

Curiosity Is First Lamp Of Knowledge: LG

Calls For Blend Of Tradition, Science At SMVD Gurukul

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday called for a balance between modern science and traditional values, saying science provides speed while values give direction to progress.

Addressing the Foundation Day celebrations of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and the Annual Day of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Gurukul, Sinha said the Gurukul should evolve as a centre where tradition and modernity complement each other.

"Science gives us speed, while values give us direction and the balance between speed and direction is true progress," he said.

Addressing students of the Gurukul, Sinha emphasised the importance of curiosity in learning and said



questioning has always been an integral part of India's knowledge traditions.

"Curiosity is the first lamp of knowledge," he said, adding that the Upanishadic tradition was based on dialogue, reflection and experience.

He said teachers should impart not only knowledge but also values and samskara to students.

Sinha also stressed the

subjects, particularly science and computer technology, he said education must prepare students for emerging technologies while retaining a strong foundation in values.

The Lieutenant Governor also called upon the Gurukul and the Shrine Board to make environmental consciousness a way of life. He urged them to undertake initiatives related to water and energy conservation, tree plantation and cleanliness, and make the institutions examples of sustainable development.

Referring to the Prithvi Sukta of the Atharvaveda, Sinha said India's ancient scriptures reflected a deep respect for nature and emphasised the need to combine traditional knowledge with modern scientific understanding to address challenges such as climate change.

He | [More on P6](#)

Widespread Rain Likely Across J&K Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to experience widespread rainfall and thunderstorms over the next two days, with weather activity expected to gradually ease from September 2, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, in its latest bulletin, forecast fairly widespread rain in Kashmir and widespread rain in Jammu on Sunday, while widespread light to moderate rain and thunderstorms are expected across both divisions on September 1.

The weather office has also warned of isolated thunderstorms accompanied by

lightning and gusty winds reaching 30-40 kmph in Kashmir on August 31 and September 1.

In Jammu division, isolated heavy rain, thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds are likely on August 31 and September 1. The IMD has cautioned that landslides, mudslides and flash floods could occur at vulnerable places during heavy spells.

Rain activity is expected to reduce from September 2. Fairly widespread rainfall is forecast in Kashmir that day, while Jammu is likely to see scattered rainfall. From September 3 to 5, rainfall is expected to | [More on P6](#)

Uzbekistan Confers Top State Honour On PM

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Sunday conferred Uzbekistan's highest honour for foreign leaders, the 'Oliy Darajali Do'stlik' Order, by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in recognition of his contribution to strengthening ties between the two countries.

Modi dedicated the honour to the enduring friendship between India and Uzbekistan, describing it as a symbol of the centuries-old bond and shared heritage between the two civilisations.

"Honoured to receive the Oliy Darajali Do'stlik Order. I dedicate this to the enduring bond between India and Uzbekistan," Modi said in a social media post.

The Ministry of External Affairs said the award recognised Modi's "contribution in strengthening the friendship between the two countries". It said the prime minister dedicated the accolade to the 1.4 billion people of India and highlighted the enduring friendship between the | [More on P6](#)

Death Toll Surges To 788 In Nepal Floods

Press Trust Of India

Kathmandu: The death toll from flash floods in Nepal rose to 788 on Sunday, with more bodies being recovered, even as more than 2,500 people are still missing.

Bodies were recovered from eight affected districts as rescuers raced against time to search for those missing and rescue those stranded on the fifth day since the disaster.

An ice-rock avalanche following a glacial collapse near the Nepal-Tibet border sent a torrent of water, mud and debris downstream, wiping out towns and villages, damaging crucial infrastructure and washing away hydropower stations through northern and central Nepal on August 26.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) said the death toll has surged to 788.

The NDRRMA further said that at least 2,502 people are still missing, while 9,435 people were rescued from flood-hit areas so far.

It killed 16 people on the Chinese side as well, while nearly 550 people remain missing in Tibet, according to Chinese media reports.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the NDRRMA warned that water levels in the Bhotokoshi River had risen again. "The water level in the flooded Bhotokoshi River has risen to some extent; all concerned are urged to take precautionary measures," it said, adding that it will provide updates on the situation after receiving additional information.

