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J&K Heat Spikes, Flash-Flood Risk Looms

Srinagar records 33.5°C, 4.2° above normal; intense showers possible from Aug 31-Sept 2



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir witnessed largely dry weather on Friday, with temperatures remaining above normal across several parts of the Union Territory, while the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast mostly dry conditions over the next few days with a possibility of high-intensity showers and flash floods from August 31 to September 2. Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 33.5 degrees Celsius, 4.2 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 18.3 degrees Celsius, 1.6 degrees above normal. The city received no rainfall during the past 24 hours, according to IMD data

accessed by the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO). Qazigund recorded a maximum of 32.6 degrees Celsius, 5.4 degrees above normal, while Pahalgam registered 27.3 degrees Celsius, 2.6 degrees above normal.

Kupwara recorded a high of 33.5 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag and Gulmarg recorded maximum temperatures of 31 degrees and 23.8 degrees Celsius, respectively.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded 34.6 degrees Celsius, 1.6 degrees above normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 18.3 degrees Celsius, 1.6 degrees above normal. The city received no rainfall during the past 24 hours, according to IMD data

The IMD has forecast mostly fine weather | [More on P6](#)

Tackling Terrorism Remains Foremost Priority: New IGP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Newly appointed Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Sujit Kumar, on Friday said tackling terrorism remains the foremost priority of the police while assuring people of their safety and seeking public cooperation in maintaining peace and law and order.

Kumar, who assumed charge as IGP Kashmir on Thursday evening, reviewed security arrangements at major congregation points in Srinagar and visited areas witnessing large gatherings following



Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).

Speaking to reporters during his visit, Kumar said police were focused on ensuring peaceful and smooth congregational prayers while maintaining adequate security arrangements across the city.

"I congratulate | [More on P6](#)

'Want No Share In This Lie': Ruhullah Questions NC's 370 Stand

Likely To Resign As MP & Exit NC On Nov 3; Says Accountability Must Come First

Farzana Nisar

Srinagar: Srinagar Lok Sabha member Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi has escalated his confrontation with the National Conference leadership, questioning its political shift on Jammu and Kashmir and asserting that while his resignation from Parliament and the party is on the cards, "before that must come accountability".

In a strongly worded two-page letter to NC president Farooq Abdullah, Mehdi questioned the party's decision to treat restoration of statehood as the "outer limit" of its political horizon, while pointing to its 2024 Assembly election promise to restore Articles 370 and 35A.

He also challenged Abdullah over his public demand that he resign as an MP and seek a fresh mandate, turning the dispute into a wider debate over what the National Conference now stands for.



WERE WE MAKING PROMISES we knew we could not keep or perhaps never truly intended to keep?"

Mehdi said his resignation would come "even without you asking" but made clear that he wanted accountability before taking the final step.

The letter came after Abdullah had publicly challenged him to resign from Parliament if he believed his 2024 Lok Sabha victory was based on his personal support rather than the National

Conference organisation.

The NC president had said that Mehdi should return to the people and seek a fresh mandate.

In an earlier statement, Mehdi confirmed that he would resign from both Parliament and the National Conference.

"Yes, I am resigning from the party and as Srinagar

MP," he said.

He said he was likely to formally tender his resignation to the Lok Sabha Speaker and Farooq Abdullah on November 3, the 26th death anniversary of his father, Aga Syed Mehdi.

Mehdi said he had a few commitments to fulfil before formally submitting his resignation, including the disbursement of funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme.

"I have a few commitments before I formally submit my resignation," he said.

He also said he had invited several MPs to Srinagar for a conference as part of his efforts to seek restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional rights.

In his letter, Mehdi took particular exception to the criticism that he was seeking restoration of Article 370 while "begging from Delhi".

He argued that the National | [More on P6](#)

Amarnath Yatra Concludes At Cave Shrine

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: The 57-day annual Amarnath Yatra formally concluded on Friday with the arrival of the Chhari-Mubarak, the saffron-robed holy mace of Lord Shiva, at the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in south Kashmir for special prayers, officials said.

The yatra, which began on July 3, coincided with Raksha Bandhan and concluded nearly three weeks after the pilgrimage was suspended on August 9 due to damage to the track and adverse weather conditions.

The Chhari-Mubarak, carried by a group of sadhus led by its custodian Mahant Dipendra Giri, reached the cave shrine in the early hours of Friday after a six-kilometre trek from Sheshnag.

Special prayers were held at the shrine, which houses the naturally formed ice Shivalingam, considered a manifestation of Lord Shiva.

The group of sadhus and devotees had trekked 42 km from Pahalgam, with night halts at Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panchtarani.

Following the prayers, the holy mace began its return journey. The puja and visarjan ceremonies | [More on P6](#)

Eid-e-Milad

Faith, Devotion Fill Hazratbal For Friday Congregation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Thousands of devotees gathered at the revered Hazratbal shrine here on Friday for congregational prayers and religious programmes following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, with the display of the sacred Relic believed to be of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) drawing large crowds.

The shrine, located on the banks of Dal Lake, witnessed a steady influx of devotees from across Kashmir, who joined prayers and recitations of Durood-o-Azkar.

The Holy Relic was displayed at Hazratbal, prompting devotees to offer prayers and seek blessings. The shrine premises and adjoining areas remained crowded as religious scholars and preachers spoke about the life, teachings and message of the Prophet (PBUH), with emphasis on peace, compassion,

brotherhood and mutual respect.

National Conference president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah also joined the Friday congregation at Hazratbal along with thousands of devotees.

Similar Milad gatherings, prayers and religious programmes were held at mosques and shrines across Srinagar and other parts of the Valley, with men, women and children participating in large numbers.

Devotees from different parts of Srinagar described the gathering as a reflection of the deep religious faith associated with Hazratbal.

"Coming here on this blessed occasion gives us a sense of spiritual connection and togetherness," said Manzoor Ahmed, a devotee from Soura.

Shafique Ahmad of Habba Kadal said | [More on P6](#)



Devotees queue up at Shankaracharya Temple to offer prayers during the Raksha Bandhan festival in Srinagar. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

J&K Doing Well, But Scope For Improvement: NITI Aayog

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is performing well across sectors, but there is significant scope to improve further by adopting best practices from across India and the world, NITI Aayog member M Srinivas said on Friday.

Srinivas was speaking to reporters after a NITI Aayog delegation visited the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM) in Jammu.

The delegation had earlier held discussions with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo to assess progress across various departments and identify areas where further support was required.

"I am extremely happy that Kashmir is doing very well and definitely all sectors are doing well. But there is enough scope and potential | [More on P6](#)

₹12,300 In J&K, ₹44,319 In Odisha'

J&K Medical Interns to Strike Over 'Lowest' Stipend From Aug 31

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Medical interns across Jammu and Kashmir have announced an indefinite strike from August 31, demanding a substantial revision of their monthly stipend, which they say has remained unchanged for nearly six years despite rising living costs and the growing responsibilities they shoulder in government hospitals.

The interns are demanding a monthly stipend of 30,000, against the current payment of around 12,300, which they contend is among the lowest compared with stipends paid to medical interns elsewhere in the country.

In a communication issued ahead of the proposed strike, the interns said prolonged inaction on their demand had left them with no option but



to withdraw their services from August 31 and launch protests until a formal order revising the stipend is issued.

"In view of the prolonged inaction, intern doctors have decided to publicly announce a complete strike from August 31, 2026, followed by protests, until a formal order regarding revision of the stipend is issued," they said.

The interns said their

demand was not merely for an increase in remuneration but for "fair compensation, dignity and recognition" of the services they render during their compulsory internship.

They said interns play a crucial role in the functioning of government hospitals, working across wards, emergency departments, operation theatres, intensive care units and outpatient | [More on P6](#)

J&K Sets 11,000 MW Hydropower Target By 2035



Press Trust Of India

Srinagar-Jammu and Kashmir has set an ambitious target of generating 11,000 megawatts of hydropower by 2035, an official spokesperson said here on Friday.

J-K is set to witness a major transformation in its power landscape, with the government charting a comprehensive, time-bound roadmap to raise its operational hydropower generation capacity to 10,969.65 MW by December 2035, more than three times the present installed

capacity of 3,540.15 MW, the spokesperson said.

The ambitious roadmap, aimed at strengthening energy security, reducing dependence on external power and creating the foundation for long-term economic growth, was reviewed in detail during a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, he added.

The chief secretary stressed the need for sustained inter-departmental coordination, rigorous project monitoring and timely resolution of bottlenecks to | [More on P6](#)

Answer Keys For UGC NET Announced

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The answer keys for the UGC National Eligibility Test (NET) were announced on Friday, the National Testing Agency said.

"The Final Answer Keys of UGC-NET 2026 have been officially released for 84 subjects," the agency said in a post on X.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) had ordered fresh examinations for candidates who appeared for the English, Commerce and Sociology papers in June this year after an expert committee found factual, typographical, translation and language-related errors in the question papers.

The NTA released the UGC-NET answer key on August 16, nearly two months after the examination, while issuing a special notice concerning the Sociology, Commerce and English papers.

