the party had changed its position on the rights lost after 2019.

He said people had placed their trust in the NC during the 2024 Assembly elections based on commitments made regarding the restoration of those rights.

"I ask only for the rights which we told people during election campaigning. It is the party's words too and not mine alone. Kashmiris | [More on P6](#)

Make India A Global Hub For Space Careers: PM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stressed creating an aura around the private sector in space research so that people worldwide feel that if they want to make a career, they should go to India.

In an interaction with CEOs and founders of 20 space startups on Friday, Modi also highlighted India's cost-competitiveness in launching space ventures.

He emphasised that the country's vast talent pool and high risk-taking capacity would allow India to rapidly establish a dominant position in the

global space sector, according to the transcript of the interaction, which was released on Sunday.

The prime minister said the world must now be looking for Indian startups – wondering who is leading in this space.

Because whenever a breakthrough happens, people's attention shifts immediately, he said.

One of the CEOs told the prime minister that after India opened the space industry for private players, a very positive trend was observed and many Indian citizens living in the US and Europe now want to return and work in the country.

In response, | [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 Kotak Kanya Scholarship 2026-27

Description: Kotak Kanya Scholarship 2026-27 is a collaborative CSR initiative of Kotak Mahindra Group companies and Kotak Education Foundation, offering financial assistance to meritorious girl students from underprivileged backgrounds. Girls who have passed Class 12 and secured admission to a professional graduation course receive INR 1.5 lakh* per year until they complete their degree.

Eligibility: Open to meritorious girl students across India who have scored 75% or more (or equivalent CGPA) in Class 12 boards. Secured admission to the first year of a professional graduation programme (Engineering, MBBS, Architecture, Design, Integrated LLB, and more) at an NIRF/NAAC-accredited institute for the academic year 2026-27. Annual family income must not exceed INR 6,00,000. Children of Kotak Mahindra Group, Kotak Education Foundation, and Buddy4Study employees are ineligible. Prizes & Rewards: INR 1.5 lakh* per

year, till completion of the professional graduation degree.

*Disclaimer: Subject to terms and conditions, at the discretion of Kotak Education Foundation.

Last Date to Apply: 31-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/KKGS5 QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/kotak-kanya-scholarship-2026-271784610111.png>

Scholarship Name Raman Kant Munjal Scholarships 2026-27

Description: The Raman Kant Munjal Scholarships 2026-27 is an initiative by the Raman Kant Munjal Foundation, supported by Hero FinCorp, that helps first-year undergraduate students pursuing finance-related courses pursue their dreams of a promising career and a better future.

Eligibility: Students enrolled in the first year of BBA, BFIA, B.Com. (H, E), BMS, IPM, B.A. (Economics), BBS, or any other finance-related degree courses are eligible. Applicants must have secured at least 80% marks in Classes 10 and 12 (70% for PwD

students). The annual parental income must not exceed INR 6 lakh from all sources. Open for Indian nationals only.

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarship from INR 40,000 to INR 5,50,000 per year for 3 years. Last Date to Apply: 31-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/RKMSP6 QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/raman-kant-munjal-scholarships-2026-271783991967.png>

Scholarship Name Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Transgender Scholarship Program 2026-27

Description: The Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Transgender Scholarship Program 2026-27 is a CSR initiative of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Limited, implemented through its Implementation Partner, Buddy4Study. It aims to empower talented and deserving transgender students across India. This scholarship is open to students enrolled in Classes 9-12 or pursuing undergraduate/postgraduate courses at recognised government or private open

schools and universities.

Eligibility: Open to pan-India transgender students pursuing secondary, senior secondary, or undergraduate/postgraduate studies through any government or private open school or open university. A minimum score of 35% in Class 10 and/or Class 12 is required.

The applicant's total household income from all sources must not exceed INR 10,00,000 per year.

Candidates who are children of employees of the Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Limited or Buddy4Study are ineligible to participate. Prizes & Rewards: Selected candidates will receive a one-time scholarship of up to INR 40,000.

Note: Scholarship funds can be utilised for academic-related expenses, including exam fees, admission fees, tuition fees, etc. Last Date to Apply: 31-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/USFB2

QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/ujjivan-small-finance-bank-transgender-scholarship-program-2026-271779164218.png>

از نیابت گو بیگام با ا جلاس نذیر احمد لون نائب تحصیلدار گو بیگام
اشتباه برادراد کا گاہی ہر خاص و عام نسبت اجرائی ڈیپنٹ سرفٹیکٹ

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر کے نسبت دفتر حذا میں ایک مشل مسمانتہ تکیہ جان دختر عبد الغنی
چہ پان ساکنہ موضع اوگمہ تحصیل کوارہامہ صلح بارہ مولہ کے طرف سے پیش ہوئی ہے جس میں
مکملہ پاک ڈیلو پمٹ ایفیر کنزرس کے اجراء کردہ ڈیپنٹ سرفٹیکٹ کے مطابق سالکا والد
عبد الغنی چہ پان ولد غلام محمد چہ پان مودخہ 23-05-2026 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے متوفی
پیشے سے مزدور تھا۔ متوفی کا کینہ مندر ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

تکیہ جان	21 سال	دختر
رفعت جان	28 سال	--
سائینچی	23 سال	-
زینہ بیگم	51 سال	زویہ
عرفان غنی چہ پان	30 سال	پسر
غلام محمد چہ پان	66 سال	والد
ذو بیگم	64 سال	والدہ

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی افراد کینہ نہیں ہے سرفٹیکٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو
کوئی عزی یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشہر اخبار رسالت دن کے اندر اندر آپنے عزی یا اعتراض عدالت
حذا کو دفتر می اداقت کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے میجا کو بی عزی یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں
ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار	FKO
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PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Ghulam Hassan Lone, R/o Kowarhama, hereby inform the concerned public that the father name of my sons, Mohammad Dayaan Lone and Mohammad Adnan Lone, have been wrongly recorded in the school records of Sheikh-ul-Alam Public School, Dhobiwan as. Ghulam Hassan Lone. The correct father's name is "Gh. Hassan Lone" instead of "Ghulam Hassan Lone." All concerned are requested to take note of the correction and update the school records accordingly.

Sd/-
Gh Hassan Lone
F/o Mohammad Dayaan Lone and Mohammad Adnan Lone
R/o Kowarhama fko

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I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer id no : 0206050017988 from Tariq Ahmad Malla son of Nzeer Ab Malla Name: Hajra bano W/o Late Nazir Ahmad malla . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may fiel them in the office of the PDD Sub Division Suzait Lawaypora Within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name: Hajra Bano
W/O Late Nazir Ahmad Malla BMG
Ph:9906491697
Adress:check I Kawoosa

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from Tasaduq Hussain Dob 01-04-1986 to Tasaduq Hussain Waza DOB 10-02-1990. In future, I will be known as Tasaduq Hussain Waza. Dob 10-02-1990 If any person has any objection, he/she may contact the Passport office Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days, no objection will be accepted.

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Experts: Move Beyond ‘Eat Less, Exercise More’ for Obesity

Press Trust Of India

Health experts have described obesity as a chronic disease and called for a shift away from the traditional "eat less, exercise more" approach, urging treatment to be tailored to an individual's health needs and disease severity.

The Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society of India (OSSI) and the Endocrine Society of India (ESI) have jointly prepared an expert document that sets out recommended approaches to managing obesity, stressing that many factors contributing to it may be beyond a person's control. IndiaNews Focus

"Obesity is a chronic disease that requires timely recognition, scientific treatment and long-term care. This joint consensus provides a unified, India-specific framework that can help move the conversation away from blame and towards evidence-based medical care," OSSI president Dr K S Kular said.

The consensus highlights that obesity is influenced by a complex interplay of genetic, metabolic, endocrine, environmental, psychological, socioeconomic and lifestyle factors. Obesity deserves the same scientific, compassionate and long-term approach as any other chronic disease. The recommendations emphasise that BMI, or body weight, alone should not determine treatment, as Indians tend to have higher body fat and develop metabolic complications such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease at comparatively lower BMI levels and younger ages than Western populations.

"India needs an approach to obesity that reflects the unique metabolic risks of our population. Assessment must look beyond weight alone and consider the overall health of the individual," ESI president Dr Kaushik Pandit said. IndiaNews Focus Healthy eating, physical activity and other lifestyle measures remain central to obesity management, but

the consensus stresses that one size does not fit all.

Depending on disease severity and individual needs, treatment may also include psychological support, obesity management medications, endoscopic therapies and metabolic and bariatric surgery, as per the recommendations. "The consensus moves away from a rigid treatment ladder. Treatment should be personalised and can evolve as the patient's health needs change," said Dr KVS Hari Kumar, honorary secretary of ESI.

"Obesity is a progressive and relapsing disease, and delaying appropriate treatment can allow both the disease and its associated complications to advance," former OSSI president Dr Randeep Wadhawan said. The consensus emphasises the need for timely, individualised treatment, urging clinicians to offer effective medical, endoscopic or surgical interventions before patients develop severe complications.

Government of India

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It is hereby informed to the general public that the Agreement presently registered in the name of Shakir Ahmed Dar is proposed to be changed in the name of Shafeeqa Bano. Any person having any objection or claim regarding the proposed change may submit the same to the concerned PDD Office within the prescribed period.

If no objection is received within the stipulated time, the necessary changes in the Agreement shall be carried out accordingly.

Name: Shafeeqa Bano
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Contact No.: 6005256265

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Bear Attack Injures Nomad in Srinagar Forest

Press Trust of India

Srinagar: A man belonging to a nomadic community was severely injured after being attacked by a bear in the forested higher reaches of the district, and was later rescued by the Army.

Army personnel provided first aid to the victim and shifted him to a hospital, officials said Sunday.

Mohammad Akram, a nomad from Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, was attacked by a bear in the upper reaches of Dachigam in Harwan forest area on Saturday, officials said.

They said personnel from an Army unit stationed nearby quickly arrived to his aid, provid-

ed first aid and helped evacuate him to a nearby hospital.

This is the second instance of a bear attack on nomads - who pass through this area grazing livestock - in the past month.

On July 26, Mohammad Ashraf (40) was injured in a bear attack in the area. He, too, was rescued by Army personnel and shifted to hospital, officials said.