The Bhotokoshi River, which flows

Make India Drug-free: PM To Citizens

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday appealed to citizens to unite against drug abuse and build a stronger future for the youth, noting that addiction engulfs not just an individual but impacts the entire society.

In his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat', he noted that the 'Drug-Free Youth for a Developed India' campaign is rapidly gaining momentum across the country and stressed that its objective is clear: 'Drug-free youth, drug-free India'.

The prime minister said he was happy that this campaign has not remained merely a formality as many people, especially the youth, are becoming a part of it in large numbers.

"After all, this is our collective resolve for the health,



happiness, and bright future of India's youth. Let us all play our part in this noble mission to keep India's youth away from drugs and free from addiction," he said.

Modi said drug addiction does not just engulf a single individual as the entire family and society have to bear the consequences.

"I would like to commend those who raise awareness against drugs and step forward to help individuals struggling with addiction," he said.

The Drug-Free India through the 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) is a flagship initiative of the government. The campaign seeks to prevent substance abuse through

awareness generation, community participation, treatment, rehabilitation, aftercare and social reintegration.

The prime minister also highlighted the PM SVANidhi Yojana welfare scheme for street vendors, noting that lakhs of women are gaining strength from it.

Lakhs of women across the streets of cities and towns are engaged in selling vegetables or fruits, running tea stalls, while some are selling flowers, earthen lamps, and 'pooja' material, he noted.

"Often, a mere lack of capital prevents their businesses from growing further. But now, lakhs of such mothers and sisters are gaining new strength through the 'PM SVANidhi Yojana'," he said.

Modi said this aspect of 'women empowerment' is not discussed as much | [More on P6](#)

FDA Bans Sale Of 10 Adulterated Ghee Batches

Agencies

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) on Sunday imposed a complete ban on the sale, storage, and distribution of 10 ghee batches found adulterated with foreign vegetable fat, terming them "sub-standard, unsafe, and misbranded" for public consumption.

The action, taken under Section 30 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, came after the Notified Food Analyst at the National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad, and the Food Testing Laboratory, Kashmir, confirmed serious quality violations in samples collected from nine districts across the Union Territory.

Among the banned products are popular household brands



— Dairy Mohan, Apna Dairy Milk, Milk Bite, Nandni, Shahi Taj, Daawat Fresh, Nand Krishna, Vandu, Dairy Milk, and Mohan Dairy — with the FDA identifying specific batch numbers for each.

The affected batches include Dairy Mohan Desi Ghee (Batch No. 05), Apna Dairy Milk Desi Ghee (Batch No. DM-06), Milk Bite Cow Ghee (Batch No. 137), Nandni Desi Ghee (Batch No. ND-28), Shahi | [More on P6](#)

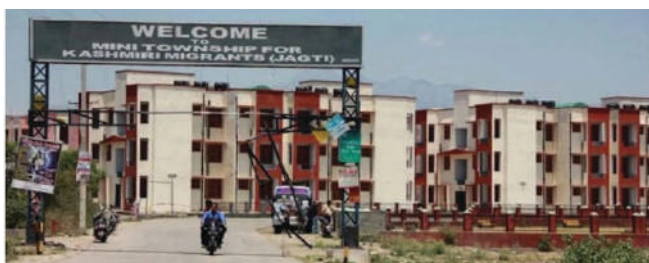
J&K Approves Rs 82-Crore Repairs for 5,000 Migrant Flats

KPs call plan a 'bandage for cancer', seek structural audit

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir government has approved a Rs 82.45-crore repair project for 5,000 flats across Jammu's migrant camps, a move dismissed by the displaced Kashmiri community as an attempt to "cure cancer with a bandage" by favouring superficial fixes over addressing deep structural flaws.

Nearly 7,000 displaced families reside across the Jagti, Muthi, TRT Nagrota, Buta Nagar, and Purkhoo camps.



Residents and activists argue that the sanctioned budget is insufficient for the scale of neglect, calling for an immediate structural safety audit before any funds are spent on

cosmetic upkeep.