Later, on the | [More on P6](#)



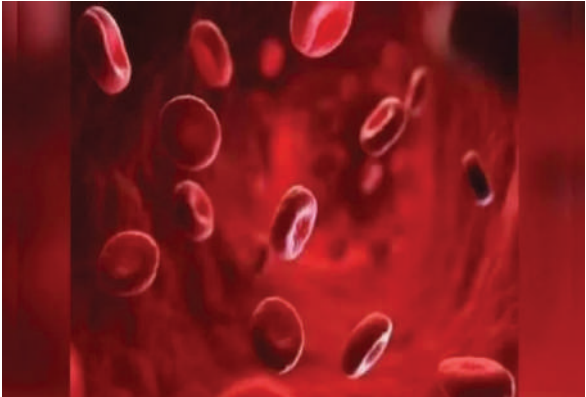
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Researchers Develop Tool To Estimate Biological Age Of Cell

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have developed a tool that can estimate a cell's biological age by analysing its gene activity and determining which genes are active or inactive. The tool, named 'Pasta' and described in a paper in the journal Advanced Science, can also identify substances that influence cellular ageing and distinguish between older, senescent

substances and biological signalling pathways that appeared to increase or decrease a cell's biological age -- some of the results were subsequently confirmed in laboratory experiments on human cells. "With this tool, we can track how cells change over time and gain insights into the mechanisms driving ageing," lead author Jérôme Salignon, a researcher at the Karolinska Institutet, said. "The tool can help us identify candidates for



cells, and more youthful, stem cell-like cells. Researchers from Sweden's Karolinska Institutet and Stockholm University said while ageing is a major risk factor for many diseases, there is a lack of methods that can reliably measure how quickly cells age. Cells with high biological age often exhibited an increased activity in genes linked to DNA damage and cellular stress, they found. Gene activity data from more than 17,000 tissue samples taken from healthy people was analysed for developing the tool. In the next stage, the researchers used Pasta to analyse more than three million gene profiles from public databases where cells had been exposed to thousands of drugs and genetic alterations. The analysis identified

future treatments of age-related diseases and cancer. In laboratory experiments, we validated two new candidates: pralatrexate, which accelerated cellular ageing, and piperlongumine, which made the cells more youthful," Salignon said. However, our results are based on cell-based experiments. Further research is needed before they can be translated into treatments for patients, the lead author said. Previous tools for measuring biological age often only work for a single tissue or type of data, which limited their usefulness, the researchers said. "We built Pasta to be broadly applicable across many tissues, cell types and laboratory techniques, so that all research groups can apply it to the data they already have," they said.



South Asia Faces Biggest Health Workforce Shortage: Study

Press Trust Of India

Globally, about 34.4 million additional doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, and pharmacists are needed to achieve moderate universal health coverage, with the largest shortages in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, a global study published in The Lancet Public Health journal has estimated. India has a ratio of about 73 health workers per 10,000 population -- 10.5 doctors per 10,000 population, 10.8 nurses per 10,000 population, 8.1 pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants per 10,000 population and 1.2 midwifery personnel per 10,000 population. Researchers from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington, US, estimated China to have a ratio of about 130 health workers per 10,000 population -- over 30 doctors per 10,000 population and about 45 nurses per 10,000 population. The analysis also found that global health workforce nearly tripled between 1990 and 2023 -- from 40.9 million to 122.1 million workers --

with women accounting for more than 70 per cent of the growth and representing about 70 per cent of all health workers in 2023. Less than half of doctors were women (43.9 per cent) and most nurses (80.7 per cent), midwives (96 per cent) and community health workers (89.5 per cent) were female in 2023. "However, this expansion has been uneven across regions and persistent shortfalls remain in doctors, nurses and midwives, dentists, and pharmacists relative to moderate UHC attainment," the authors wrote. Shortages in health workforce were largest in south Asia, which was estimated to be short by 2.6 million doctors, 10.0 million nurses and midwives, 0.7 million dentists, and 0.3 million pharmacists. "Using the thresholds for an 80 or higher UHC score, we estimated a shortage of 34.4 million HRH (human resources for health) globally in 2023, including 7.1 million doctors, 23.9 million nurses and midwives, 1.8 million dentists, and 1.6 million pharmacists in 2023," the team said. Lead author Megan Knight, researcher at the Institute for

Health Metrics and Evaluation, said, "Women have transformed the global health workforce over the past three decades, but they continue to be concentrated in professions that generally offer lower pay and fewer opportunities for leadership." "Building stronger health systems will require not only expanding the workforce, but also creating equitable opportunities for career advancement, leadership, and safe, supportive working environments," Knight said. In 2023, India was found to be among the countries in the world, including Brazil, Thailand and Rwanda, with the highest density of community health workers -- 16.2 per 10,000 population. Region-wise, the highest densities of community health workers were concentrated in south Asia (13.6 per 10,000 population), southeast Asia, east Asia, and Oceania (13.5 per 10,000 population), Latin America and the Caribbean (10.8 per 10,000 population) and sub-Saharan Africa (10.1 per 10,000 population), the analysis found. Fewer than one community health worker per 10,000 population were found in high-income countries.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Dilawar Hussain, resident of Takiya Lal Shah, Hazratbal, Srinagar, hereby declare that my name is recorded in the bank records as Dilawar Hussain Akhoun. However, my correct name, as mentioned in my Aadhaar Card and PAN Card, is Dilawar Hussain. Henceforth, Dilawar Hussain shall be considered my correct name for all official purposes. Address: Takiya Lal Shah, Hazratbal, Srinagar Account No.: 0007040100061180 Mobile No.: 9596220263 Dilawar Hussain inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Bashir Ahmad Lone F/o Mohammad Asif Lone, R/o Saterseeran Nagbal, Tehsil Kreeri, Post Office Kreeri, District Baramulla, do hereby notify that my son's name has inadvertently been recorded as "Asif Bashir" in his Aadhaar Card bearing No. 7626-6234-1376, which is incorrect. His actual and correct name is "Mohammad Asif Lone". I have applied for correction of his name in the Aadhaar records and for publication of the same in the Government Gazette. Any person having any objection to the aforesaid correction may raise the same before the concerned authority within the prescribed period. Bashir Ahmad Lone F/o Mohammad Asif Lone fko Post Office Kreeri, District Baramulla, J&K

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Maryam Jan W/o Aadil Jeelani Mian, R/o Baba Tang, Pattan, Post Office Pattan, District Baramulla, do hereby notify that my name has inadvertently been recorded as "Chesfida Rasheed" in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 4391-7080-7759, which is incorrect. My actual and correct name is "Maryam Jan". I have applied for correction of my name in the Aadhaar records and for publication of the same in the Government Gazette. Any person having any objection to the aforesaid correction may raise the same before the concerned authority within the prescribed period. Maryam Jan W/o Aadil Jeelani Mian R/o Baba Tang, Pattan, Post Office Pattan District Baramulla, J&K fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in my adhaar card as Zahira Jan while my correct name is Zehra Showkat. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar Centre Jammu/Srinagar within Seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Zehra Showkat D/o Showkat Ahmad Bhat R/o Bonagund Kunzar Kawarhama BMG

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, M/S Kirmani Constructions, Prop: ISHFAQ AHMAD DAR S/O ABDUL MAJEED DAR R/O Sozeith Goripora, Narbal, Budgam JK is applying for DEE Class Government Contractor Card at the Office of the Chief Engineer JKPDC Bemina. Anybody having any objection may contact above Office within seven days from the date of this advertisement, after which no objection will be entertained. Abass Advt.



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Mirwaiz Calls for Urgent Protection of Kashmir's Fragile Ecology

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, while addressing the Friday congregation at the historic Jama Masjid Srinagar, said that the devastation being witnessed in Nepal and across the Himalayan region should deeply concern all of us. These are not isolated events. They are warnings of how vulnerable our mountain ecosystems have become as glaciers collapse.

"We express our heartfelt solidarity with the people of Nepal at this difficult time, and pray for those who have lost their lives, for the safety and early recovery of the many people who remain missing, and for strength and relief for all those affected," Mirwaiz said.

He said Jammu and Kashmir is part of the same fragile Himalayan belt. "We are already seeing more intense rainfall, cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides. Climate change is undoubtedly a major factor, but we must also ask whether our own pattern of development is making the situation more dangerous."

Mirwaiz said that gifted with the natural beauty of mountains, lakes and rivers, Kashmir attracts tourists and travellers and is a source of sustenance to a large population here. "But the manner in which we are recklessly exploiting this ecology for commerce and in the name of development is very worrying."

He said mountains are being cut and blasted for roads, trees are being felled, hotels and buildings are coming up in ecologically

sensitive areas and natural drainage channels are being disturbed. "If this continues without proper scientific and environmental safeguards, we are creating conditions for far greater disasters in the future."

Mirwaiz said equally worrying is the continued encroachment of wetlands, lakes and flood channels. "I appeal to people not to occupy or build upon these areas. Wetlands are not unused land; they are natural buffers that absorb excess water and protect human settlements."

Referring to Dal Lake, Mirwaiz said, "We have only to look at the condition of our own Dal Lake to understand how prolonged encroachment, construction and environmental neglect can damage a precious natural system. It is shrinking day by day while we look the other way as if it's no concern of ours."

Mirwaiz said this is therefore a matter of serious collective responsibility. "Authorities, planners, businesses and citizens all have to recognise that in a fragile Himalayan region development for infrastructure and tourism carries serious consequences. We have to strike a balance between ecology preservation and human intervention in the name of progress."

"The tragedy in Nepal must be seen as a warning close to home. We too live in the Himalayas. If we continue to disturb the natural balance of our mountains, forests, wetlands and waterways, the consequences may one day be irreversible," he said.

KGP Achieves Landmark Global Placement Success

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant achievement for technical education in Jammu and Kashmir, Kashmir Government Polytechnic College (KGP), Srinagar, has recorded a landmark success with 10 of its students being selected during a prestigious campus placement drive while still pursuing their studies.

The selected students are set to join the renowned Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group (ESAG) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates,

marking a major milestone in the college's efforts to bridge academic learning with global industry opportunities.

The campus recruitment drive was organised by the Training and Placement Cell of KGP Srinagar in collaboration with ESAG, providing fifth-semester students from multiple engineering branches an opportunity to secure positions with a leading UAE-based conglomerate having a legacy of over six decades across retail, real estate, technology and industrial sectors.



Shankaracharya Temple Witnesses Heavy Footfall on Raksha Bandhan

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Large numbers of devotees thronged the Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar on Friday as Raksha Bandhan was celebrated across Kashmir, with long queues witnessed at the revered hilltop shrine throughout the day.

Devotees waited patiently for their turn to offer prayers and pay obeisance at the temple, which emerged as a major centre of attraction on the occasion. To facilitate the movement of visitors and manage the heavy rush, authorities put in place special traffic and parking arrangements around the temple.

Srinagar Deputy Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Mehboob-ul-Haq said the arrangements were functioning smoothly, adding that additional transport facilities had been arranged in coordination with the district administration.

"Traffic arrangements are fine. Here, with the help of the District Administration, we have arranged for RTC vehicles, which are ferrying people from the bottom to the top of Shankaracharya temple and then bringing them back," he said.

He said free parking facilities had also been made available for visitors. The traffic department, he added, was fully prepared to handle the expected increase in the number of devotees during the day.