The nomadic community thanked Army personnel for the life-saving aid during both incidents. One Manzoor Ahmad said timely intervention helped ensure the injured received immediate attention at the critical moment and were safely transported to a medical facility.

Bukhari Slams NC Over Srinagar's 'Neglect'

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Sunday said that the "people of Srinagar city have always supported the National Conference, but the party has deprived them of their social, political, and economic rights."

He said that the Apni Party is committed to working for the upliftment and development of the people of Srinagar city.

He made these remarks today while addressing a public meeting at Brain Nishat in Srinagar. The event was organised to welcome prominent political and social leader Amir Bhat and his associates into the party fold.

Bhat was previously associated with the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP).

On the occasion, Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari declared Amir Bhat as the party's face in Srinagar's Khanyar constituency and assured him of the party's full support in his efforts to serve the people.

Addressing the occasion, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said, People of Srinagar city are grappling with a range of issues and yet the government seems least bothered about them.

He said, "People in the city lack adequate housing, with three to four families often living under a single roof in many areas. There are also limited livelihood opportunities, leaving even educated youth unemployed and without hope for a better future.

This situation persists despite the people of Srinagar having consistently supported the ruling National Conference. Despite being in power for decades, the NC has failed to address the basic needs and aspirations of the people of the city."

He further said, "Apni Party wants to improve the living standards of the people of Srinagar and ensure that they have access to adequate housing, employment opportunities, and sufficient public infrastructure. The party is committed to addressing the basic needs of the people and creating better opportunities for a dignified and prosperous life."

He also talked about the several public issues that people in brain Nishat are facing. He said, "I have been informed about the range of pressing public issues that the people here are facing. There is not even a health centre in the area where round-the-clock medical services are available. There is also not a single marriage hall in the area, along with several other shortcomings that reflect the lack of adequate public infrastructure."

He said young leaders like Amir Bhat now have a vital responsibility to help transform the future of Srinagar city and its people. "Srinagar has been chronically neglected and overlooked, even by those who remained in power for decades. It is now time for young and committed leaders to work for the development and welfare of the city and restore its rightful place," he said.

FCIK Seeks CM Omar's Intervention against Industrial Power Tariff Hike

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Valley's apex industrial Chamber, the Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has vehemently opposed the latest power tariff order of the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC), saying that behind the mask of widely publicised average hike of 6.83%, industry has actually been saddled with an increase of nearly 10% in its principal energy charges, at a time when existing enterprises are already overstressed by a slew of unprecedented challenges.

In a statement, FCIK said the energy charge for LTIS-I has been increased from 4.20 to 4.60 per kWh, while that for HT Industry at 11 kV has risen from 4.10 to 4.50 per kWh, translating into steep increases of 9.52% and 9.76%, respectively. This is over and above the enhancement made in fixed/demand charges.

"For industry, 6.83% is therefore not the real story. More in-explicable is that KPDCL and JPDCL themselves sought only a 5% across-the-board increase, whereas JERC has imposed an increase approaching twice that percentage on the principal industrial energy charge," FCIK said.

The Federation said even a 5% increase would be difficult for existing industry to absorb. While a substantial number of enterprises are operating at meagre capacity utilisation and struggling for viability,

the Government is preparing a new Industrial

Policy with revival of existing units as an important objective.

"A near-10% escalation in a basic input cost at this stage could further suppress production, impair competitiveness and frustrate the very process of revival," stated FCIK.

The Chamber questioned why industry should be burdened with system-wide inefficiencies when industrial consumption is essentially fully metered, with HT consumers subjected to precise energy and demand metering.

"Theft, unmetered consumption, deficient billing, poor recoveries and commercial losses elsewhere cannot indiscriminately be loaded upon an identifiable, metered and regularly billed consumer category", stated FCIK.

The Federation reminded JERC of its own categorical observation in the previous tariff order that distribution loss is a "controllable parameter" and that "inefficiencies cannot be passed on to the consumers."

"JERC cannot enunciate this sound regulatory principle and then allow fully-metered consumers to become the easiest means of balancing the books of distribution utilities," FCIK said.

FCIK also questioned the reliance on system-wide distribution-loss assumptions of around 15% for JPDCL and 19% for KPDCL without transparently establishing where these losses actually occur.

It called for disclosure of



BJP Leaders Stress Unity, Discipline & Grassroots Outreach at Srinagar Meeting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held its State Office Bearers' and Organizational Meetings at Hotel Countryside, Nowgam, Srinagar, with a focus on further strengthening the organization, expanding grassroots outreach and preparing for upcoming political and organizational programmes.

J&K BJP President and MP Sat Sharma (CA) chaired the meeting. The meeting was also addressed by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Leader of Opposition J&K Sunil Sharma, General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, MP Ghulam Ali Khatana, and former Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh. The proceedings were conducted by BJP J&K General Secretary Anwar Khan.

Sat Sharma, while addressing the meeting, stressed the need for continued ideological commitment and a stronger organizational presence at the booth level. He called for regular meetings at every level of the organization from Booth and Shakti Kendra to Mandal, District and State to ensure better coordination and sustained engagement with the public.

Sat Sharma also called for increased "Pravas" by senior leaders and office bearers to strengthen direct contact with people across Jammu & Kashmir. He said the BJP is not merely a political organization but a movement rooted in nationalist ideology and dedicated to

Ashok Koul reviewed the ongoing organizational activities and programmes, including the Digital Learning Programme, Mann Ki Baat, and monthly meetings at the Shakti Kendra, Booth, Mandal and District levels

public service.

Dr Jitendra Singh appreciated the BJP's organizational strength in Jammu & Kashmir and urged party leaders and workers to remain prepared for emerging political and organizational challenges. He also stressed the importance of effectively communicating the development initiatives and achievements of the government to the people.

Sunil Sharma recalled the sacrifices and dedication of BJP cadre in Jammu & Kashmir, saying that the party's growing strength at the grassroots is the result of the commitment and hard work of its workers over the years.

Ashok Koul reviewed the ongoing organizational activities and programmes, including the Digital Learning Programme, Mann Ki Baat, and monthly meetings at the Shakti Kendra, Booth, Mandal and

District levels. He emphasized the need for consistent organizational activity and greater coordination among party workers.

Jugal Kishore Sharma described the political resolution as a roadmap for the party's future course of action and urged the cadre to work with dedication towards its implementation.

Dr Nirmal Singh said the State Office Bearers have an important role in maintaining a strong link between the party organization and the people. He called for greater interaction with workers and the public at the grassroots level.

Ghulam Ali Khatana underlined the growing importance of social media and other media platforms in taking the party's programmes, policies and public outreach initiatives to a wider audience. He urged party workers to make effective use of these platforms to strengthen communication with the people.

Alongside the State Office Bearers' Meeting, separate interactions and organizational meetings with senior leaders, District Presidents, District Prabharies and MLAs were also held at the venue. The meetings reviewed organizational functioning and discussed strategies for strengthening the party's presence and public outreach across Jammu & Kashmir.

The leadership called upon the party cadre to remain united, disciplined and connected with the people while working with renewed commitment towards strengthening the organization at every level.

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- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)

 HIJRI CALENDAR 10 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1448	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	4: 30
	ZUHR	12:35
	ASR	5: 15
	Magrib	7: 11
	ISHA	8: 40

- 1608- 1st English convoy lands at Surat, India
- 1690- Job Charnock sets up East India Company HQ camp by Kalikata village (modern Calcutta)
- 1704- Battle of Málaga: largest naval battle in the War of the Spanish Succession; Tactically indecisive but a Grand Alliance strategic victory
- 1789- French Revolution: The National Assembly proclaims freedom of speech
- 1814- British forces capture Washington, D.C. and destroy many landmarks (War of 1812)
- 1891- Thomas Edison patents motion picture camera
- 1904- Battle of Liao-Yang-200,000 Japanese against 150,000 Russian, Japanese tactical victory
- 1912- District of Alaska becomes an organized incorporated territory of the United States
- 1914- Battle of Bergen: Germans defeat Belgian/British troops
- 1914- German troops occupy Namur, Belgium
- 1920- With British approval, Greece is encouraged to take offensive action against Turkish nationalists in Asia Minor
- 1921- Battle of Sakarav Valley begins between Turkey & Greece
- 1929- Turkey & Persia sign friendship treaty
- 1931- France & USSR sign neutrality/no attack treaty
- 1937- In the Spanish Civil War, the Basque Army surrenders to the Italian Corpo Truppe Volontarie following the Santoña Agreement.
- 1939- Germany & USSR sign 10-year non-aggression pact
- 1949- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) goes into effect
- 1966- USSR launches Luna 11 for orbit around Moon
- 1968- France becomes the world's fifth thermonuclear power with a detonation on Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific
- 1976- Soyuz 21 returns to Earth
- 1978- USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1979- UN's Vienna office begins issuing postage stamps
- 1985- STS 51-L mission scrubbed at T -5m because of bad weather
- 1991- Mikhail Gorbachev resigns as head of USSR Communist Party
- 1992- Diplomatic relations are established between the People's Republic of China and South Korea.
- 1993- Mars Observer comes closest to Mars
- 1994- Israel & PLO initialed accord giving autonomy to Palestinians in West Bank in education, health, taxation, social welfare & tourism
- 1995- Microsoft debuts Windows 95
- 1997- Gordon Spence discovers 2`2976221 -1 (36th known Mersenne prime)
- 2004- 89 passengers die after two airliners explode after flying out of Domodedovo International Airport, near Moscow. The explosions were caused by suicide bombers (reportedly female) from the Russian Republic of Chechnya.
- 2006- The International Astronomical Union (IAU) redefines the term "planet" such that Pluto is considered a Dwarf Planet.
- 2015- Physicist Stephen Hawking presents a new theory on black holes at a lecture at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm
- 2015- Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announces that for the 1st time 1 billion people logged into Facebook
- 2016- Astronomers announce discovery of earth-like planet named Proxima b orbiting star Proxima Centauri
- 2016- 6.2-magnitude earthquake strikes central Italy, north east of Rome, killing 268, injuring 400
- 2018- Scott Morrison becomes Prime Minister of Australia after defeating Peter Dutton in a leadership spill, replacing Malcolm Turnbull
- 2019- US adventurer Victor Vescovo is the first person to visit the deepest point of every ocean when he reaches Molloy Hole, in the Arctic
- 2020- First documented case of a person being re-infected with COVID-19 a second time, a Hong Kong man four months after first infection
- 2021- Kathy Hochul becomes the first female Governor of New York, replacing Andrew Cuomo after his resignation
- 2021- UN says Madagascar on brink of world's first "climate change famine" with people suffering "catastrophic" levels of hunger, after four years without rain

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Crafting a New Kashmir

Kashmir's centuries-old traditions can find new life through technology, provided innovation strengthens rather than erases the values behind the craft.