According to an official statement issued on Sunday, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) Arvind Karwani | [More on P6](#)

Poonch Custodial Deaths

Gujjar Leaders Question Removal Of Officer's Censure

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Prominent Gujjar community leaders and activists have expressed concern over the Armed Forces Tribunal's decision to remove from the administrative record a punitive censure imposed on a senior Army officer in connection with the custodial deaths of three civilians in Poonch in December 2023.

The AFT, while dismissing Brigadier Padmasambhava Acharya's challenge to the "Severe Displeasure" censure imposed on him on July 8, 2024, directed that the punishment be deleted from his

administrative file after taking into account a Ministry of Defence policy that limits the duration of such censure to two years.

The tribunal clarified that the deletion of the punishment from the record was being ordered as an exception in the particular case.

The case relates to the Army operation launched following an ambush near Dera Ki Gali in Poonch on December 21, 2023, in which four soldiers were killed and two of them were mutilated.

During subsequent searches, several civilians were detained for | [More on P6](#)

HC Quashes JKB Officer's Dismissal

Rejects Parity Between LG's Article 311 Powers and Bank Rule

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has quashed the dismissal of a JKB officer, holding that the Bank could not invoke Clause 12.29 of its Officers Service Manual (OSM) to dismiss an employee without a departmental inquiry unless all the mandatory pre-conditions prescribed under the provision were fulfilled.

A bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar, while disposing of the plea, ruled that four conditions must be satisfied before the Managing | [More on P6](#)



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Scholarships This Week

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

Scholarship Name SBI Platinum Jubilee Asha Scholarship 2026

Description: The SBI Platinum Jubilee Asha Scholarship 2026-27, an initiative of SBI Foundation, supports meritorious students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds across India. It covers students from Classes 9 to 12 to undergraduate, postgraduate, medical, IIT, IIM and eligible overseas programmes.

Eligibility: Open to Indian nationals studying in Classes 9 to 12, undergraduate, postgraduate, MBBS, IIT or IIM programmes. Overseas Studies is open only to SC/ST Indian nationals.

Applicants must have at least 75% marks or 7.0 CGPA; SC/ST applicants receive a 10% relaxation. Annual family income must not exceed INR 3 lakh for school students and INR 6 lakh for other categories.

General UG/PG institutions must have NAAC Grade 'A' or above or be among the Top 300 in NIRF Overall 2025-26. Medical applicants must study at AIIMS or a Top 50 NIRF medical institution.

Overseas applicants must study at a Top 200 QS/THE-ranked institution and have a valid offer or acceptance letter. Category-specific entrance or proficiency scores may apply.

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarships ranging from INR 15,000 to INR 20,00,000 per academic year will be awarded depending on the scholarship category. (*T&C Applied)

Note: Scholarship support may be utilised for eligible education-related expenses such as tuition fees, accommodation, books, examination fees and educational equipment.

Scholarship renewal is not automatic and is subject to continued eligibility, academic performance and verification each year.

Last Date to Apply: 04-09-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SBISF20

QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/sbi-platinum-jubilee-asha-scholarship-20261786449537.png>

Scholarship Name Parivartan ECSS Programme 2026-27

Description: The Parivartan ECSS Programme 2026-27 is a scholarship initiative aimed at supporting meritorious and financially underprivileged students from Class 1 to the postgraduate level

Eligibility: Open to students in Classes 1 to 12, diploma, ITI, polytechnic, undergraduate (general and professional), and postgraduate (general and professional) courses

Minimum 55% marks in the most recent qualifying examination

Annual family income from all sources must not exceed INR 2.5 lakh



Open to Indian nationals only

Note: Preference will be given to applicants who have experienced a personal or family crisis in the past three years that has significantly impacted their ability to continue their studies

Prizes & Rewards: Scholarship up to INR 75,000 based on education level.