The authorities continued to maintain arrangements for the smooth movement and convenience of devotees visiting the temple as celebrations of Raksha Bandhan drew large crowds to the historic shrine. (with KNT inputs)

Unidentified Woman's Body Retrieved From Jhelum

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An unidentified woman was found dead after being retrieved from the River Jhelum near the Nawa Kadal area of Srinagar on Friday.

The woman was immediately shifted to a hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead on arrival. Her identity could not be ascertained immediately, while the circumstances surrounding her death remain unclear.

Police have kept the body for identification and completion of legal formalities. Further proceedings in connection with the incident have been initiated.

AIP Seeks Urgent Intervention over Achan Landfill Crisis

Observer News Service

Srinagar: While speaking to inhabitants living around Achan-Eidgah, Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) Chief Spokesperson Inam Un Nabi expressed serious concern over the continuing waste-management crisis at the Achan landfill, saying the people living in its vicinity are bearing the consequences of prolonged accumulation of waste.

In a statement issued, Inam Un Nabi said the latest developments before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) are deeply concerning, with around 11 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste still reported at Achan, while only approximately 40,000 tonnes has so far been processed through bio-mining. The deadline for clearing the legacy waste has also reportedly been extended from March 2027 to March 2028.

He said the problem cannot be addressed merely by extending deadlines, particularly when Srinagar generates around 520-550 tonnes of municipal waste every day, against an existing processing capacity of approximately 150 tonnes per day.

"Not only the The people of Achan Eidgah but entire old City (Shahr e Khass) have lived with this burden for years. They deserve a clean and healthy environment, not an ever-expanding waste site at their doorstep." Inam Un Nabi said.

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
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- PDD: 0194-2450213
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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR 15 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1448	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	4: 34
	ZUHR	12:32
	ASR	5: 12
	Magrib	7: 05
	ISHA	8: 29

- 708 - Copper coins are minted in Japan for the first time (Traditional Japanese date: August 10, 708).
- 1988 - USSR launches 3 cosmonauts (Valery Polyakov, 1 Afghan) to station Mir.
- 1990 - Saddam Hussein declares America can't beat Iraq
- 1991 - USSR suspends Communist Party activities
- 1995 - NATO launches Operation Deliberate Force against Bosnian Serb forces.
- 1997 - At least 98 villagers are killed by the GIA in the Rais massacre, Algeria.
- 2003 - Ayatollah Sayed Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, the Shia Muslim leader in Iraq, is assassinated in a bombing, along with nearly 100 worshippers as they leave a mosque in Najaf.
- Usher
- 2004 - 28th Olympic Games closes at Athens, Greece
- 2004 - Athens Olympic marathon is run on same route as 1896 Games, start at site of the Battle of Marathon to the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens: Stefano Baldini of Italy wins men's gold in 2:10:55
- 2004 - Future undisputed world light heavyweight boxing champion Andre Ward of the US wins the light heavyweight gold medal at the Athens Olympics beating Magomed Aripadiev of Belarus on points
- Panhandle. Kills more than 1,836, causes over \$115 billion in damage.
- 2007 - A United States Air Force nuclear weapons incident takes place at Minot Air Force Base and Barksdale Air Force Base.
- 2013 - 41 people are killed and 33 are injured in a bus accident in Kenya
- 2014 - Senegal is 5th country hit by Ebola
- 2017 - Hurricane Harvey sets rainfall record (51.88 inches in Cedar Bayou) from a tropical cyclone in continental US, according to US National Weather Service
- 2017 - Monsoon rains in Mumbai cause chaos closing schools and airports

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Abdul Majeed Bhat, F/o Basit Majeed Bhat, R/o Hail Jagir, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, do hereby declare that the name of my son has inadvertently been recorded as "Muhammad Haris Bhat" in his Aadhaar Card bearing No. 7947-6496-7876, which is incorrect. His correct and actual name is "Basit Majeed Bhat". I have applied for correction/updates of his name in the Aadhaar records accordingly. Abdul Majeed Bhat F/o Basit Majeed Bhat R/o Hail Jagir, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Zaina Begum, W/o Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Khan, R/o Salusa, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla, do hereby declare that my name has inadvertently been recorded as "Zana Begum" in my Aadhaar Card bearing No. 7052-9648-8231, which is incorrect. My correct and actual name is "Zaina Begum". I have applied for correction/updates of my name in the Aadhaar records accordingly. Zaina Begum W/o Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Khan R/o Salusa, Tehsil Kreeri, District Baramulla FKO

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Dy Chief Engineer/Const./Doubling/Northern Railway, Jammu Tawi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Two Packet system for the following work:

1	Name of work and location:	Construction of road under Bridge or Limited Height Subway internal RCC box size (7.5 x 5.5) Nalunga village at Railway km 93/780.8 near Mirthal station on JRC-PTKC Section.
2	Completion period of the work.	9 (Nine) months
3	Approx. Cost of work:	Rs. 15,87,45,816.08/-
4	Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 31,74,900.00/-
5	Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 15:00 hrs on date 23.09.2026 on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened soon after 15:00 hrs on 23.09.2026.
6	Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document:	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in and tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in . Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 09.09.2026 to 23.09.2026. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No. 5-WDYCECDJAT-26-27, Dated 27.08.2026
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2982/26

FATEHA KHWANI



اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُونَ
Innalillahi wa Inna ilaihi Rojiun
Indeed we belong to Allah and indeed to him we will return

With profound grief, we announce the demise of **Gazanfar Ali**, former Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), who passed away on 27th August 2026. Fateha Khwani will be held on Sunday, 30th August, at 6:30 AM, at the ancestral graveyard, Pandreathan, Srinagar.

A day-long Majlis shall be observed at Imambargah Pandreathan afterwards.

May the Almighty grant the departed soul eternal peace and bestow upon the bereaved family the fortitude to endure this irreparable loss.

BEREAVED:
Family, relatives, friends
and all near and dear ones.

اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُونَ
INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAHI RAJI'UN

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

Nazir Ahmad Chishti

S/O Late Haji Nizamuddin Chishti

RESIDENT OF

Lal Ded Colony, Goripora,
Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir – 190015

MOURNING WILL BE FOR THREE DAYS ONLY

Ijtimahi Fatiha khwani will be held at
ancestral graveyard at Bahudin Sahab,
Nowhatta on **29 Aug 2026 at 10:30 am.**

Later on **majlis** will be held at home.

BEREAVED FAMILY

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

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KO VIEW

The Srinagar Test

Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi's decision to quit the National Conference and the Lok Sabha on November 3 has turned a party dispute into a bigger question: who speaks for urban Kashmir, and what do its voters want?

Ruhullah says he will submit his resignations on the 26th death anniversary of his father, Aga Syed Mehdi.

The symbolism is striking, but the politics are sharper. His break comes after months of criticism of the National Conference leadership over its retreat from the promise to fight for restoration of Article 370 and broader constitutional guarantees. He has accused the party of "lies and betrayal" and said his own commitments do not change with political circumstances.

Farooq Abdullah effectively forced the moment. After Ruhullah claimed that his 2024 victory displayed his personal credibility as much as the party's mandate, Abdullah challenged him to resign and return to the voters. Ruhullah accepted. "It is not possible that Doctor sahib asks me for something and I send him back empty-handed," he said.

That exchange has changed the character of the dispute. Ruhullah is no longer merely the dissenter sitting inside the National Conference, a political scarecrow warning the party about the distance between its promises and its conduct. He is preparing to test whether that dissent can travel beyond the party machinery and survive as an independent political proposition.

Srinagar will be the real laboratory. Ruhullah won the 2024 Lok Sabha election with 356,866 votes, more than twice the tally of his nearest rival, Waheed-ur-Rehman Para. His margin was 188,416 votes.

Those numbers belong to an election fought under the National Conference banner, so they cannot simply be treated as Ruhullah's personal property. But they are large enough to make Abdullah's challenge consequential. A by-election would therefore ask a deceptively simple question: how much of the Srinagar mandate belongs to the party, and how much belongs to the man?

The answer could rearrange urban Kashmir politics. Srinagar has long been the National Conference's political home turf. A serious independent challenge from Ruhullah would force the party to defend that inheritance against one of its own most visible critics.

It could also give voters a rare chance to separate loyalty to a political institution from loyalty to an individual candidate.