Irshad Mushtaq

Long before machines and screens, Kashmiris lived by trust and shared purpose. Communities thrived because honesty was an everyday practice, and artisans created not just objects of beauty, but the very fabric of social harmony.

The roots of this enduring tradition reach across continents and centuries. More than 700 artisans journeyed from Central Asia under the guidance of Shahi Hamadan (RA), bringing skills and vision that would seed generations of craft.

Later, under the reign of King Zain-ul-Abidin, known as Badshah, the valley saw a careful intertwining of social infrastructure, agriculture, and artistic development.

Canals flowed, crops thrived, and artisans prospered as vital members of a cohesive, thriving society.

Yet today, that legacy stands at a precipice. The rush of modernity threatens to overshadow centuries of craftsmanship and the values embedded within them.

Technology offers speed, scale, and global reach, but it can also dilute, commodify, and erase.

The question is urgent: how do we protect the soul of these crafts while embracing the tools of our time?

Kashmiri artisans continue their work, often against financial and social pressures. Their persistence is a testament to resilience. And therein lies the opportunity: technology can

amplify tradition.

Thoughtful innovation can expand the reach of Kani shawls, carpets, and woodwork, connecting them with markets that crave uniqueness, quality, and story.

Global consumers increasingly seek authenticity. They desire goods that carry history, care, and skill - qualities intrinsic to Kashmiri work.

By fusing heritage with innovation, the valley can meet this demand, ensuring that both its economy and cultural identity remain vibrant.

The future need not be a choice between progress and preservation. It can be a synergy of both.

Beyond spiritual, we must remember, Shah Hamdan's legacy was economic foresight. He nurtured skills, fostered community, and seeded prosperity that endured through centuries.

and creativity, history and future.

Every knot in a carpet, stitch in a shawl, and carved pattern can carry both the wisdom of ancestors and the promise of tomorrow.

The stakes are higher than preservation alone. This is about fostering an economy rooted in culture, a society that values integrity as much as innovation, and a community that uplifts its artisans as they uplift the valley.

Protecting heritage, then, is economic, social, and profoundly human.

Kashmiri crafts are living legacies, capable of shaping a future as vibrant as their past. They invite us to imagine a world where beauty, trust, and ingenuity coexist.

This is a call to action, philosophical and practical, to honour the past without being trapped by it, embrace technology without erasing identity,

“Kashmiri crafts are living legacies, capable of shaping a future as vibrant as their past. They invite us to imagine a world where beauty, trust, and ingenuity coexist.”

Today, his model offers guidance. Trust, sincerity, and collective care can be as foundational to commerce as they are to culture.

Imagine a Kashmir where artisans inherit centuries of knowledge yet are encouraged to experiment and innovate. Think about a region where each creation reflects the weight of tradition but also the spark of modern imagination. Imagine a society where honesty, respect, and credibility are not aspirations, but the very ground upon which enterprise, art, and community flourish.

Reviving this vision is not a retreat into nostalgia. It is an active, deliberate choice to weave the old and new together: tradition and technology, patience

and craft a Kashmir where heritage and innovation walk hand in hand.

In preserving and evolving these traditions, we cultivate a society rooted in creativity, trust, and enduring prosperity.

Kashmir has always been more than its mountains, rivers, or valleys. It is hands that shape it, communities that nurture it, and traditions that define it.

The time to honour them, and to craft a future worthy of their legacy, is now.

The author is a Srinagar-based financial educator, and can be reached at drm757@gmail.com.

The Cappuccino Trap

Imported ingredients and weak local supply chains are making Kashmir's new café culture an expensive urban habit.



Musaib Bilal

Global flavours have arrived in the valley. You can sip imported coffee in a café, order exotic fruit from across the world, or follow a nutritionist's advice online.

From bustling street-side cafés to sleek coffee shops, the city has embraced the global café experience.

The aroma of cappuccino, colourful salads on display, and the constant click of cameras promise a slice of urban modernity.

But behind the frothy lattes and neon lights, the price often outweighs the pleasure.

In the U.S., a small pizza costs about the same as a bag of chips: around \$6. In Kashmir, a pizza at a café can cost 200-500, while chips sell for just 20-25.

That means a pizza here can be nearly twenty times more expensive than a bag of chips.

Supply chains tell the story.

In the U.S., wheat, cheese, tomatoes, and oils flow efficiently through mass production. Here, ingredients like mozzarella, processed tomato sauce, and certain spices travel long distances, adding transportation, refrigeration, and handling costs.

Healthy meals illustrate the disparity sharply.

A grilled chicken salad in the U.S. may cost \$8-\$12 (660-1,000), barely more than a burger. In Kashmir, it can cost 400-700.

Lettuce, bell peppers, avocado, and quinoa either have to be imported or grown in costly greenhouses, so eating healthy here ends up being as much about your wallet as your diet.

Roadside cafés seem like an alternative, but the hidden costs can be high.

Cheaper oils, stale bread, and substandard sauces sometimes replace fresh ingredients. Authorities have seized large quantities of rotten meat bound for kitchens, a reminder that a bargain meal can carry risks beyond indigestion.

Café culture also comes with social pressures.

Patrons sip the same cappuccinos, pose in the same neon-lit corners, post photos with identical filters. The ritual signals belonging, yet it extracts a tangible toll.

A 500 café visit consumes a larger share of a Kashmiri's monthly budget than a \$10 lunch does

“Mozzarella made nearby, lettuce grown year-round in greenhouses, sauces prepared in valley-based units could reduce costs, strengthen the local economy, and make healthy meals accessible.”

in New York. Younger people feel compelled to participate, stretching their finances to align with an imported lifestyle.

The solution lies in local production.

Mozzarella made nearby, lettuce grown year-round in greenhouses, sauces prepared in valley-based units could reduce costs, strengthen the local economy, and make healthy meals accessible.

Eating out could become a routine choice rather than a social compulsion.

Cafés also meet practical needs. Office workers with long commutes, bachelors living alone, and travellers often have no choice but to eat out. For them, affordable, safe, and healthy options are essential.

Global café culture offers novelty and connection. Yet when the price overwhelms the plate, it is worth asking: have we embraced taste without the means to afford it?

Until local production scales or expectations adjust, cappuccinos and quinoa salads remain more about image than enjoyment, and eating out continues to eat at our pockets.

The author is a mental health advocate, and can be reached at musaibilal.216061@gmail.com

The Cost of Caring

The region has rules on fair pay, a Supreme Court-backed framework and a government order. What remains missing is implementation.



Ummar Jamal

Healthcare workers here and across India watched closely as the Government of Jammu and Kashmir issued a formal order in December 2023 to revise pay and working conditions for nurses in private hospitals.

This was meant to align local practice with a decade-old judicial mandate and service rules developed by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The committee formed under that order was to offer guidance within thirty days.

But many months later, its findings and recommendations have not appeared in any public record. And this absence has amplified a long-standing issue that deserves sustained public focus.

Nurses are the frontline of patient care. They respond to emergencies, calm anxious family members, and perform critical procedures through long shifts.

In large private facilities nationwide, the average nurse earns between 20,000 and 50,000 per month depending on experience and hospital type.

But in Jammu and Kashmir, reported average pay for a nurse is approximately 22,000 per month. Some private duty nurses here are documented at similar rates.

Even those figures tell only part of the story.

Independent salary surveys across India show private hospital pay widely varies by city, bed strength, and ownership. Smaller clinics and nursing homes often maintain much lower wages.

In many such facilities the baseline can sit

well below 20,000, creating a stark contrast with government hospital scales that often start above 30,000 for comparable roles.

This contrast was at the heart of a landmark judicial step taken on 29 January 2016, when the Supreme Court acknowledged widespread wage disparities and work-condition issues among nurses in private healthcare institutions.

The Court directed the Health Ministry to form a High-Level Committee to study these conditions and propose solutions.

Acting on that order, the Ministry convened a panel in February 2016. Its mandate was to gather data from states and union territories to advise on fair pay scales and standardised service terms that would protect nurses working in

“Kashmir's private health sector runs on informal pay and fragile contracts, a system that strips nurses of bargaining power and leaves them taking whatever wages hospitals decide to offer.”

private settings.

After deliberation, the committee reached firm conclusions. It said private hospitals often lacked structured pay scales for nurses, a reality that failed to reflect their critical role in patient care. Bed strength formed the basis for proposed pay frameworks. For hospitals with more than 200 beds, the panel recommended salaries equivalent to those of state government nurses holding the same grade.

Facilities with 100-199 beds were to offer pay within 10 percent of government rates, while those with 50-99 beds were to stay within a 25 percent margin.

All establishments, including those with fewer than 50 beds, were to provide at least 20,000 per month, with working conditions, leave entitlements, and ancillary benefits aligned with govern-

ment standards.

The committee's recommendations also explicitly covered working conditions. Hospitals were to ensure duty hours, leave provisions, medical care, and transportation support that matched or approached the standards enjoyed by government nurses.

Those well-considered suggestions formed a roadmap designed to make private healthcare systems more equitable and professionally sustainable for nurses and by extension for patients.

However, implementation has not followed with corresponding vigour or reach.

Kashmir's private health sector runs on informal pay and fragile contracts, a system that strips nurses of bargaining power and leaves them tak-

ing whatever wages hospitals decide to offer.

Many young professionals join the workforce with degrees, diplomas, and specialised training only to find earnings lower than the national estimates of 20,000 and far below government scales for equivalent jobs.

These trends matter beyond paychecks.

Numerous peer-reviewed studies from within Indian hospitals show that work-life quality among nurses directly correlates with staffing levels, pay, and employer support.