Last Date to Apply: 31-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/HDPC63

QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/parivartan-ecss-programme-2026-271786449521.png>

Scholarship Name JK Tyre Shiksha Sarthi Scholarship Program 2026-27

Description: The JK Tyre Shiksha Sarthi Scholarship Program 2026-27, an initiative by JK Tyre & Industries Limited, supports daughters of heavy vehicle drivers pursuing undergraduate or diploma courses in general or professional fields. Eligible students from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu can receive scholarships of up to INR 25,000, with the possibility of renewal for the duration of the course, subject to academic performance and renewal criteria.

Eligibility: For female students who are daughters of heavy vehicle drivers and are enrolled in general or professional undergraduate courses or diploma courses. Must have secured at least 55% marks in the previous academic year.

Annual parental income from all sources must not exceed INR 5,00,000.

Applicants must be residents of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Karnataka or Tamil Nadu.

Prizes & Rewards: Selected students will receive scholarships up to INR 25,000

Last Date to Apply: 10-09-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/JKTS4

QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/>

[jk-tyre-shiksha-sarthi-scholarship-program-2026-271786449521.png](http://www.b4s.in/observer/HDPC63)

Scholarship Name Satya Scholarship Program 2026

Description: The Satya Scholarship Program 2026, an initiative by Nehru Sidhant Kender Trust, offers 100% tuition fee coverage and accommodation support to meritorious Class 12 graduates from Punjab pursuing 3-5-year undergraduate or integrated master's programmes in Commerce, Engineering, and Medical & Health Sciences at select institutes – ensuring financial barriers do not stand in the way of higher education.

Eligibility: Open to first-year students in 3 to 5-year undergraduate or integrated master's courses in BBA, B.Com, B.Tech, B.E. (all streams), B.Sc. (Engineering), BCA, B.Arch, MBBS, BDS, BPT, B.Sc. (Nursing), B.Sc. (Allied and Healthcare).

Must have passed Class 12 Board Exam from a recognised board in Punjab with at least 60% aggregate.

Students from Punjab in 38 selected institutes in Ludhiana or top 50 NIRF-ranked institutions in India are eligible.

Annual parental income must not exceed INR 8 lakh; guardian income limits apply for orphans.

Applicants must be Indian citizens and not recipients of any other educational scholarship.

Note: Preference for girl students, sportspersons, persons with disabilities (PwD), orphans, and children of single parents.

Prizes & Rewards: 100% annual course fee coverage for the entire course duration, with additional support for hostel, accommodation, and meals as per program guidelines.

Last Date to Apply: 31-08-2026

Application mode: Online applications only

Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SAT3

QR Code: <https://dle9eg0t05513.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/satya-scholarship-program-20261783398813.png>

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Abdul Hamid Para, S/o Ghulam Din Para, R/o Gokhama, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.), do hereby notify the General Public and all concerned that my ward, namely Burhan Hamid, was born on 15/08/2012 at home.

I further declare that I have not obtained any Birth Certificate for my above-named ward from any concerned authority or institution. The date of birth of my ward is also not entered in the records of the Police, Village Guard or Municipal Committee. I am therefore in need of a Date of Birth Certificate for my above-named ward and am submitting this declaration before the concerned Revenue Department for necessary action.

Any person having any objection in this regard may raise the same before the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

Abdul Hamid Para
S/o Ghulam Din Para
R/o Gokhama, Tehsil Kunzer,
District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.)

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Farooq Ahmad Wani, S/o Late Khazir Mohammad Wani, R/o Lalpora, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.), do hereby notify the General Public and all concerned that I was born on 08-02-1972 at home in Village Lalpora.

I further declare that my date of birth is not entered in the records of the Police, Village Guard or Municipal Committee. I am therefore in need of a Date of Birth Certificate in my favour.

This notice is issued for submission before the concerned Revenue Department for necessary action. Any person having any objection in this regard may raise the same before the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

Farooq Ahmad Wani S/o Late Khazir Mohammad Wani
R/o Lalpora, Tehsil Kunzer,
District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.)

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Umer Ahmad Lone, S/o Fayaz Ahmad Lone, R/o Merchi Pora, Tehsil Tangmarg, District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.), do hereby notify the General Public and all concerned that my name has inadvertently been recorded in my Aadhaar Card as "Umer Fayaz" instead of my correct name "Umer Ahmad Lone."