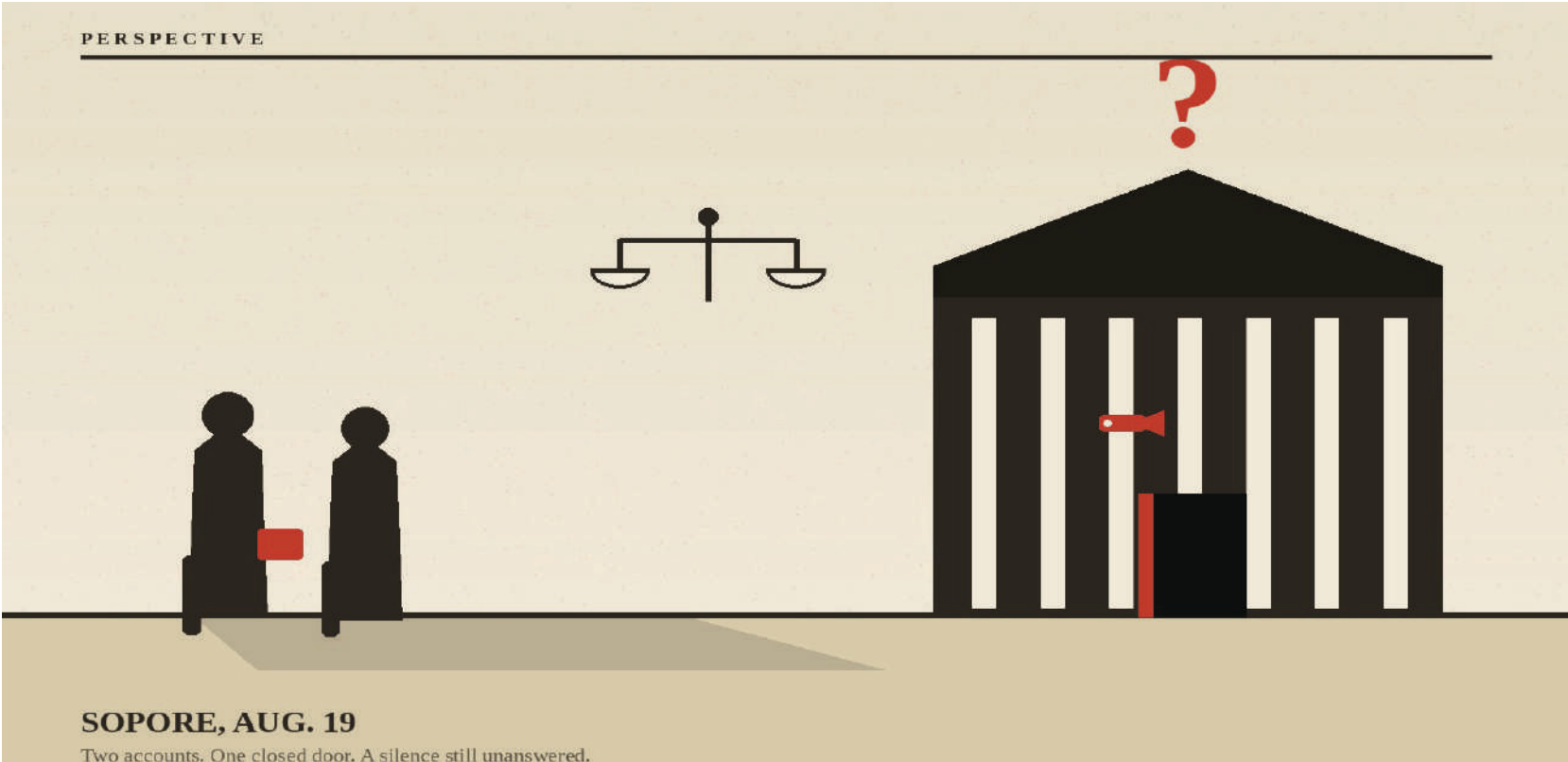
The implications extend beyond Srinagar, as Kashmir's three Lok Sabha constituencies already present an unusual picture.

Baramulla's Engineer Rashid remains in Tihar jail, while Anantnag-Rajouri is represented by Mian Altaf Ahmed. If Ruhullah leaves Parliament, Srinagar too would become vacant, leaving Mian Altaf as the only functioning elected Lok Sabha representative from the valley.

That would make the Srinagar contest more than a by-election. It would become a referendum on the National Conference's direction, Ruhullah's political credibility and the vocabulary of Kashmir's representation in New Delhi.

The grand old party may still possess the organisation, but Ruhullah may possess something newer: the political space created by dissent.

What Srinagar does with that space could set the pulse of Kashmir's politics for years.



Inside the Sopore Dispute

A contested encounter inside a Tehsildar's office has grown into a test of how institutions respond when two versions of an event collide.



Asif Wani

A dispute inside a Tehsildar's office in Sopore has become larger than the allegations themselves.

Two young lawyers say they were mistreated during a professional visit on August 19. The Tehsildar rejects the allegations, but the Bar Association Sopore began a sit-in and sought action. The administration, meanwhile, remained largely silent.

That silence is the weakest possible institutional response.

The lawyers are seeking action, but the deeper demand is for a process capable of establishing what happened.

Such a process would give the Tehsildar an opportunity to answer the allegations and give the lawyers a formal avenue through which their complaint could be examined.

Both interests belong to the same principle: due process.

Mohammad Waseem, one of the lawyers and the complainant, alleges that he entered the Tehsildar's office while his clients were being questioned and was ordered to leave.

He says abusive and threatening language followed, including derogatory remarks about him and lawyers generally. He also alleges a threat of being sent to the lock-up and other consequences. The Bar Association's resolution condemning the incident records similar allegations.

These are serious claims, but they also remain claims.

A public officer cannot be presumed guilty because a professional body has endorsed an allegation. Administrative action based solely on collective pressure would weaken the very principle the lawyers are invoking.

The Tehsildar has publicly rejected the allegations and released CCTV footage three days after the incident. The footage establishes that the lawyers entered and left the Tehsil office. It cannot establish what occurred inside the chamber, where the relevant exchange is alleged to have taken place.

That distinction should have been the beginning of an inquiry.

According to Waseem, the Bar had approached the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sopore, before the protests began and brought the incident to his attention.

If that account is disputed, the administration can place its version before the public. But if the complaint was indeed brought to the authorities, a preliminary fact-finding exercise could have followed.

Such an exercise is straightforward. The available CCTV footage could be preserved. The people present at the office could be identified. Statements could be recorded. The Tehsildar could provide his account. Other relevant material could be examined.

The purpose would be to establish facts, rather than pronounce guilt.

The dispute has since acquired a legal dimension. A criminal complaint has been filed against the Tehsildar, and the Court of the District Mobile Magistrate, Sopore, presided over by Usman Khurshed, has issued a pre-cognisance notice.

The Tehsildar has an opportunity to be heard before the court decides whether to take cognisance. The proceedings remain at an early stage and carry no finding on the allegations.

The court process and administrative engagement can proceed on separate tracks. The existence of a complaint before a magistrate does not prevent the administration from examining an institutional grievance with care. In fact, careful administrative engagement could help prevent a professional disagreement from hardening into an institutional confrontation.

That risk is already visible.

Bar Associations in Baramulla and Rafiabab also extended support to Sopore. A dispute involving two lawyers and one revenue officer involved a wider section of the legal fraternity.

Such escalation serves neither side. Lawyers depend on revenue officials to perform their statutory functions. Revenue courts, in turn, depend on lawyers who appear before them on behalf of citizens.

The relationship is practical as much as institutional.

When it breaks down, clients wait, proceedings slow and the distance between an ordinary citizen and the state grows wider.

Lawyers also occupy an unusual position in public life. They frequently enter government offices on behalf of people who lack the confidence, knowledge or access to confront officialdom themselves. Their professional work often places them between an individual citizen and the machinery of government.

That position gives their complaints institutional weight, while giving them no exemption from scrutiny.

The administration therefore has two duties at once: hear the lawyers seriously and protect the Tehsildar's right to a fair examination.

Tangmar provides a useful recent comparison.

Last month, a lawyer allegedly assaulted by the Station House Officer at Kunzer prompted intervention from the adminis-

tration. The SSP Baramulla ordered an inquiry, and the SHO went on leave before being transferred to another station through a routine district reshuffle. The engagement helped cool the situation.

Sopore could have followed a similar course without prejudging the Tehsildar.

Listening to a grievance does not amount to accepting it. An inquiry does not constitute punishment. Engagement does not diminish executive authority.

A government demonstrates institutional confidence when it can hear an allegation, examine evidence and allow the facts to guide its response.

The lawyers, meanwhile, have a corresponding obligation to let due process do its work. A collective protest can draw attention to a grievance, but evidence must establish its truth.

That is why the administration's silence has become the most troubling feature of this dispute.

The question before it is smaller and more practical than punishment: what happened inside that office on August 19?

A fair process can answer that question. It can vindicate the Tehsildar if the allegations prove unfounded. It can vindicate the lawyers if evidence supports their account. It can also establish uncertainty where evidence falls short.

Any of those outcomes would be preferable to institutional silence.

People who practise due process in courtrooms should have access to it when they themselves raise a grievance. The administration, which exercises executive authority, has the greater capacity to begin that process.

Sopore now needs that first step.

The author is Practising Lawyer at J&K and Ladakh High Court, Srinagar, and can be reached at aasifwani79@gmail.com.

The Law After Retirement

Under Jammu and Kashmir's anti-corruption statute, leaving government service does not automatically remove the requirement of sanction for prosecution.



Farooq Ahmad Khan

A retired officer walks into a lawyer's chamber holding a charge-sheet that names events from 2007.

He has been out of office for years, and assumes, as most people assume, that retirement closes the door behind him.

The lawyer's first job is to explain that retirement does not automatically close the case.

The answer lies in a law few people outside the courts know well: the Jammu and Kashmir Prevention of Corruption Act, Svt. 2006.

Its wording and history are different from the Central law, and so are some of the answers it gives.

The confusion starts with a habit.

Lawyers familiar with the Central Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, often carry its logic into J&K courtrooms as if the two laws were the same.

For years, Section 19 of the Central law referred to a person "who is employed" in government service. Courts read those words literally: once an officer retired, the requirement of sanction for prosecution ended with the job.

Over time, that reading became a kind of legal shorthand, repeated so often that it turned into instinct. Retirement meant no sanction.

That instinct, applied to a J&K file, produces the wrong answer.

In Chuni Lal Raina v. State of J&K & Anr., decided in 1998, the High Court examined Section 6 of the state's own Prevention of Corruption Act and held that sanction remained necessary even for a retired public servant, so long as the alleged conduct fell within that section's terms.

The Court was not choosing a side in a national debate. It was reading a different statute, one that never confined its protection to serving officers in the first place.

Parliament caught up in 2018. The amended Central Act now expressly covers a person who "was" employed at the time of the alleged offence, not only one who "is" employed today.

The change closed a gap that had left retired officers exposed for two decades under the Central law.

What makes the J&K position worth pausing over is timing.

The protection Parliament wrote into national law in 2018 had already existed, in substance, in the Jammu and Kashmir statute since before Chuni Lal Raina was decided in 1998.

Nobody has produced evidence that Parliament borrowed the idea. What can be said plainly is that the state's law reached a conclusion the rest of the country needed twenty years to legislate.

This is not a footnote for legal historians. It



changes how a real file gets read today.

Two officers, alleged to have committed nearly identical acts in the same year, can face opposite outcomes depending on which statute governs their prosecution and when cognizance was taken against them.

The document sitting on top of the file, headed "Sanction for Prosecution," settles nothing by its heading alone.

Even a sanction that exists can fail.

The Supreme Court, in State of Goa v. Babu Thomas, held that sanction granted by an au-

thority not competent under the applicable rules is not a curable irregularity. It goes to the root of the prosecution.

Section 6 of the J&K Act ties competence to remove from office, a detail easy to overlook and decisive when overlooked.