In one hospital survey, private hospital nurses with wages between 5,000 and 20,000 per month reported significantly lower job satisfaction and higher burnout compared with those with structured support and clearer remuneration.

A pervasive outcome of this differential is workforce instability. High turnover, frequent job

hopping, and the loss of experienced nurses to either government service or opportunities abroad weaken the overall quality of care.

Facilities that claim high “nursing charges” in patient bills often fail to link those charges transparently with compensation for nursing staff.

Reports from larger Indian cities show examples where total daily rates billed under nursing categories far exceed the monthly salaries nurses actually receive, indicating financial flows that bypass direct remuneration for caregivers.

Private hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir, like many across India, operate in competitive, high-cost environments that demand rapid service turnover.

When this market pressure is combined with weak regulatory action on wages and work conditions, the system puts upward pressure on patient bills while offering downward pressure on employment terms.

The government order of late 2023 was a step toward recognition of these imbalances and a move to align local practice with national commitments.

The delay in producing actionable guidelines and transparent enforcement structures deprives nurses of predictable career pathways, reinforces wage gaps, and sustains a model that undervalues essential caregiving skills.

A sustained commitment to implementing existing frameworks, including transparent monitoring and periodic review of pay scales tied to cost of living and professional growth, would reflect both policy coherence and practical respect for those who serve at the heart of health systems.

The author is the National President of the J&K Students Association. He can be reached at umarjama1968@gmail.com.

Before the Walls Went Up

There was a time when neighbours arrived without appointments, weddings belonged to whole mohallas and even a television could bring an entire street together.



Umair Ul Omar

Growing up in Kashmir, the neighbourhood was a lively network of relationships that made life richer, safer, and warmer. The streets I knew were filled with faces that felt like family.

Every neighbour had a role: sharing joy, shouldering burdens, and turning even the simplest days into moments of connection.

Our homes were modest, but hospitality was boundless. I remember the smell of Nun Chai and freshly baked Kulchas greeting unexpected guests, and the hum of conversations that went late into the night.

When illness struck, neighbours came with prayers, hot meals, and hours of company. Weddings were community affairs: women gathered to cook rice, men helped prepare the intricate wazwan, and everyone pitched in - setting up tents, carrying chairs, and exchanging stories.

It was a collective celebration where no one counted the cost or asked for favors in return.

One vivid memory stands out from my childhood. Guests arriving a day before a wedding were not left to fend for themselves but welcomed into neighbours' homes as family. It felt as if the entire neighbourhood was the host.

Sadly, that spirit of togetherness has faded in recent years.

Last year, at a wedding in Dialgam, I was struck by the openness of homes without high fences or locked gates. It felt like stepping back in time to the Kashmir I once knew, where courtyards were shared spaces and neighbours greeted each other like close relatives.

A few years ago, visiting villages in Tral, I saw children running barefoot along streams, elders sitting on wicker chairs with salted tea in hand, and

streets alive with easy conversation.

More recently, in Lolab, Kupwara, neighbours welcomed me with warm smiles and open doors. These gestures were part of daily life, deeply woven into Kashmiri identity.

Eid-ul-Azha mornings hold a special place in my memories. The call, "Please come, we need help with the sacrifice," would echo through the lanes.

Neighbours gathered without hesitation to lift the animal, share the meat, and share the faith. There was

they fragmented the communal experience. I recall how only a few homes had battery-powered TVs, and the whole mohalla would gather under one roof to watch shows like Alif Leila.

Children, men, and women packed into a single room, eyes wide with wonder. Doors were open, and so were hearts.

Modern life brought bigger homes, higher boundary walls, and a preoccupation with individual privacy. The once-open doors have shut tight. Visits now need appointments, and conversations happen in measured tones. Instead of warmth, there is suspicion or silent rivalry.

If one neighbour builds a new floor, others feel pressured to renovate in competition. We have developed a strange fear of happiness in others, where another's success can feel like a threat.

The children growing up in this new Kashmir live in a different world. Born into homes with smartphones and fast internet, many have never experienced the joy of playing cricket in narrow alleys, plucking mulberries from neighbours' trees, or being gently scolded by an elder next door.

Their social lives exist online, separated from the fabric of community that once taught empathy and resilience.

Why did this happen?

Progress itself is not the enemy. Kashmiris have always embraced change when it brings hope. The loss lies in abandoning the values that grounded that progress: trust, humility, and care.

Years of trouble and trauma have pushed us inward, making us guard our hearts and homes fiercely. Yet healing requires connection.

Our elders often say, "Crying is lighter when shared." That truth holds more weight now than ever.

Modernity must arrive, but it cannot erase the neighbours who once shaped our lives. It cannot steal the stories, the simple kindness, and the deep bonds that gave Kashmir its soul.

When we lose our neighbours, we lose ourselves.

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When Water Was Enough

Kashmir's Aab-e-Grattas once made flour without fuel, machines or electricity. Their disappearance reveals what the valley has lost as its streams and traditions change.



Shereen Naman

In the village of Rafiabad, near the lower slopes of north Kashmir, mornings once began with the sound of water meeting wood. It was not a roar or rush, but a reliable creak, the sound that told you the day had started, and bread was on its way.

Sara, now in her thirties, remembers those mornings clearly. Her grandfather would rise before the sun, sling a jute bag of maize or rice over his shoulder, and head to the village Aab-e-Gratte, a traditional water-powered flour mill built on the stream that ran through the valley. He returned with freshly ground flour, warm from the friction of stone on stone, ready to be kneaded into kulchas and roti.

Today, the stream still flows, but the wheel doesn't turn. The millstone is split. The wooden sluice gate has caved in. Moss coats the fallen beams, and thorny shrubs fill the hollow where the flour was once collected.

The Aab-e-Gratte, meaning "water flour mill" in Kashmiri, was once a fixture in almost every village of the valley. Designed without motors, fuel, and fuss, it relied entirely on the natural gradient of mountain water.

Water was channeled from a stream to strike a wooden wheel, which turned a vertical shaft, rotating two stones, the top one (runner) spinning over the lower (bed), to grind grain into flour.

For centuries, these mills offered more than sustenance. They were the heartbeat of community life. People waited their turn while discussing crop yields, family marriages, and village disputes. Some came just to listen to the hum of water, the scrape of stone, and the occasional bird perched on the dripping beams.

Today, only a few dozen remain. Most are in varying stages of collapse.

Technological change came first. With the rise of electricity and diesel-powered mills in the 1990s, villagers

could get flour in minutes, not hours. Packaged flour from Punjab and Gujarat began appearing in Kashmir's local markets—pre-ground, neatly sealed, and chemically treated to increase shelf life.

Then came climate shifts. Shrinking glaciers, erratic snowfall, and reduced spring flows have transformed the valley's water patterns. Many streams that once surged through villages during harvest season now trickle out before summer ends. The timing has changed

grandfather built this in 1943. It ran until 2001. Then the sluice rotted and the roof caved in. No one came to fix it. My sons say there's no use keeping it alive."

Data is scarce, but a 2023 informal survey by agricultural students at SKUAST-Kashmir identified fewer than 50 operational water mills in the entire valley, down from an estimated 400 in the early 1980s. Many of the remaining ones survive only in remote, uphill areas where modern infrastructure is slower to reach.

Some see value in reviving them. Environmental groups argue that Aab-e-Grattas are among the few surviving examples of zero-carbon food processing in the region. Their design aligns with local ecology and could, with minor adaptations, complement sustainable tourism or community farming projects.

"There's a climate-smart wisdom in them," said Dr. Tariq Hussain, who studies indigenous technologies in rural South Asia. "They require no fuel, produce no emissions, and work with seasonal cycles. If supported with even basic repairs and community awareness, they could play a role in local food security."

However, efforts to preserve them remain minimal. No government scheme currently exists to restore or protect these mills as heritage sites. Occasional cultural festivals might feature one for display, but the structural support is absent. NGOs working in rural sustainability say they lack funding or technical capacity to intervene.

Meanwhile, memory carries the burden.

When Sara visits her childhood village now, the wheel is no longer a sound she hears. It's something she has to imagine. She walks to the old spot by the stream and runs her hand along the mossy stones. The hollow where flour once collected is filled with leaves. The door is broken. A cow grazes nearby, uninterested.

"I tell my daughter about it," she said. "That once, a stream could feed a family. That water was enough."

Whether her daughter will ever see it turn again is uncertain.

The water still comes, some years more than others. But the will to build, repair, and wait fades faster than the streams.

— The author is a cultural activist by passion and scribe by profession. She can be reached at shereennaman332@gmail.com.

A Lunch by the Jhelum

Over food and fashion, a chance encounter became a conversation about Kashmir, marriage, independence and the lives we imagine for one another.



Khushboo Javed

The rain had settled over the city that morning, the kind that makes you want to stay indoors and watch the day go by. It was my friend's birthday, and she kept waver over my invitation to lunch at her favourite new place. I thought she might not come at all.

Then, just as the clouds thickened, she arrived at my door. She borrowed one of my dresses, I called for a cab, and off we went: two friends.

This small restaurant is barely two months old, located at a stunningly beautiful place. I assume the owners must have needed a special permission from the government to get this restaurant built at that particular location. Construction at such a site where nature offers itself with grace will simply be a felony. But one small place does not hurt, which feels like needed for a fresh breath after a tiring weekend.

As I got down the cab, I could see a woman with a pixie haircut, most probably in her 40s, looking at me

through the big window pane from inside the restaurant. My friend and I entered and I let her decide the table for us. We sat on a table right in front of the big couch on the ground floor where a group of four non-Kashmiri friends along with an elderly woman were having a good time.

This particular woman in her 40s was also a part of the same group. As I was making myself comfortable in my chair, I could feel her still looking behind her chair at me, observing something. I looked up, met her gaze, smiled and whispered a hello. She returned the greeting as warmly.

Suddenly my friend called me, "Hey, she's asking about your handbag." I looked in front of myself where my friend was hinting towards. Another lady from the same group, almost in her 50s, was pointing towards my friend, "The shirt! It is a very beautiful shirt. Where did you get it from? I like it!" My friend pointed towards me, gesturing that it belonged to me.