I hereby declare that my correct name is Umer Ahmad Lone, as recorded in my School Certificate records. I intend to get my name corrected in my Aadhaar Card accordingly.

Any person having any objection in this regard may raise the same before the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

Umer Ahmad Lone S/o Fayaz Ahmad Lone
R/o Merchi Pora, Tehsil Tangmarg,
District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.)

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Sheikh Akib Nisar. S/O Nisar. Ahmad. Sheikh R/O. Gadoora Tulmulla. Gandarbal is. applying for DEE. Class. Government Contract. 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

ab

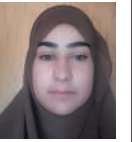
PUBLIC NOTICE

Shakeela. Begum. W/o. Farooq Ahamad Paray. R/O. KANGAN. NA. GANDARBAL Prang Palang Ganderbal. KANGAN is applying for DEE Class Government Contract 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

ab

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that my name and Date of Birth (DOB) in my Aadher Card bearing Aadhar No :- 9432 0625 8735 has been wrongly mentioned as Mavisha Bano . D.O.B10.02.2006 instead of Mawish Gulab D/O. Mohammad Gulab Lone and DOB is 15.03.2010 .Now I am applying for its Correction as per J&K Board of School Education recard bearing Reg No:- 2427010001020011 .if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.



Mawish Gulab
D/O. Mohammad Gulab Lone
R/O :- Dapal Dudi .Tehsil :- Machil Distt :Kupwara .
Post Office:- Dudi Pin Code:- 193222 J&kashmir

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, GHULAM HASSAN CHOPAN S/O MOHD JAMAL CHOPAN, R/O RAJPORA HEENG, hereby inform the general public that I have lost the front-side number plate of my motorcycle/scooter bearing Registration No. JK05M3425 on 26/08/2026, while travelling from Rajpora Heeng to Dhoiwaan.

The said number plate may have been dropped somewhere along the above-mentioned route. If anybody finds the same, they are requested to kindly inform me or hand it over to the concerned Police Station.

This notice is being published for the information of the general public and for future reference.

Name: Ghulam Hassan Chopan
S/O: Mohd. Jamal Chopan
R/O: Rajpora Heeng

Date of Loss: 26/08/2026
Vehicle: Motorcycle/Scooter
Registration No.: JK05M3425
Item Lost: Front-Side Number Plate

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Gulam Nabi Khandy, S/o Abdul Kabir Khandy, R/o Devbugh, Tehsil Kunzer, District Baramulla, Jammu & Kashmir (U.T.), do hereby notify the General Public and all concerned that my name and father's name have inadvertently been recorded in my Service Book and other service-related records as "Ghulam Nabi Khandy, Son of Ab Kabir Khandy" instead of my correct name and father's name, i.e. "Gulam Nabi Khandy, Son of Abdul Kabir Khandy."

I hereby declare that "Ghulam Nabi Khandy, Son of Ab Kabir Khandy" and "Gulam Nabi Khandy, Son of Abdul Kabir Khandy" refer to one and the same person, i.e. myself. The discrepancy is only due to an inadvertent spelling variation and use of an abbreviation in the service records, and there is no change in my identity.

This notice is issued for the purpose of correction and updation of my Service Book and other official/service-related records. Any person having any objection in this regard may raise the same before the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

Gulam Nabi Khandy
S/o Abdul Kabir Khandy
R/o Devbugh, Tehsil Kunzer,
District Baramulla, J&K (U.T.)

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

Umer Farooq S/O Farooq Ahmad bhat R/o. WANGUNDA. TAILBAL. Hazratbal. Srinagar is applying for DEE Class Government Contract 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

ab



The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets.

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Know Your Rights & Stand Up to Claim Them: Altaf Bukhari tells Shehr-e-Khaas residents

Calls people to break themselves free from the prevailing pathetic condition and work towards building a better future for the younger generation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Sunday urged the people of Srinagar’s Shehr-e-Khaas not to fall prey to the decades-long exploitation by traditional political parties like the National Conference. He called upon them to become aware of their political and democratic rights and assert them to bring about a change in their present difficult situation.