A government department issuing sanction for an officer whose removal rests with a statutory board has not merely made a paperwork error. It has acted outside its power, and cognizance built on that act stands on nothing.

Sanction also fails when it is signed without

being considered.

In Mansukhlal Vithaldas Chauhan v. State of Gujarat, the Supreme Court wrote that consideration implies application of mind, and it meant this literally: an authority must look at the material before it, rather than simply endorse someone else's file.

The order simply needs evidence, on the record or in the files behind it, that a mind engaged with the facts before a signature closed the matter.

None of this makes sanction a privilege for the guilty. The Court called it a safeguard against frivolous and vexatious prosecution, rather than a shield for wrongdoing, and both halves of that sentence has impact.

An honest officer should not answer for a decision that later became politically inconvenient. Neither should a corrupt one hide behind a technical defect manufactured after the fact.

What the retired officer in the lawyer's chamber actually needs is someone to ask, in order, when the offence occurred, which statute governed it, when his service ended, when cognizance was taken, and who held the legal power to authorize his prosecution.

The paper on the file answers none of these questions by existing. It only raises them.

The author is an advocate practising before the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, and can be reached at frooqahmadkhan@gmail.com.

Why Iqbal Speaks to Me More Than Nietzsche

Schopenhauer saw desire as an endless source of suffering, while Nietzsche sought mastery through the Will to Power. Iqbal imagined something beyond both.



Wajahat Qazi

Pared to essence, one basic and elemental, for want of a better word, impulse appears to be the inner and vital life force of human beings.

The great poet philosopher Hazrat Allama Muhammad Iqbal (RA) calls it Khudi.

Two Western greats, Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, both, incidentally, German, coined and referred to terms, 'Will to Power' and 'Will'.

Intriguingly, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer coined and elaborated upon these terms in the crucible of the great churn and its aftermath in the West.

That was its Renaissance and Reformation.

Allama Iqbal coined the phrase Khudi, rendering it eloquently poetic and poignant, in one of his poems.

The time period was a time of great churn and turbulence, intellectual, emotional and political, in much of the colonized world, especially the Muslim world.

Consider the Poet of East's Khudi first.

While the inimitable Qalandar did not entirely or fully explicate on Khudi in prose, and left space for inference and practice of the same, the meaning is pretty much clear.

Contra material, empirical and even rational views and philosophies, Iqbal's Khudi appears to refer to the 'Divine Spark' within every human being.

This spark, occluded by base instincts and quests, is the moral and ethical agency that humans are imbued with.

It is a call for and of action against fatalism, but what it appears not to be is 'will'.

The concept, if it is a concept at all, then becomes a paradox, a negative one.

If there is no will, how can a human attain the state of Khudi?

Iqbal's fecund corpus of amazing and incredible works lends itself to a basic attempt at interpretation.

It can be inferred with a degree of certitude that striving and struggling to realize oneself in the form and idiom of God's instructions, through Ishq (divine love), are central to Khudi.

Importantly, once the state is attained, humans transcend and overcome both fear and limitations of the natural, physical world.

Khudi, then, in Iqbal's schemata, appears to be a sacred, exalted state of being.

Now, consider Schopenhauer.

Inspired, to some extent, by Immanuel Kant, this great German postulated everything was and could be reduced to the 'Will'.

The 'will' was an inanimate force that merely existed for the sake of living and, to some extent, striving.

While being purposeless and soulless, the will inspired people to focus on desire and striving to live in the physical world.

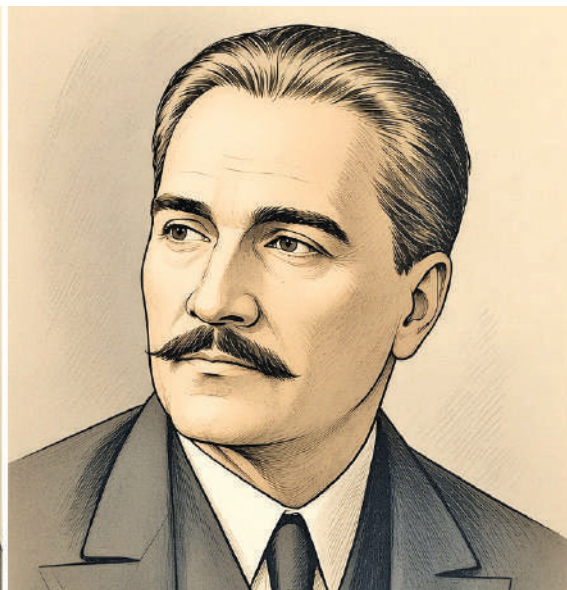
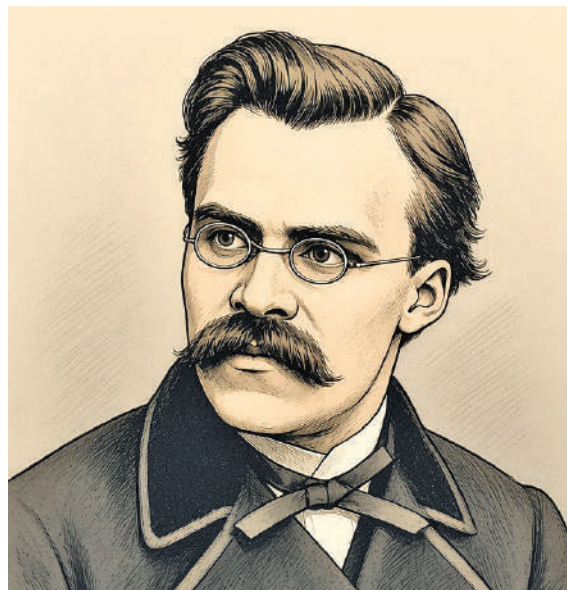
Even animals had 'will', Schopenhauer postulated.

Because the 'will' is insatiable, it is a perpetual source of suffering.

Once, for example, a human attained a given desire, s/he yearned for more.

While Schopenhauer held that humans had no free will, the 'will' he referred to constituted the sole source of action for human beings.

The stoic but bleak realism that Schopenhauer crafted his philosophy was, from a material and dialectical perspective, undercut by



The observed and lived reality of most across the world is fetishization of the self in vulgar and base forms, 'my body, my choice', for example, anti- and asocial behaviour that undercuts tradition, morality and ethics in an orgy of liberal fetishes, a consumerist ethos that sees consumption as the ultimate quest and value in and of life, and so on.

another great German, Nietzsche.

The philosopher of philosophers rebelled against the 'Fall' of the great faith of Christianity that had, over time, descended into what he called 'slave morality' and the 'Will to Power'.

Presenting the latter as the

fundamental quest of human beings, mastery over baser instincts and impulses, and a creative force that aimed at self-improvement and enhancement, Nietzsche called the human who had imbibed these life forces 'Übermensch' (superman).

By way of a digression here, when

we look around, in either the West or East, we observe hardly any trace of these eminence grises.

Instead, the observed and lived reality of most across the world is fetishization of the self in vulgar and base forms, 'my body, my choice', for example, anti- and

asocial behaviour that undercuts tradition, morality and ethics in an orgy of liberal fetishes, a consumerist ethos that sees consumption as the ultimate quest and value in and of life, and so on.

In a loose sense, all this corresponds to Schopenhauer's will.

But scratch the surface, and it is actually a perversion and corruption of the same.

In the West, then, its foundational philosophers who set the tone for the West's 'modern' avatar have been abandoned.

What about the East?

We, in the East, have abandoned our poets and philosophers.

What do we follow, then?

To paraphrase, morph and rephrase the French great Jean-Paul Sartre, the locus of our 'Being' has become 'nothing(ness)'.

So, whether we are in and of the East or the West, we are all lost.

Is there redemption? Can we do a salvage job? Can we reclaim ourselves?

I cannot, as a matter of fact and prudence, speak for anyone else, but I can postulate my source of inspiration and a model.

It goes without saying that, as materialist but great philosophers, I respect both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

But the locus of my being, my quest and striving, veers around the only one and inimitable Allama Muhammad Iqbal's idea of Khudi.

For me, indeed, it can only be an ideal, given the weaknesses and frailty of my self, but it is what it is.

— The author holds a Distinction in International Relations from the University of Aberdeen and combines scholarship with real-world engagement. He has worked in academia and media, including as Associate Editor at Kashmir Observer. He can be reached at wajahatqazi1234@gmail.com.

The Hostel Room After Home

College begins with independence, but also with the loneliness of sleeping in a place that does not yet feel like yours.



Palveen Kour

Kashmiri families send their children to college with books, clothes and carefully folded hopes.

At the gate, parents repeat common advice: eat properly, study hard, call home.

Then the child leaves, and the family returns to a house suddenly missing one of its voices.

The student enters college somewhere between excitement and dislocation.

Hostel life replaces the sounds of home with unfamiliar rooms, new faces and routines that must be learned quickly.

A student accustomed to a mother calling from the kitchen, a father asking about breakfast or siblings filling the house with noise now eats, studies and sleeps among strangers.

At night, the phone becomes a small bridge to home.

Many students call their parents and say they are doing fine. Some end the call before emotion overtakes them. Tears come later, behind a hostel door.

Homesickness often gets dismissed as something time will cure. Time helps, but the first semester can be difficult because students are expected to adapt while carrying pressures that remain invisible on campus.

Some Kashmiri students reach

college after years of family sacrifice.

A father may have worked in the fields, sold livestock or borrowed money to pay fees. A mother may have postponed her own needs so a child could continue studying.

Such students enter college with an expectation larger than academic success. They want their education to justify what their families have given up.

That expectation can make failure feel painfully personal.

A poor examination result becomes more than a grade. It can feel like a failure to repay a household that has invested its hopes in one child.

Social life creates another divide.

Some freshers quickly find friends who turn a hostel into a second home. Others struggle to enter established circles. They walk through crowded corridors, sit in full classrooms and return to rooms where nobody asks how their day went.

Loneliness can remain invisible because students often continue functioning.

They attend lectures, submit assignments and smile when spoken to while privately feeling overwhelmed.

Teachers see attendance and grades, while roommates see routines, but the private struggle remains largely unseen.

Academic pressure comes before emotional adjustment has taken hold.

Assignments, presentations, practical examinations and unfamiliar teaching methods demand attention from students still learning how to manage life away from home.