"Oh, that's my shirt and she borrowed it in a hurry. It's her birthday," I said jovially as jovial this bevy of ladies was. In my 50s, I wish to be with my girlfriends in the same togetherness having a warm meal. Hopefully, the AI will not have taken over everything and we will not be surviving merely on universal basic income.

"Oh, wow, it's her birthday," said another lady, and they sang for my friend. We had a little chit-chat while I sat by the side of the lady

asking about my dress. I showed it to her on the internet for reference.

"What do you do?" She asked me. "I... I do nothing," I replied, cool as a cucumber.

"She does nothing!" The lady repeated after me to her friends. They were so happy with my response that it felt as if it was the best thing they had heard that day. They looked like some nice hard-working and dedicated ladies who needed a break from everything.

"So how does it feel here?" I enquired.

"We are enjoying the warmth and the hospitality of the people here," she said warmly. "I'm happy to hear that. May I ask where you are from," I asked. "We are from Delhi," she replied.

"So, Khushboo, how old are you?" The lady in the red dress asked.

"I'm 27."

"So are you getting married?"

"Hopefully," I shrugged.

"It will be among your own kin, right? Like that's how you get married."

This belief came across as strange to me.

"No, not necessarily. As for me, I am not going to marry anyone in my family or among the friends."

"Will a marriage of your choice be entertained?" She investigated further.

"Of course! I'll have a say. I'm a free soul. What I say will matter in my family!"

If only she knew that I was going to discuss with my Baba the

confusions she had. And why do I have this liberty to choose? Because Baba is a protective but open-minded father who knows well that I will not force them to get me married to a guy they will not deem fit for me and simultaneously, I will not allow anyone to force or manipulate me into marrying a guy I do not want to. It is simple and fair as that.

"Do you know where I can find the best Kashmiri tilla-work shoes here?" The shirt lady asked for my assistance.

I do not know of any such shoe-making business in the valley but I told her that I would try to get it confirmed and revert. I let them be and went back to join my friend.

I called a journalist friend for help. "You alive?" was the first thing he asked. Another friend asked the same thing early morning over a phone call a few days ago. I feel mortified to tell them that sometimes I can disappear like that. The journalist friend could not help. Hence, I called my mother's friend who is acquainted with such things.

We enjoyed the food but the hummus I told my friend that I guess I make better. That is because of a friend's secret recipe. I had a little chit-chat with the manager as well who came to our table. I asked him how the recent food crisis has affected the business. "Not much. We get the meat fresh every day from the local market. We do not buy any frozen stuff from outside the valley," he said. He himself is from Lucknow.

As these ladies left, I informed

the one who had inquired about the shoes, "The craftsmen used to make these handmade shoes in Basant Bagh, Gowkadal. My friend is not sure if they still make those shoes but that's where you can look."

She hugged me before she left, followed by another lady who said, "Just throw your anxiety issues into the river," while she looked at River Jhelum behind us. "I want to do that," I reassured her.

When I got to say goodbye to the lady with the pixie haircut, I asked her if I could know what she did for a job.

"I work with clothing and textiles industries, with board of directors of luxury brands," she told me.

Then I understood that maybe it was the professional in her examining my formal cum informal attire of cotton chikankari frock, formal trousers over a formal pair of shoes and livid printed georgette scarf, and a handbag that matched my trousers.

What the lady thought about the marriage system in Kashmir was interesting. She was right only up-to a certain extent. My prince charming or non-charming won't come via force and conflict, or necessarily acquaintanceship. Who knows, he could as well have been planning to come to the same restaurant that afternoon, but could not make it because he was getting late for his flight to Delhi.

— The author can be reached at khushboojaved3@gmail.com.

2 POC SO Accused

sexual assault. Police have intensified efforts to trace and apprehend the two accused and issued look-out notices at exit points to prevent them from leaving Kashmir. The police have also urged people to immediately share any information regarding the whereabouts or movement of the duo with the authorities.

“Information leading to their arrest will be suitably rewarded,” police said. Anyone with information has been asked to contact the nearest police station or call the emergency helpline 112. Meanwhile, further investigation into the circumstances surrounding the escape is underway.

Industry Must

India’s rise as one of the world’s three largest economies well before 2047, the nation must also define the character of its civilisation, spirituality, and cultural framework,” Sinha said. He said history remembered civilisations not only for their economies but also for how they used the resources and prosperity generated by those economies.

The Lieutenant Governor identified five major challenges that need to be addressed collectively by industry leaders, businesses, engineers and other stakeholders to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat.

He said India must transform its large young population into a skilled workforce equipped with expertise in emerging technologies, while ensuring that development remains environmentally sustainable.

“Transforming India’s vast young population into a skilled workforce equipped with expertise in emerging technologies is important for us and also ensuring sustainable development by balancing progress with environmental responsibility,” he said.

Sinha also called for strengthening institutions by making them transparent, accountable and efficient and responsive to citizens’ needs.

He stressed the importance of balanced regional development, particularly by bridging the gap between advanced cities and under-served regions to ensure equitable growth.

The Lieutenant Governor further called for India to move from being a consumer of technology and innovation to becoming a global creator.

“We must create the future rather than purchase it by becoming not just a consumer but a global creator of technologies, innovations, and ideas,” he said.

“We must resolve that we will not merely use artificial intelligence; we will also contribute to the future of artificial intelligence. We must resolve that we will not import innovation; we will export innovation,” Sinha added.

Reflecting on India’s development journey, Sinha said the “seed of Viksit Bharat” had already sprouted and that historic milestones had been achieved over the past 12 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said the collective desire and determination of citizens could help the country achieve its long-term goals.

“I believe that when a group of people from different sectors has a deep desire to achieve something, the pain and intensity of that yearning can ultimately become the means of achieving it,” Sinha said.

Drawing an analogy with a seed that is restless to germinate after being buried in the soil, he said a nation with an intense desire to achieve its goals could overcome seemingly impossible challenges.

Sinha also emphasised that the development of India must translate into broader social and economic well-being.

He reminded IIT alumni and other eminent personalities that India’s cultural ethos had always emphasised collective welfare and said the dream of Viksit Bharat should encompass the creation of an inclusive and prosperous nation where development is the right of every citizen.

He called upon industry leaders, policymakers, educators and citizens to reflect on the impact of their contributions on society.

Sinha also urged the younger generation to prepare for the responsibilities of 2047, when India will complete 100 years of independence.

He said the generation that would be at the peak of its careers and energy in 2047 must begin thinking today about what it would create and how those creations would affect society.

“The new generation, which will be at the peak of its careers and energy in 2047, must ask itself today: When India becomes a developed nation, what will you be creating? What impact will my creation have on society, and how will it affect people’s lives?” he said.

Sinha said that although eminent personalities were engaged in different fields, their collective efforts were ultimately contributing to one common objective: creating the future of India.

“We must contribute to the welfare of our country, society and humanity as a whole,” he said.

The World Wisdom Forum was organised by the IIT Alumni Council to deliberate on the theme of Viksit Bharat and India’s collective future. Sinha also felicitated achievers from diverse sectors during the event.

Member of Parliament Shashank Mani Tripathi, IIT Alumni Council President Ravi Sharma, National Stock Exchange MD and CEO Ashish Chauhan, besides IIT alumni and prominent citizens from different walks of life, were present on the occasion.

AI Cannot Replace

landscape. The Lieutenant Governor addressed the eighth batch of the Integrated Programme in Management (IPM) and the sixth batch of the Integrated Programme in Law (IPL).

“I want the spirit of adapting to change and working constructively to take deep root in your minds,” Sinha said, urging students to prepare themselves for a rapidly changing world.

He said the most important question for students was not simply what they would do, but what they knew well enough to enable

them to rebuild their careers despite changing circumstances.

“Remember, the most important question in life is never ‘What do I do?’ The real question is: ‘What do I know so well that, despite all challenges and changing circumstances, I can re-establish myself fully in the market?’” he said.

Sinha said the pace of technological change meant that the environment students were preparing for today could be substantially different by the time they graduated.

“The truth is that the ground beneath our feet is changing, right now, far faster than ever before,” he said.

On artificial intelligence, the Lieutenant Governor said AI would soon become ubiquitous in management, much like Excel, functioning as an invisible but powerful infrastructure rather than merely a subject of study.

However, he stressed that technological tools could not replace the human dimensions of leadership and decision-making.

“No technology can answer what should be created, what should be trusted, or how people should be led. AI tools can accelerate the speed of the business-management processes, but they cannot change the fundamental nature of decision-making,” Sinha said.

“Leadership, trust, and decision-making remain fundamentally human responsibilities,” he added.

Addressing law students, Sinha said AI could assist with tasks such as drafting contracts but could not interpret human intent or deliver justice with empathy.

He said accountability and fairness would remain central to the legal system and represented qualities that machines could not replicate.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the IPM students for choosing to study management and leadership at a young age and urged them to view their time at IIM Rohtak as more than a pursuit of a degree.

He described the period as an opportunity for self-discovery and encouraged students to explore different areas of knowledge beyond their formal curriculum.

“New ideas develop through meaningful dialogue and healthy differences of opinion. Do not limit yourselves to the curriculum, because studying diverse fields will broaden your vision,” he said.

Sinha urged students to ask questions, engage in respectful disagreements and expose themselves to diverse fields to develop a broader understanding of the world.

He said the years ahead would bring both successes and challenges, with students learning from both their achievements and mistakes.

“These very experiences will make you not only better business leaders but also better human beings,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted IIM Rohtak’s initiatives in sports management, gender diversity, 100 per cent placements and outreach programmes, including skill development initiatives for daughters of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that while nobody could predict what the world of tomorrow would look like, wisdom, moral courage and values would continue to provide students with the strongest foundation.

Sinha urged the students to sharpen their curiosity, strengthen their character and commit themselves to making a positive contribution to society and the nation.

He said adapting to change while working constructively should become an integral part of the students’ approach as they prepare to enter an increasingly technology-driven professional world. (ONS)

Nationwide Anti-Drug

awareness campaigns among coastal communities on maritime drug trafficking and coordinated checks at land, sea and air ports.

In the second half of December, agencies will conduct coordinated checks at all major entry and exit points, officials said.

The second fortnight of January 2027 will focus on detecting and destroying illicit drug cultivation, followed by an awareness drive among chemical industries on preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals in February.

Joint inspections of jails are also planned during the second half of February.

The year-long campaign will further include initiatives to engage youth in sports, verify drug-free campuses in educational institutions and train anti-narcotics personnel to detect activities involving the darknet, cryptocurrency, synthetic drugs and clandestine drug manufacturing laboratories.

Officials said the fortnightly campaigns would supplement regular enforcement activities and time-bound targets assigned to agencies under the national Vision Document for Narcotics Control 2026-29, which was unveiled recently.

The NCB said the coordinated nationwide campaigns would strengthen inter-agency co-operation, increase public awareness and contribute towards achieving the vision of a Nasha Mukta Bharat, or drug-free India.

Heavy Rains

abandoned and structurally unsafe houses across the old city and take preventive measures before such structures collapse.

“Such properties, including those under custodial ownership, need to be properly surveyed and assessed. Houses requiring urgent repairs should be repaired or otherwise secured to prevent accidents, particularly during the monsoon season,” local resident Sanjay Kumar said.

Several areas, including Tallab Tillo, Bhagwati Nagar, Krishna Nagar and Canal Road, witnessed extensive waterlogging, with rainwater entering houses and shops.

Residents expressed concern over recurring waterlogging, saying even relatively light rainfall can lead to water accumulation in several parts of the city.

They urged the government to conduct a comprehensive assessment of drainage systems in flood-prone areas and take measures to prevent rainwater from entering residential and commercial premises.

Waterlogging also disrupted traffic movement at several points, causing inconvenience to commuters.

Severe waterlogging was reported on the Jammu-Poonch National Highway near Bhagwati Nagar, the Jammu-RS Pura road near Kulliyian and Bajalta Road.

Meanwhile, traffic on the Jammu-Kishtwar National Highway was suspended after a mud-slide triggered by heavy rains blocked the road at Ragi Nallah. Restoration work was underway to clear the affected stretch.

Reports of flash floods were also received from Thathri in Doda district, though officials said there were no reports of damage.

Jammu city recorded the highest rainfall in Jammu and Kashmir during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 am on Sunday, receiving 66 mm of rainfall.

Udhampur recorded 56 mm, followed by Poonch at 45 mm, Kokernag at 42 mm and Qazigund at 32.6 mm, according to official data.

The Meteorological Centre forecast generally cloudy weather in the region on Sunday, with light to moderate rain or thundershowers at many places.

From August 24 to 28, generally hot and humid weather is expected, with brief spells of rain or thundershowers at scattered places, mainly during the early morning and afternoon hours, the weather office said.

From August 29 to 31, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely at scattered to many places, with brief intense showers mainly in the Jammu division during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The weather office has cautioned that intense localised showers could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides in vulnerable areas.

Drug Peddler

possession of Bharti in the Kashmir Basti area of Jammu.

During the course of the trial, the accused jumped bail granted in 2010, resulting in the proceedings against him remaining pending, the spokesperson said.

In a significant breakthrough, he said the NCB subsequently traced him to Jammu’s Amphalla jail and secured his production before the competent court in August last year, thereby bringing him back within the judicial process.

It wasn’t immediately clear under which case the accused was sent to Amphalla jail.

Following sustained legal proceedings, a special NDPS court here sentenced Bharti to three years’ imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on August 11, the official said.

In default of payment of the fine, he will undergo a further two months’ rigorous imprisonment, the spokesperson said, adding that the court also directed that, before his release, the convict furnish a bond of Rs 20,000 under Section 34 of the NDPS Act, undertaking not to repeat such offences in future.

The conviction marks the successful conclusion of a case dating back nearly 18 years and demonstrates NCB Jammu’s resolve to pursue drug offenders even where they attempt to evade the judicial process by jumping bail, the spokesperson said.

NCB reiterates its appeal to citizens to join the fight against drug trafficking.

“Information regarding the sale, transportation or trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances may be shared through MANAS – National Narcotics Helpline or toll-free number (1933). The identity of informers is kept strictly confidential,” the spokesman said.

Ruhullah: NC

put trust in NC on the rights lost after 2019,” he said.

Ruhullah further questioned why elected representatives and party members could not raise concerns if they believed the party leadership had deviated from its commitments. “Why can’t I raise issues against the party? We are not slaves of the party. We can raise genuine questions if the party is not on the track,” he said.

The MP questioned the growing focus on restoration of statehood, saying it is not the only issue that had formed part of the NC’s political agenda.

He recalled that NC vice president and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had earlier criticised those who focused only on statehood, adding that the political agenda extended beyond restoration of statehood.

MP Ruhullah said political parties are accountable to the people and should remain open to questions from those who had supported them.

“Parties are accountable to people, not above questions,” he said, asserting that raising concerns over unfulfilled commitments should not be treated as opposition to the party.

He added that his position is aimed at ensuring that the issues and rights promised to people during the election campaign remained part of the political discourse in Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Make India

Modi said: “We need to connect with many people – people who went abroad are now returning. I believe we should create an aura where people worldwide feel that if they want to make a career, they should go to India.”

He said such people from across the globe should feel that they should connect with a startup in India, connect with a space agency in India.

“I firmly believe that because of you, we can attract the entire talent pool like a magnet, and that can become a massive strength for us,” Modi said.

The prime minister appreciated the CEOs of space startups who showed courage by entering a new sector, and said the biggest factor was that they trusted the government’s word.

“My view has always been that whatever decision we make, we must remain consistent and avoid making frequent changes. This ensures that anyone willing to take a risk feels confident that while a mistake on their end might cause issues, no one will abandon them. Creating that trust was our effort,” he said.

Modi also said that India is highly competitive in terms of cost and there is no question about talent.

“We are very competitive on cost; there is no question at all about talent, and our people naturally have a higher risk-taking capacity anyway. Because of these, we can establish our

place very rapidly,” he said.

The CEOs said India’s first space-tech unicorn, Skyroot Aerospace, successfully launched India’s first private rocket into orbit, and that was just the beginning.

By mid-2027, they are aiming for one launch per month, the CEOs said.

They thanked the prime minister for opening up the space sector for private players, saying so far, factories have been built with a capacity of one rocket per month.

They said this is just the beginning and the dream is to do one launch per week, and eventually several launches per day.

When Modi asked whether the investors have the confidence, one of the CEOs said that investor confidence has increased significantly after Skyroot’s first launch.

“That’s great,” Modi said and asked whether that route is proving useful to the space start-ups. To this, one of the CEOs said, “It is very useful.”

The CEOs said their vision for the next 18 months is to establish a global ground station network.

Another CEO said that after a single launch, the company had received eight launch contracts in the last month, most of them international.

According to a statement issued by the prime minister’s office on Friday, Modi assured full government support to young space entrepreneurs and urged them to explore how space technology can be used in agriculture, livestock management, dairy, environment and other areas that affect people’s everyday lives.

The prime minister also hailed the CEOs for showing remarkable courage by entering a new and demanding domain of space startups as they have taken risks, trusted the reform process and remained consistent in their efforts.

He assured them of the government’s full support and called for greater collaboration between space companies and other sectors to expand the use of their technologies.

The startups part of the interaction included Skyroot Aerospace, Agnikul Cosmos, Pixxel, Dhruva Space, GalaxEye, PierSight, Bellatrix Aerospace, Digantara, SatSure, Suhora Technologies, Manastu Space, Astrobase, TakeMe2Space, VyomIC, Cosmoserve Space, OrbitAID Aerospace, SkyServe (Hyspace), Serendipity Space, Vassar Labs and mistEO.

The prime minister also greeted everyone on the occasion of National Space Day on Sunday.

“Happy National Space Day,” he said.

Modi also posted a video showing different aspects of India’s space research, innovations and success.

“Here’s to dreaming even bigger, innovating more and pushing newer frontiers...,” he said.

National Space Day is celebrated to commemorate the Chandrayaan-3 mission that accomplished a safe and soft landing of the Vikram Lander on the lunar surface on August 23, 2023.

Monsoon Fevers:

overlap, making self-diagnosis and self-medication particularly risky.

“Fever, body ache, headache, weakness and gastrointestinal symptoms can occur in a number of infections. Management should be guided by the patient’s clinical condition and, where required, appropriate investigations,”

Nischal said.

He cautioned against using leftover antibiotics from previous prescriptions or taking medicines prescribed for someone else.

“Antibiotics should not be started, stopped or modified without medical advice. People should not change the dose, duration or frequency on their own,” he said, adding that patients whose symptoms persist, fail to improve or worsen should be reassessed rather than simply adding another antibiotic.

Dr Mayank Uppal, senior consultant, Internal Medicine, Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, said antimicrobial resistance was already making the treatment of infections more challenging.

“Antibiotic resistance is not a future threat; it is already affecting clinical practice. When antibiotics are used unnecessarily or incorrectly, they exert pressure that allows resistant organisms to survive and spread,” Uppal said.

He, however, stressed that the solution was not to avoid antibiotics when they are genuinely required.

“Antibiotics remain lifesaving medicines. The objective is not to reduce their use indiscriminately but to ensure that the right patient receives the appropriate drug, dose and duration based on the clinical situation,” he said.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines on antimicrobial use also emphasise appropriate antibiotic selection and caution against indiscriminate empirical treatment when a bacterial infection has not been established.

Doctors advised patients with persistent or worsening fever, breathing difficulty, altered consciousness, severe dehydration, persistent vomiting, bleeding or marked weakness to seek prompt medical evaluation.

Dr Asuri Krishna, professor in the Department of Surgery at AIIMS, Delhi, said older adults, young children, people with underlying illnesses and those with compromised immunity may require earlier assessment.

He also cautioned against judging the severity of an infection solely by the intensity or duration of fever and assuming that persistent fever requires a stronger antibiotic.

“Fever for a few days does not necessarily mean that a stronger antibiotic is required. In many viral infections, supportive treatment and adequate hydration are the mainstay, while persistent or worsening symptoms need a fresh clinical assessment to identify whether the diagnosis needs to be revisited,” Krishna said.

Choudhary also cautioned against making treatment decisions based solely on rapid diagnostic tests or information obtained online.