Questions begin to surface: Did I choose the right course? Am I good enough? Will I fit in?

Those questions can affect concentration and performance.

A withdrawn student may be struggling with homesickness. A sudden decline in grades may signal pressure



rather than indifference. A student who seems detached may be worrying about money, family expectations or the fear of disappointing the people who sent them there.

Colleges often measure students through what can be recorded.

Attendance can be counted, marks can be entered, assignments can be checked, but loneliness leaves a thinner paper trail.

Campus culture can close that gap through ordinary human gestures.

A senior who invites a fresher to eat with friends can make a difficult evening easier. A professor who notices a student's withdrawal can create a point of contact. A roommate who asks a simple question can interrupt

days of isolation.

Most students eventually find their footing, as hostel rooms acquire memories, classmates become friends, and campus routines become easier.

A place that once felt foreign begins to enter the student's own story.

Some take longer.

The first semester is described as the beginning of higher education. But for many young Kashmiris, it is also their first sustained encounter with distance, responsibility and independence.

They are learning a course of study while learning how to live without the people who made their earlier life feel secure.

A fresher does not enter college as a

finished adult. The student at the hostel gate is still someone's child, carrying family hopes into an unfamiliar world.

A college's responsibility therefore extends beyond examinations and attendance.

A young person who has left home should find enough human connection to begin building a life of their own.

— The author is a Srinagar-based Biotechnology postgraduate student and the writer of three books. She also volunteers with NGOs, teaching children in rural Kashmir. She can be reached at palveenkour7@gmail.com.



A senior who invites a fresher to eat with friends can make a difficult evening easier. A professor who notices a student's withdrawal can create a point of contact. A roommate who asks a simple question can interrupt days of isolation.

President Murmu Paves Way For High Court Bench in Ladakh

Press Trust Of India

Leh: President Droupadi Murmu has issued a regulation that establishes a bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in the Union Territory of Ladakh, paving the way for bringing higher judicial services closer to the people of the region.

The regulation, titled 'The Union Territory of Ladakh (Sitting of the Bench of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in Ladakh) Regulation, 2026,' was promulgated by President Murmu on August 27 and published in the Gazette of India Extraordinary on the same day.

Issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the regulation seeks to establish a high court bench in Ladakh and address related matters, fulfilling a long-standing demand from the people of Ladakh for improved access to higher judicial remedies in the geographically remote area.

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena welcomed the promulgation, stating that the notification was issued within seven days of the Union Cabinet's decision. He emphasised that this quick action demonstrates the Centre's commitment to addressing the aspirations of the people of Ladakh.



On August 20, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal to enable sittings of a high court bench in Ladakh, aiming to make justice more accessible, especially for residents of remote and far-flung areas.

Saxena expressed gratitude to the prime minister and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for the "historic step" towards bringing the high court closer to the people of Ladakh.

"For a geographically challenging region like Ladakh, access to justice cannot be separated from physical accessibility. This decision will

substantially ease the difficulties faced by our people in accessing higher judicial remedies and will strengthen their faith in our justice delivery system," the lieutenant governor said.

Having high court sittings within Ladakh is expected to decrease the time and expenses incurred by litigants who currently have to travel outside the Union Territory for high court proceedings.

The move will also make the justice delivery system more accessible to ordinary citizens, litigants, advocates and other stakeholders, while facilitating access to constitutional and legal remedies closer to their

homes.

Saxena stated that the measure would ensure "easier, faster and more accessible access to justice" for the people of Ladakh.

According to the regulation, the principal seat of the common High Court will continue to be at the same place where the principal seat of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh was located before the commencement of the regulation.

However, the judges and divisions of the High Court may also hold sittings in other locations within the Union Territory of Ladakh as designated by the Chief Justice, with the approval of the lieutenant governor of Ladakh.

The regulation further provides that the chief justice may, in his discretion, order that any case or class of cases arising in the Union Territory of Ladakh be heard at Srinagar or Jammu, as the case may be.

The regulation extends to the whole of the Union Territory of Ladakh and will come into force on a date to be appointed by the Administrator by notification in the Official Gazette.

The promulgation comes within a week of the Union Cabinet's decision on August 20 to enable sittings of a High Court bench in Ladakh.

Centre Appoints Key Officials in NTA Amid NEET Paper Leak Row

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Centre has appointed officials to key posts in the National Testing Agency (NTA), which has been facing flak for issues related to the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) paper leak and other concerns.

Anshuman Sharma, a 2005-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) officer, was on Friday appointed as Joint Secretary in the NTA for a tenure of five years, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

Sathiya S, Ravi Kumar Singh and Prasanna Venkatesh V have been appointed as directors in the examination body.

Sathiya is an IRS (Income Tax) officer, Singh belongs to the Indian Police Service and Prasanna is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer.

Amit Samdariya, a 2016-batch Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Indirect Taxes) officer, has been selected for appointment as joint director in the NTA, another order issued on August 27 by the Personnel Ministry said.

The move assumes significance as the Centre has recently announced a comprehensive overhaul of the examination system at the NTA, including



implementing a four-tier paper checking process, removing 600 experts, and onboarding domain specialists, among other changes.

The move followed a row over the NEET paper leak, that led to resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as the Education Minister last month.

Pradhan resigned on July 25 amid Cockroach Janta Party-led protests across the country seeking his ouster over the NEET paper leak issue. The 36-day protest had ended with his

resignation.

A day after Pradhan's resignation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the constitution of a high-powered task force headed by Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani to recommend reforms to make the exam system leakproof.

The task force on Friday invited suggestions on comprehensive reforms in public examinations, including measures to fix accountability and strengthen institutional arrangements.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Heat Spikes

across Jammu and Kashmir on August 29 and 30, although isolated areas, particularly in the Jammu region, may receive thundershowers.

A shift in weather conditions is expected from August 31, when thundershowers may occur at some places across Jammu and Kashmir. However, the weather is likely to remain dry over most areas during August 31 to September 2, with no major wet spell expected.

The weather office, however, warned that high-intensity showers could occur at a few places during August 31 to September 2, creating a possibility of flash floods.

Mostly fine weather is expected on September 3 and 4, though isolated thundershowers may occur, particularly during the early morning and late afternoon hours. The IMD said the forecast for these dates remains uncertain and could change.

The weather conditions have also prompted changes in advisories for orchard activity in Kashmir.

The IMD has advised orchard spraying in parts of Kashmir on August 29 and during the morning hours of August 30. Spraying has been advised against from August 31 to September 2 due to the possibility of thundershowers.

The weather office has advised people, particularly those living in vulnerable areas, to remain alert to the possibility of flash floods during episodes of intense rainfall.

'Want No Share

Conference itself was not "begging" for Article 370 but was seeking restoration of statehood from the Centre.

Mehdi said statehood was a right recognised by the Supreme Court but argued that accepting it as the "outer limit" of Jammu and Kashmir's political aspirations risked legitimising and normalising the constitutional changes made in August 2019.

He also questioned why the NC had promised restoration of Articles 370 and 35A in its 2024 Assembly election manifesto if it did not intend to pursue the commitment.

"Why did we include the restoration of Article 370 in our manifesto?" he asked.

"Were we making promises we knew we could not keep or perhaps never truly intended to keep?"

Mehdi argued that the BJP was in power at the Centre when the NC framed its 2024 manifesto, and therefore the party could not simply use the Centre's position as an explanation for abandoning its earlier commitment.

He questioned whether the NC had invoked the "wound" inflicted on the people of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 merely for political mileage before forgetting its promises after forming the government.

Mehdi said that if this was the case, it was not merely a political misjudgment but a "sin" and a "brazen moral failure" of deliberately misleading a population that had already endured decades of suffering and voted for the party with "hope, trust and the expectation" that it would honour its word.

"Personally, I want no share in this lie," he said.

Mehdi said the issue went beyond the restoration of Article 370 and involved wider concerns about the future of Jammu and Kashmir.

He pointed to unemployment, pressure on land and resources, and concerns over religious rights, traditions and language.

"Our land is up for grabs. Our resources benefit everybody but us. Our religious rights, traditions, and language face constant pressure. Our environment is being ravaged by illegal deforestation, mining, and construction in ecologically fragile zones," he said.

He said elected representatives had a responsibility to resist what he described as the "constant degradation and dehumanisation" of Jammu and Kashmir rather than reduce the

aspirations of its people to what the BJP was willing to concede.

"Our job as elected representatives is to fight this constant degradation and dehumanisation," Mehdi said.

He added that the political responsibility was also to ensure that the events of August 2019 did not become the "new political normal".

"It is to ensure that the extraordinary and deeply consequential events of August 2019 do not become the new political normal and to recognise that restoration of statehood cannot be treated as an adequate substitute for what was taken away," he said.

Mehdi further questioned why his political position should be considered objectionable by anyone from Jammu and Kashmir, "let alone a member of the JKNC".

He reminded Abdullah of the National Conference's own past position, recalling that the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly had passed the Autonomy Resolution when Abdullah was chief minister.

"I do not ask these questions out of disrespect. I ask them because I remember that you were the hon'ble chief minister of the very Assembly that passed the Autonomy Resolution. That, too, must have required courage," he said.

"Why, then, has the mere mention of constitutional guarantees for Jammu and Kashmir now become so offensive that you felt compelled to publicly demand my resignation?" he asked.

Mehdi said the central question was what had changed, the aspirations of the people or the willingness of the National Conference to stand up for them.

"What has changed, the aspiration of our people, or the JKNC's willingness to stand up for them?" he asked.

He said he had more questions but would await Abdullah's response, adding that the people of Jammu and Kashmir also had a right to know what the National Conference truly stood for.

The letter also addressed the personal dimension of the dispute.

Mehdi said he had never sought membership of the National Conference and had instead been personally invited by Farooq Abdullah to join the party.

"Not many know this, Doctor Sahab. But you do," he wrote.

He described himself as "the inheritor of a long tradition of martyrdom" and "the proud son of a martyr".

On the question of his resignation, Mehdi reiterated that the decision would be taken regardless of Abdullah's public demand.

"The resignation will come. It would have come even without you asking, but before that must come accountability," he said.

The developments mark a sharp escalation in the differences between Mehdi and the NC leadership, with the dispute now extending beyond his proposed resignation to fundamental questions over the party's political position on Article 370, restoration of statehood and its commitments to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Amarnath Yatra

will be held on the banks of the Lidder river in Pahalgam on Sunday, after which the Chhari-Mubarak will return to its abode at the Amareshwar Temple at Dashnami Akhara in Srinagar, officials said.

More than 4.80 lakh pilgrims undertook the Amarnath Yatra this year.

Faith, Devotion

the gathering reflected the faith of people from across Kashmir.

"The atmosphere is peaceful and spiritual. People have come from different places to remember the Prophet and seek blessings," he said.

Congregations were also reported from Bandipora, Baramulla, Kupwara, Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam and Anantnag, while several areas of Srinagar, including parts of the old city and uptown, witnessed religious gatherings and processions.

Security arrangements were stepped up around Hazratbal and other key locations. IGP Kashmir Zone Sujit Kumar reviewed the arrangements, while police and other security personnel were deployed to facilitate the movement of devotees and maintain order.

The district administration made arrangements, including medical facilities near the shrine, while Traffic Police implemented route plans and diversions to regulate vehicular movement in and around Hazratbal.

Outside the shrine, local vendors also saw brisk business, with many visitors stopping for the popular halwa-paratha, providing a boost to trade around the shrine.

The gatherings across the Valley marked the continuation of religious programmes following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH), with Hazratbal remaining the main centre of congregational prayers and devotion. (KNO)

Answer Keys

same day, it announced that the three examinations would be conducted afresh in September, citing the errors.

The re-examinations are scheduled for September 9 and 10, and candidates will not be required to pay an additional examination fee.

The NET is conducted by the NTA to determine the eligibility of Indian nationals for the role of assistant professor and for the junior research fellowship (JRF) in Indian universities and colleges.

J&K Sets 11,000

maintain the pace of execution and unlock J-K's considerable hydropower potential.

Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department, Ashwani Kumar said J-K has an identified hydropower potential of 14,635 MW, of which around 24.21 per cent has so far been harnessed across the UT, central sector and independent power producer (IPP) projects.

He added that Chenab Basin constitutes the largest share of the identified potential with 11,283 MW (77.1 per cent), followed by the Jhelum Basin with 3,084 MW (21.1 per cent) and the Ravi Basin with 500 MW (3.4 per cent).

Emphasising that the department has now put in place a phased capacity-addition strategy to systematically tap this vast potential and move J-K towards a position of greater energy self-reliance and eventual power surplus.

J-K Power Corporation Limited (JKPCL) MD Rahul Yadav said the first major capacity additions are targeted by the end of 2026, when 1,636 MW is slated to be added through the commissioning of 1,000 MW Pakal Dul HEP, 624 MW Kiru HEP and 12 MW Karnah HEP, taking the cumulative installed capacity to 5,176.15 MW by December 2027, commissioning of the 37.5 MW Parnai HEP will take the cumulative capacity to 5,213.65 MW.

The MD said 2028 will mark another significant jump, with 1,390 MW targeted through the 540 MW Kwar HEP and 850 MW Ratle HEP, raising the cumulative capacity to 6,630.65 MW.

By December 2029, a further 500 MW is expected from Central Sector projects, including 260 MW Dulhasti Stage-II and 240 MW Uri-I Stage-II, taking the total generation capacity to 7,103.65 MW, Yadav said.

It was highlighted that the subsequent phase, covering 2031-2035, will see progressive commissioning of major projects in the pipeline, including 820 MW Kirthai-II, 390 MW Kirthai-I and the 1,856 MW Sawalkote HEP.

With these additions, J&K is envisaged to reach an installed hydropower capacity of 10,969.65 MW by December 2035.

Reviewing the progress of projects presently under construction, the chief secretary called for close monitoring of construction milestones and coordinated resolution of issues affecting project execution so that the targeted commissioning schedules are adhered to.

The planned expansion is expected to have far-reaching implications for J-K's development trajectory, providing a stronger and more reliable energy base for industry, infrastructure, tourism, services and emerging economic activities, the spokesperson said.

He said the decade-long roadmap thus represents a significant step towards transforming J-K from a power-constrained economy into a more energy-secure and self-reliant region, with hydropower emerging as a key driver of its future economic growth.

Tackling Terrorism

everyone and want to assure the people that the Zonal Police is always there for you," he said.

The IGP also sought cooperation from the public in maintaining peace and law and order, acknowledging that heightened security arrangements and traffic restrictions could cause inconvenience to commuters, particularly around major religious gatherings.

"Many people are offering prayers today, so we seek your cooperation. We understand movement is difficult for the public," he said.

Kumar said police and other security agencies had put in place arrangements to facilitate large gatherings and ensure the safety of devotees at religious places.

During his visits, he reviewed security deployment, crowd-management measures and coordination among police and other security agencies at locations witnessing heavy footfall.

On counter-terror operations in Kashmir, Kumar said tackling terrorism remained the foremost priority of the police and that operations against terror networks would continue.

"Our operations were the first priority in the past and they remain the first priority today as well," he said.

The IGP's visit came as thousands of devotees gathered at major shrines and mosques across Kashmir for Friday prayers and religious programmes following Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).

Police and security personnel were deployed at strategic locations, while traffic arrangements and diversions were implemented around major congregation points to regulate the movement of people and vehicles.

The arrangements were aimed at ensuring the peaceful conduct of religious gatherings while facilitating the movement of devotees across Srinagar.

J&K Doing Well

for us to do because we need to learn from the best practices of the world and the best practices of India as well. So, there is always scope for people to improve upon," Srinivas said.

He said NITI Aayog's role was also to identify issues faced by departments and ministries and determine whether any hurdles from the Centre were affecting their functioning.

"Are there any issues with them which are getting hurdles from the Delhi side? So, basically, to break those silos and then facilitate them, bring them on board," he said.

Srinivas said NITI Aayog works on the principles of both competitive and cooperative federalism, facilitating coordination while encouraging states and Union Territories to learn from each other's successful practices.

He said practices that work well in one part of the country can be taken to others, creating a system where states and UTs learn from one another.

"Basically, we are here to bridge that gap between the people, break the silos, bring them on one platform and facilitate and help them," he said.

Srinivas identified stronger institutional linkages as one of the key takeaways from the delegation's visit to Jammu and Kashmir.

He said institutions in the UT should be connected with leading institutions across the country so that research being undertaken locally can move beyond laboratories and ultimately benefit society.

"The major takeaway is that there is a need to connect the institutions in J-K with the best institutions of the country because some of the basic research which is happening, ultimately, they have to take it to commercialisation. It has to reach mankind," he said.

He said such linkages could help strengthen research, facilitate commercialisation and ensure that innovations emerging from institutions in Jammu and Kashmir translate into wider social and economic benefits.

J&K Medical

departments while shouldering significant clinical responsibilities.

The disparity in stipends has emerged as a key argument behind the demand.

According to figures cited by the interns, Odisha pays 44,319 per month, followed by West Bengal at 43,099 and Assam at 35,000. Karnataka pays 30,000, while Kerala offers 27,300.

Delhi and Meghalaya pay 26,300, Telangana 25,900, and Arunachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh 25,000 each.

Tamil Nadu pays around 25,000 or more, while Haryana offers 24,310 and Andhra Pradesh 22,500. Gujarat pays around 21,840, while Bihar pays over 20,000.

Goa, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry pay 20,000 each, while Maharashtra pays 18,000.

Against these figures, the interns say the stipend of around 12,300 in Jammu and Kashmir leaves them at the bottom of the comparison.

The proposed protest has received support from the Resident Doctors' Association of Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar and associated hospitals, along with postgraduate and senior residents.

In a statement of solidarity, the association said the existing stipend did not adequately reflect the duties and responsibilities of interns or the rising cost of living.

"Their demand for a revision of the stipend to 30,000 per month is a legitimate demand for fairness, dignity and appropriate recognition of their invaluable service," it said.

The resident doctors urged the authorities to take immediate and meaningful steps to resolve the issue and ensure an early and just settlement.

The interns said representatives from medical colleges across Jammu and Kashmir had coordinated the proposed action and maintained that the demand was not confined to any particular institution.

They have appealed to all MBBS interns to remain united and participate peacefully in the protest.

Health activist Dr Mohammad Momin Khan also questioned the continued delay in revising the stipend of medical interns in J&K.

"If Uttar Pradesh can enhance the internship stipend to 25,000, why is Jammu and Kashmir still delaying a fair revision for its medical interns? Our interns deserve dignity, recognition and fair compensation for their contribution to the healthcare system," he said.

The interns said they would continue to seek a formal decision from the authorities before August 31, but reiterated that they would refrain from joining their duties unless their demand for a stipend revision is addressed.

The proposed strike is expected to involve interns across medical colleges in Jammu and Kashmir and could affect services where interns form part of the frontline hospital workforce.

Third Vande Bharat on Jammu-Srinagar Route Soon

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Union Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh on Friday said that a third Vande Bharat Express train between Jammu and Srinagar will be launched soon, describing it as a major development for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a video message, Singh said the Ministry of Railways has also approved a halt at Udhampur following a longstanding demand from the public.

He said the approval was particularly significant as there had earlier been doubts over the feasibility of providing a stop at Udhampur. Singh thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Ministry of Railways and Railway



Minister for approving the halt.

Reflecting on the expansion of railway connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir, Singh said that while Jammu got its railway sta-

tion in 1972, it took nearly five decades for the network to make significant progress further into the region.

He said the expansion of rail-

way infrastructure gathered momentum after Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, with rail connectivity extended from Kathua to Udhampur and eventually to

the Kashmir Valley.

Singh said connecting the Kashmir Valley by rail was once considered an extremely challenging task because of the difficult and mountainous terrain, but the project was ultimately completed despite formidable engineering and logistical challenges.

He also highlighted the construction of the Chenab Rail Bridge in Reasi—the world's highest railway arch bridge—as a landmark engineering achievement.

The Union Minister said the Jammu-Srinagar rail journey has also emerged as a major attraction for tourists, with many visitors choosing to travel by train not only for connectivity but also to experience the scenic beauty along the route.