“Diagnostic tests have to be interpreted in the context of the patient’s symptoms and examination. A test result in isolation should not become a reason to start or stop an antibiotic,” he said.

Doctors said preventing antimicrobial resistance requires responsible prescribing as well as greater awareness among patients.

Krishna said patients should understand that receiving an antibiotic was not necessarily a sign of better treatment.

“In many cases, the safest and most appropriate approach is careful observation, supportive treatment and reassessment if the condition changes,” he said.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Indeed, we belong to Allah and indeed to Him we will return.



Sad Demise

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform you of the sad demise of our beloved

Ghulam hassan mir
S/o abdul ahad mir

Old residence
haji masjid red Cross road masuima

Current address :-
rakh- E - arth bemina opt sheikh - ullaham- masjid

fatiya khani at graveyard maltang dalghate



10:00 Am



25-8-26

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ وَعَافِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُ

May Allah forgive him, have mercy on him, grant him health and pardon him.

Breast Cancer Can Turn Fatal Without Timely Detection, Warn Doctors

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Breast cancer can become life-threatening if it is not detected and treated at an early stage, as the disease may spread to other organs, including the bones, liver and lungs, doctors said, stressing the importance of awareness, regular screening and timely medical intervention.

Doctors said advanced breast cancer can lead to serious complications, significantly affect a patient's quality of life and, in severe cases, prove fatal. Beyond the physical burden, the disease often places considerable emotional and financial pressure on patients and their families, particularly when treatment continues for a prolonged period.

"Once cancer spreads to other parts of the body, the complications become much more serious. Patients may experience consid-



erable pain, disability and deterioration in their overall quality of life. The disease also takes an emotional and financial toll on families," oncologist Dr Aijaz Shah told KNO.

He said that while certain risk factors, including genetic predisposition, cannot be modified, several preventive measures and

lifestyle changes can help reduce the risk of breast cancer.

According to Dr Shah, women should remain alert about changes in their breasts and undergo appropriate screening as recommended.

"Self-breast examination, clinical breast examination and mammography after the age of 40 can play an important role in

detecting breast cancer at an early stage," he said, adding that early diagnosis substantially improves treatment outcomes.

He further advised women to maintain a healthy body weight, remain physically active, avoid smoking and limit alcohol consumption, as these measures can contribute towards lowering the risk.

An oncologist, Dr Zahoor Ahmad Mor, said breastfeeding has also been associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer, while a balanced diet can support overall health.

"A diet containing adequate fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while limiting highly processed foods, is beneficial for maintaining overall health," he said.

Doctors urged women to seek medical advice if they notice any unusual changes in their breasts. Warning signs, they said, may in-

clude a new breast lump, unusual nipple discharge, changes in the size or shape of the breast, alterations in the skin, nipple changes or other persistent abnormalities.

Any unusual or persistent change should not be ignored, doctors said, adding that seeking medical advice at the earliest can make a significant difference because breast cancer is treatable, particularly when it is detected before it spreads.

Doctors said awareness should not be limited to Breast Cancer Awareness Month or particular campaigns, but should become part of routine healthcare practices among women.

They added that regular check-ups, timely screening, awareness of symptoms and adoption of a healthy lifestyle remain among the most effective measures for reducing the burden of breast cancer.

Second Consecutive Lotus Bloom Renews Hopes of Wular's Ecological Revival



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Lotus flowers have bloomed for the second consecutive year in Kashmir's Wular Lake, renewing hopes among local communities that the revival of the iconic aquatic plant could help restore traditional livelihoods and revive a cherished part of the region's culinary heritage.

The lotus had disappeared from large parts of the lake for nearly three decades after massive siltation, particularly following the devastating floods of 1992, disrupted its habitat.

The renewed blooming follows restoration and desilting work undertaken by the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA), which has been working to improve the ecological health of the wetland.

For people whose families traditionally harvested nadru (lotus stem), the return of the flowers has been especially significant.

Bashir Ahmad, a 65-year-old fisherman whose family depends on Wular, said the return of the lotus was once considered almost impossible.

"We threw seeds into the lake hundreds of times, but nothing grew. It is only now, after the silt was cleared, that we see the flowers again," Ahmad told KNO.

His brother, Mohammad Fayaz Dar, said the disappearance of lotus had also affected local food traditions.

"After the lotus stems disappeared, nadru also gradually vanished from local diets. But now, we believe it will be revived completely," Dar said.

The lotus stem has traditionally been an important ingredient in Kashmiri cuisine and is widely prepared during weddings, festivals and other special occasions.

Tavir Ahmad, a chef in Kashmir, said the return of the plant was bringing back old culinary traditions.

"Now that it is back, we are preparing dishes the

way our grandmothers did -- slow, simple and full of memory," he said.

Wular, one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes, has historically supported thousands of people through fishing, lotus-stem collection and harvesting of water chestnuts. The lake is also an important habitat for migratory birds and has been recognised as a Ramsar wetland of international importance.

Over the decades, the lake suffered from silt accumulation, waste dumping, encroachment and changes in surrounding land use.

WUCMA employee Showket Ahmad said the lotus roots may have survived beneath layers of silt and began emerging after restoration work cleared sections of the lake.

"After we cleared silt from specific areas, lotus plants started re-emerging," he said.

Environmentalists have described the revival as an indication of the wider benefits of wetland restoration.

With lotus blooming again for a second consecutive year, residents hope the plant will establish itself more widely across Wular and once again become a sustainable source of livelihood—(KNO)

DDC Poonch Inspects Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi(PBUH) Arrangements



Observer News Service

POONCH: District Development Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma today conducted an extensive visit to various locations in Poonch town to inspect arrangements for the observance of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) and the associated religious procession.

Among those present were Additional Deputy Commissioner Tahir Mustafa Malik, Assistant Commissioner (Revenue) Muhammad Sayeed, Assistant Director (FCS&CA) Khalil Ahmed Bandy, alongside officers from Jal Shakti and other departments concerned.

During the visit, the District Development Commissioner inspected Poonch Eidgah and re-

viewed the arrangements for devotees attending the Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi programme. The DDC assessed the availability of essential amenities and directed the departments concerned to ensure proper arrangements for public convenience, safety and security.

The Deputy Commissioner also visited Jama Masjid, Poonch, to review preparations for the procession in the presence of Hazrat Maulana Mufti Farooq Hussain Misbahi and Hazrat Maulana Hafiz Abdul Majeed Madani. The Chair took detailed stock of crowd management, traffic regulation, sanitation, drinking water, power supply, security arrangements and other essential services along the designated route. The DDC directed the

officers concerned to maintain close coordination and put all necessary arrangements in place well in advance to ensure the religious programme and procession proceed peacefully and smoothly.

Later, the District Development Commissioner visited the historic Poonch Fort (Qila) and Main Bazaar to review overall town arrangements. The DC emphasised maintaining cleanliness, facilitating smooth traffic movement and keeping all public utilities fully functional.

The DDC reiterated the commitment of the district administration to provide all essential facilities and ensure a peaceful, safe and well-managed observance of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi in Poonch.

Development & Changing Mindset Marking New Era in Kashmir: Jitendra Singh

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a significant change in its development trajectory and the mindset of its youth under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, with peace and normalcy returning to the region.

Addressing a meeting of BJP leaders and office-bearers in Srinagar, Singh said the changing atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir was reflected in the aspirations and achievements of its younger generation.

"In the last 12 years, since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took power, the atmosphere has changed here. Peace and security are being restored, ordinary conditions are returning and the work of development is moving ahead at a rapid pace," he said, as per KNS.

Singh said the youth, particularly in Kashmir, have become increasingly aspirational after witnessing the difficult period of the past three decades.

"The mentality of our youth has started to change. Today's youth of India, and especially the youth of Kashmir, is highly aspirational and doesn't want to miss the bus," he said.

The Union minister said the performance of Kashmiri students in civil services ex-



aminations and competitive selections for engineering and medical colleges demonstrated the changing aspirations of the region's youth.

He said Jammu and Kashmir was now entering a phase similar to the transformation witnessed in the Northeast.

"The way the atmosphere and mindset had changed in the Northeast, we are now seeing that phase in Kashmir," Singh said.

He also highlighted the region's untapped economic potential, saying its rivers, agriculture and other resources had not been fully explored.

"Today, for the first time, lavender is being cultivated here. The Purple Revolution has taken place. Today, for the first time, new dams are being built here," he said.

Singh said Jammu and Kashmir would have an important role in India's journey towards becoming a developed nation.

"When India celebrates its 100th anniversary, we can also proudly say that in bringing India to that peak, we, the people of J&K, have also played a role," he said. (KNS).

ADC Bhaderwah Reviews Arrangements for Manimahesh, Kailash Yatra

Observer News Service

BHADERWAH: Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal conducted a detailed inspection of the Bhaderwah-Chamba road leading towards the revered Manimahesh Shrine in Bharmour, Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh, to review arrangements for the safe movement of pilgrims.

Among those present were Tehsildar Kamal Preet Singh, Assistant Engineer (PWD R&B) Muneeb, alongside other civil and police officials.

During the inspection, the team assessed road conditions and reviewed transit facilities along the route for pilgrims undertaking the Manimahesh Yatra.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunil Ku-



mar Bhutyal also inspected Bheja village and Padri Meadows, key halt points where pilgrims stay overnight before proceeding towards Padri Meadows and entering Himachal Pradesh.

The ADC directed PWD (R&B) and Jal Shakti De-

partment to address road and water requirements on priority, ensuring the route remains safe and motorable with adequate water supply. The Chair stressed that the officers concerned must take prompt corrective measures and maintain close

inter-departmental coordination.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner also reviewed administrative preparedness for the upcoming Kailash Yatra, with preparations underway across Bhaderwah. The ADC directed the departments concerned to ensure the timely completion of all arrangements, focussing particularly on road connectivity, drinking water, sanitation and other essential amenities along pilgrimage routes.

The ADC emphasised that all departments must work in synergy to facilitate smooth movement for devotees during both the ongoing Manimahesh Yatra and the upcoming Kailash Yatra, directing field officers to remain vigilant and swiftly address any issues affecting public convenience.

Mian Altaf Demands Fast-Track Trial in Chatroo Case

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Senior National Conference leader and Member of Parliament, Mian Altaf Ahmed, has expressed deep anguish and outrage over the tragic death of a minor school girl in the Chatroo area of Kishtwar district.

Demanding immediate intervention from the administration, Mian Altaf called for a comprehensive, time-bound investigation and a fast-track



trial to ensure swift justice for the victim's family. Terming the incident horrifying and an unpardonable violation of

human trust, Mian Altaf stated. In a statement issued, Mian Altaf said the heinous nature of this crime has shocked the

conscience of our entire society, urging the establishment of a dedicated fast-track court to conduct day-to-day hearings, ensuring the trial concludes and justice is delivered without procedural delays.

Mian Altaf maintained that the investigation must be conducted with complete transparency and that the guilty, if established through due process, should face the strictest punishment permissible under law. (KNS)

SPOs Honorarium Hike Will Be Fulfilled Soon, says Sunil Sharma

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Leader of Opposition and BJP leader Sunil Sharma accused the Union Territory government of failing on issues of unemployment, grassroots democracy and corruption, saying his party would raise people's concerns in the upcoming Assembly session.

Addressing a BJP meeting attended by senior party leaders and office-bearers from across Jammu and Kashmir, Sharma said the meeting would discuss the party's future strategy, organisational activities and issues concerning the people.

He alleged that the J-K government had "made fun" of unemployed youth by providing jobs to its relatives and workers through outsourcing.

Sharma also accused the government of trying to weaken grassroots democracy by delaying elections to Panchayati Raj institutions and alleged that corruption was on the rise.

"The government has increased electricity tariffs on the poor," he said, adding that the BJP would raise these issues and seek accountability from the government.

He said the BJP would hold a "secretariat gherao" on September 2 over various issues and claimed the protest would be aimed at "waking up" the government to fulfil its promises to the people.

On the long-pending demand of Special Police Officers (SPOs), Sharma said their honorarium would be increased soon and claimed that the required rules and formalities had been completed.

"Very soon, the Ministry of Home Affairs will issue an order in their favour. You will see that the long-awaited demand of the SPOs of Jammu and Kashmir will be fulfilled," he said. (KNS)

AIP Seeks Roadmap for 200 Free Power Units after Tariff Hike

SRINAGAR: Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) has lambasted the National Conference government over the 6.83% average hike in electricity tariffs, saying the move exposes the widening gap between the NC's election promises and its governance.

As per statement, AIP Chief Spokesperson Inam Un Nabi said the NC's 2024 manifesto promised 200 units of free electricity, while Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told the Legislative Assembly on 25 March 2025, "Our aim is to give 200 units of free electricity to the people and it will be done." Instead, consumers are now facing higher power bills, with the revised tariff effective 1 September 2026.

"JERC has assessed the annual requirement of JPDCL and KPDCCL at ₹10,275.72 crore, against ₹7,352.87 crore revenue at existing tariffs. The revised tariff is expected to generate ₹7,854.94 crore, while another ₹2,420.78 crore will come from government subsidy and grant-in-aid. The question is simple: before burdening consumers with higher tariffs and putting ₹2,420.78 crore of public money into the sector, why has the government failed to address the underlying gap of ₹2,922.85 crore?" Inam asked.

Inam Un Nabi said the people deserve transparency on power purchases, transmission and distribution losses, outstanding dues and operational expenditure.

"The NC promised relief but delivered a tariff hike. The people were promised 200 free units; they are now being asked to pay more. This is not just a broken promise, it is a serious question of public accountability," Inam said.

Inam Un Nabi demanded that the government immediately publish a time-bound roadmap for the promised 200 free units and explain how it intends to protect ordinary households from the rising cost of electricity. (KNS)

Article 370 Revocation Normalised Kashmir: Dr Darakhshan Andrabi

SRINAGAR: Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board and Minister of State Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi on Sunday said the abrogation of Article 370 has fully normalised the Union Territory, asserting that Pakistan's persistent objections on Kashmir were outdated and held no relevance.

"Pakistan always has one issue or another. But as for our Kashmir, we are happy being with India—and we always have been. If they want to keep harping on the same old tune, let them," Dr Darakhshan Andrabi told reporters here as per KNS.

Her remarks came in response to recent statements by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor, who described Kashmir as "an important part of India." The BJP senior leader said the international community was recognising the ground reality in the Valley.

"Now that Article 370 has been revoked, the situation here has normalised, and people are moving forward happily," she added.

Taking a swipe at domestic Opposition parties, Dr Andrabi said their criticism reflected an inability to accept the country's developmental strides under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership over the past 12–13 years.

"The Opposition is never happy when someone works hard. They simply cannot digest this success," she said, while acknowledging that the Opposition's role in a democracy would persist. "Whether in Parliament or the Assembly, their role will always remain. There is no point in trying to stop them," she added. (Agencies)

Justice Sanjeev Kumar visits Teetwal, inspects Camp Court, Legal Aid Clinic



KARNAH: Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Executive Chairman of the J&K Legal Services Authority, today visited Teetwal and inspected the Camp Court and Legal Aid Clinic established there.

During the visit, the Acting Chief Justice was briefed by Judicial Magistrate, Karnah, Mansoor Ahmad Mir, on the functioning of the Camp Court, pendency of cases and the catchment area being served by the facility.

Registrar General, High Court, M. K. Sharma; Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, Shazia Tabassum; Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kupwara, Manjeet Singh; SDM Karnah, Tehsildar Karnah, and officials from various other departments were present on the occasion. (Observer News Service)

CJP to Review Assurances, Fresh Agitation on Cards

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Cockroach Janta Party will convene a meeting of its national working committee on Monday to review the status of the commitments made by the Centre after the withdrawal of its nationwide agitation on July 25, saying the government is yet to formally communicate the steps being taken to fulfil the assurances.

All steps to secure fulfilment of the commitments would be considered, including the possibility of launching another peaceful nationwide agitation, the CJP said.

"The CJP called off its agitation in good faith because the government gave its word to the young people of this country," it said, adding that it would not allow that "good faith" to be mis-

taken for "weakness".

The CJP also asked students, young citizens, its supporters and volunteers to remain prepared for the outcome of its Monday meeting.

The announcements came days after the Supreme Court on August 18 sought a consolidated list of FIRs registered against students and protesters across the country.

The CJP said the top court asked the Centre thrice to provide the list so that it could consider exercising its powers under Article 142 to quash the cases.

"Despite the court repeatedly asking for this list, the Union government did not commit to providing it," the CJP said.

The outfit said that immediately after the court hearing, its co-convenor Saurav Das and legal affairs lead Ratna Singh



raised concern that the government appeared to be "cheating" the younger generation after the CJP called off its agitation on the basis of the commitments made during its talks with the Centre.

The assurances included withdrawal or quashing of all FIRs arising from the protests, a guarantee that no student or peaceful protester would face punitive action in future and compensation for the families of NEET-UG candidates who committed suicide after the test was cancelled in May due to paper leaks.

The CJP also said the government delegation that engaged in parleys with the outfit did not formally reach out to it to place on record the steps being taken to fulfil the written assurances, including on FIRs and compensation.

The CJP said its decision to withdraw the agitation was based on the government's words and warned against any attempt to "dilute, delay, reinterpret or dishonour" the commitments, which would be seen as "vishwasghaat" (betrayal) with the country's youth.

The national working committee meeting on Monday will assess the situation and decide the CJP's next course of action.

The CJP called off its nationwide agitation on July 25, soon after then-education minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned and the government gave assurances that students and peaceful protesters would not face punitive action.

The campaign also sought action in the NEET paper leak controversy and compensation for the deceased victims.

Munir Heads to Tehran as Pakistan Walks a Tightrope

Trans Asia News

TEHRAN—Pakistan's Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir heads to Tehran on Monday carrying a diplomatic message of peace—but also the baggage of a new defence alliance with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye that has dramatically altered the regional equation.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said Sunday that Munir will lead an official delegation to Tehran for talks with senior Iranian officials on bilateral and regional issues, including efforts to promote peace and security.



Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir is seen with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi in Tehran in June 2026. (Photo X)

has sought a larger strategic role in the reshaping of the Middle Eastern order.

The result is a new security architecture in which Saudi financial power, Turkish military-industrial capacity and Pakistan's military experience are being brought together.

The pact has consequently been described as a possible new strategic pole in West Asia, even though its signatories insist that it is defensive and does not target any particular country.

That distinction will matter enormously when Munir sits down with Iranian officials.

Pakistan caught between partners

Pakistan has strong reasons to avoid being seen as part of an anti-Iran coalition. Iran is its immediate western neighbour, shares a long border with Pakistan and remains an important economic and security partner. Islamabad also has an interest in preventing instability along its Balochistan frontier and avoiding any spillover from the regional conflict.

At the same time, Saudi Arabia is one of Pakistan's closest strategic and economic partners, while Türkiye has emerged as an increasingly important defence partner.

The Makkah agreement has deepened those commitments.

Munir was central to Pakistan's role in finalising the pact alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, making his appearance in Tehran particularly significant.

Edmund Hat-trick Fires East Bengal to Durand Cup Title



Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: A compact East Bengal produced a scintillating show as Edmund Lalrindika struck a dream derby hat-trick to rout Mohun Bagan 4-1 and clinch a record-equalling 17th Durand Cup title here on Sunday.

The Antonio Lopez Habas-coached side were at their fluid best, with skipper Mohammed Rashid holding the midfield and orchestrating their attacks, as East Bengal handed their arch-rivals a nightmare start by scoring four goals in a breathtaking first half.

Rashid set up Bipin Singh's opener in the 10th minute and later assisted Lalrindika's hat-trick goal in the 44th minute.

Playing as a lone forward in place of Jesin TK, Lalrindika also struck in the 12th and 22nd minutes as East Bengal virtually buried their arch-rivals' hopes in an action-packed first half.

Manvir Singh pulled one back for Mohun Bagan in the 33rd minute, providing a solitary moment of joy for the Mariners.

But the reigning Indian Super League champions remained compact and disciplined to see out the match and exact revenge for their 0-1 defeat in the 2023 final that had given Mohun Bagan a record 17th title.

The result means the two city heavyweights are now even-stevens, with 17 Durand Cup titles apiece in the 135-year history of the Asia's oldest competition.

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