Raksha Bandhan Celebrated Across Kashmir with Fervour

SRINAGAR: Raksha Bandhan was celebrated across Kashmir Valley on Friday, with devotees visiting temples, offering prayers and seeking blessings on the occasion.

The festival, which celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters, was marked by religious ceremonies and family gatherings at various places across the Valley.

At the historic Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar, devotees turned up in large numbers and were seen standing in long queues to enter the hilltop shrine and offer prayers.

Arun Kumar, a resident of Maharashtra who is visiting Kashmir with his family, said that they decided to celebrate the festival by visiting the temple.

"Raksha Bandhan is a special occasion for us. We came here to offer prayers and seek blessings for the happiness, peace and well-being of our families. This is our first Raksha Bandhan in Kashmir, and we are enjoying it," he said.

Another devotee, Amit Singh, said the peaceful atmosphere at the shrine made the occasion special. "The atmosphere here is very peaceful. Visiting the temple on Raksha Bandhan and offering prayers gives us a sense of spiritual fulfilment," he said.

Raksha Bandhan is traditionally observed on the full-moon day of the Hindu month of Shravan, with sisters tying rakhis on their brothers' wrists and praying for their well-being—(KNO)

Illegal Brick Kilns in Khansahib Ordered to Shut Within 24 Hours

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Sub-Divisional Administration Khansahib and police on Friday launched a joint crackdown on brick kilns allegedly operating without the mandatory permissions and statutory clearances, directing their operators to cease all activities and shut down within 24 hours.

The enforcement drive was led by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Khansahib Jahangir Ahmad Giri and Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Khansahib Sakib Gani, along with Tehsildar Khansahib Moin Azhar Kakroo, concerned Station House Officers and other officials.

During inspections conducted across different areas of the sub-division, the joint team identified several brick kilns operating without valid permissions and



other requisite clearances.

The kiln operators were directed to immediately stop all operations and were cautioned against continuing any activity in violation of government rules and regulations.

They were also instructed to clear all pending dues of labourers, disengage the workers from the sites and ensure the complete closure of their operations within 24 hours.

The administration warned that non-compliance with the directions would invite strict legal and administrative action,

including the demolition or removal of illegal structures and other assets established in violation of the law.

Officials said the drive was aimed at ensuring strict adherence to regulations, safeguarding public resources and maintaining environmental and administrative discipline across the Khansahib sub-division.

The Sub-Divisional Administration reiterated that no unauthorised brick kiln activity would be permitted in the area and warned that violators would face stringent action under the applicable laws.

Faith, Harmony Mark Chota Amarnath Yatra in Bandipora

Agencies

BANDIPORA: The annual Chota Amarnath Yatra, also known as the Maha Dhyaneswar Yatra, began here in North Kashmir on Friday with 108 devotees embarking on a 7.5-km trek through the dense forest terrain to a naturally formed ice lingam at a sacred cave in Dardpora village.

According to the details available, the pilgrimage, traditionally observed on Sharvani Purnima, was flagged off from the Sharda Mata Temple in Kaloosa by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Zaffar Hussain in the presence of Senior Superintendent of Police Ajaz Ahmad Zargar.

Pilgrims comprised youngsters, women and elderly devotees who set out amid tight security arrangements for the annual pilgrimage to the Maha Dhyaneswar temple, popularly known as Chhota Amarnath.

The sacred site, located amid dense forests of Dardpora, is revered for a naturally formed ice lingam over which water droplets fall from above, creating a distinctive religious and natural spectacle.

Officials said elaborate arrangements had been put in place for the pilgrims, including security, parking, drinking water, medical fa-



cilities and deployment of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

ADC Hussain said, "We ensured that all necessary provisions -- ranging from security and parking to water supply, medical facilities and SDRF deployment -- were in place, striving to make pilgrims feel even better than last time."

In a notable display of communal harmony, local Muslims in Dardpora welcomed the pilgrims as they passed through the village and offered hospitality to the devotees.

The warm reception by residents highlighted the tradition of local communities coming together to facilitate the annual pilgrimage and promote peace and brotherhood in the area.

Opendar Krishna Koul, coordinator of the Maha

Dhyaneswar Yatra, said the pilgrimage has become an important occasion for promoting peace and harmony and bringing visitors from different parts of the region to Bandipora.

He said that the pilgrimage continues to face infrastructure-related challenges but said efforts were underway to improve facilities and raise awareness about the destination. "We are including trekking and cultural experiences to appeal to a broad audience," he said, adding that the event would continue to evolve with the aim of attracting more local and outside visitors.

The organisers said they hope to expand the scope and visibility of the yatra in the coming years, combining its religious significance with the region's trekking and cultural attractions—(KNO)

Over 30 Villages Hit by Doctor Shortage at PHC Tukroo

Agencies

SHOPIAN: The Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Tukroo in south Kashmir's Shopian district is facing a shortage of doctors and other medical staff, leaving residents of the surrounding areas worried about the availability of healthcare, particularly during emergencies and night hours.

Residents said that the health centre caters to people from more than 30 villages and serves as an important first point of medical care for a large rural population. However, they alleged that the shortage of manpower has affected the functioning of the facility, with patients often facing difficulties in accessing medical attention when they need it most.

Locals said the absence of a doctor during night hours is particularly concerning, as patients requiring urgent medical attention are forced to look for alternatives or travel to hospitals in other areas.

"People come to the PHC with the expectation that



they will receive immediate medical attention, but the shortage of doctors and staff becomes a major problem, especially at night. In an emergency, even a short delay can create serious difficulties for a patient," a local said.

Another resident said the problem becomes more difficult for elderly people, children and patients from remote villages who cannot easily arrange private transport to reach bigger healthcare facilities.

"The PHC is catering to a large number of villages, so it cannot function effectively with inadequate staff. The authorities need to ensure that doctors and other essential staff are available round the clock," he said.

Residents also highlighted the absence of a dedicated ambulance at the health centre, saying the facility is unable to provide timely transportation to patients who require referral to higher-level hospitals.

"An ambulance is not a luxury for a health centre serving so many villages. During an emergency, families have to arrange private vehicles, which wastes precious time and can also put an additional financial burden on them," another resident said.

Locals said patients requiring specialised treatment are often referred to higher health institutions, making an ambulance service particularly important for safe and timely transportation. (KNO)

Hospital Sweeper Sacked in Kishtwar Minor Death Case

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: A sanitation worker at a district hospital in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar was dismissed from service after his arrest in an alleged conspiracy to conceal sexual assault and termination of pregnancy of a 15-year-old tribal girl, officials said.

Police arrested the accused, a daily-wager employed as a sweeper at the hospital, on Wednesday after he was named as an accused in the case, prompting the hospital authorities to terminate his service with immediate effect.

"Police informed us about his arrest. He was dismissed from service on Thursday," Medical Super-

intendent Yudhveer Singh Kotwal told reporters.

Kotwal, who issued the termination order, said Ahmed's continuation in service was considered incompatible with the discipline, integrity and functioning of a public health institution in view of the serious nature of the allegations and offences involved.

Kotwal clarified that Ahmed has been dismissed from service, and not suspended.

Asked if the minor girl had been admitted to the hospital and other details of the case, Kotwal declined to comment, saying the matter is under police investigation.

"I do not want to say

anything that could influence the investigation. The probe is underway and we are cooperating with the police," he said.

The 15-year-old tribal girl was allegedly sexually assaulted repeatedly by a teacher at her school over several months, resulting in her pregnancy.

She later died following an alleged attempt to terminate the pregnancy in the Chatroo area, officials said.

Police arrested the government teacher and his brother on August 20.

A special investigation team (SIT) headed by Additional SP Pardeep Singh was constituted to conduct a time-bound investigation into the matter.

Article 371 Will Protect Ladakh's Unique Culture: Rijiju

Agencies

LEH: Asserting that Article 371 would help protect unique culture of Ladakh and safeguard its interests, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday said that Government of India is committed to providing special provisions to the region.

Addressing a gathering in Leh, Rijiju, said, "Union Home Minister Amit Shah has given a commitment to the people of Ladakh regarding special provisions under Article 371."

"This is a very big commitment. Article 371 has special provisions for certain states. The process of providing special provisions for Ladakh, following the announcement by Home Minister Amit Shah and with the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is now taking shape," he said.

Rijiju said the earlier provisions related to autonomous councils did not provide the same level of empowerment, adding that preparations were also underway for the creation of seven districts in Ladakh.

"Earlier, there were only two districts, Leh and Kargil. Now, with seven districts, there will also be seven councils. This is aimed at empowering people at the grassroots level and strengthening democracy," he said.

The Union Minister said, "PM Modi-led government is committed to the development of Ladakh and has assured its people that all necessary facilities, including road connectivity and telecommunications in border areas, will be provided in a time-bound manner."

"We had said that in



your border areas, complete road connectivity, telecommunication and all other facilities will be provided in a time-bound manner, one after another. The work being carried out under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is progressing in this direction," he said.

Rijiju said the work being undertaken by the Government of India would lay a strong foundation for Ladakh's future, adding that development would continue in a phased manner. "Everything cannot be done at once. The work will continue, but the commitment of our government towards Ladakh will always remain special," he said.

PM MODI TO VISIT LADAKH

Rijiju said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit Ladakh again and would share his thoughts and plans with the people during the visit.

He said the Prime Minister has given special attention to the Himalayan regions, including Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast, noting that these regions have distinct geographical and climatic conditions and require special focus from the government.

Rijiju also urged the youth of Ladakh to remain connected with their traditional values, culture and language.—(KNO)

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A TREE PLANTATION DRIVE UNDER

SBI PAN INDIA CSR INITIATIVE

As part of the **SBI PAN INDIA TREE PLANTATION DRIVE**, **SBI SOPORE** organised a tree plantation programme at the premises of **GOVERNMENT DEGREE COLLEGE SOPORE**. On the occasion, around 450 saplings were planted in the college premises to promote environmental conservation and a greener future. The **Principal Syed Muzaffar & HOD Botony Shayista Qadir** of the college, along with the faculty and staff, appreciated the thoughtful initiative and lauded SBI for its commitment towards environmental sustainability. **Branch Manager Mr. Athar Bashir Bhat** and Field Officer **Mr. Mubashir Lone** were present during the programme.



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