He was addressing a workers’ convention in Habba Kadal, Srinagar, which was attended by a large gathering of local residents and party workers.

Addressing the gathering, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari expressed serious concern over the continued poor condition of Srinagar city and the hardships faced by its residents. He said that to change this situation, people must take responsibility and stop falling prey to the exploitative politics of the National Conference and its leadership.

He said, “Marhoom Sheikh Sahib successfully earned the unconditional loyalty of the

people of the city and built a political empire for generations of his family. However, this blind following by the people paved the way for a prolonged lack of development and prosperity in the city. Even today, decades later, people continue to blindly follow the party, often at the cost of their own future and that of the coming generations.”

He went on to say, “There are around nine lakh people living in this historic city, yet a large number of them are struggling even for basic amenities. Look at the plight of our youth. They are educated but remain jobless, with many forced to take up petty jobs, like working as street vendors. How long can this situation continue?”

“Unfortunately, the existing reservation policy has also adversely affected the people of the city by further reducing employment opportunities for local youth. The residents of the city do not fall under any reserved category, except the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), whose reservation has also been reduced from 10 percent to 3 percent,” he added.



E-Rickshaws Emerge as ‘Safer’ Transport Option for Women in Srinagar

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Electric rickshaws, introduced in Srinagar only a couple of years ago, have emerged as a preferred and safe mode of public transport for women. Many passengers describe them as among the safest and most comfortable options for short-distance travel in the city.

The eco-friendly vehicles operate on several routes across Srinagar and have gained popularity over the years, commuters say. Women and young female students can frequently be seen using e-rickshaws to travel to colleges, markets and other destinations within the city.

Besides offering an economical means of transport, regular women passengers say the open design, comfortable seating and absence of overcrowding make e-rickshaws a comparatively safer alternative to conventional public transport.

Areeba Nazir, a college student, said she feels comfortable and secure while travelling in an e-rickshaw.

“I have found travelling in an e-rickshaw both comfortable and safe. It is also environmentally friendly, which is another reason why I prefer using it for short-distance travel,” she said.

Another student, Rabia Farooq,

expressed similar views, saying e-rickshaws offer several advantages over other modes of public transport operating in the city.

“E-rickshaws are open from the sides and allow women to sit comfortably. There is also no fear of overloading, which makes them a better option in many ways than the overcrowded buses in the city,” she said.

The drivers operating these

port. From my experience over the last few months, I can say that women feel more comfortable travelling in these rickshaws. The seats are comfortable and there is no provision for overloading passengers,” he said.

Speaking to Kashmir Observer, Shazia Bashir, a regular commuter said overcrowding in conventional public transport can often create an uncomfort-

“

It is a safe mode of transport. From my experience over the last few months, I can say that women feel more comfortable travelling in these rickshaws. The seats are comfortable and there is no provision for overloading passengers

vehicles also say that women constitute a significant proportion of their passengers.

Faisal Ahmad, who has been driving an e-rickshaw for the past several months, said the number of female passengers using the service is often higher than that of male commuters.

He attributed the trend largely to the sense of safety and comfort that the vehicles provide to women.

“It is a safe mode of trans-

able environment for women and increase the risk of harassment.

“In overcrowded buses, women can be more vulnerable to harassment. In e-rickshaws, however, there is no possibility of overloading in the same manner, and that makes the mode of transport comparatively safer for women,” she said.

The introduction of e-rickshaws has thus provided women commuters with another option for travelling within the city while also promoting envi-

- 
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- BUIBHARA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI CALENDAR

17 Rabi-ul-Awwal
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 36
ZUHR	12:32
ASR	5:10
Magrib	7: 03
ISHA	8: 27

- 1310- German king Heinrich VII makes his son Johan king of Bohemia
- 1422- Henry VI becomes King of England at the age of 9 months
- 1837- Ralph Waldo Emerson gives his famous "The American Scholar" speech to Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, declares American literary independence from Europe
- 1842- American blacksmith Micah Rugg patents a nuts & bolts machine
- 1843- Liberty Party nominates James Birney as presidential candidate
- 1854- Major outbreak of cholera occurs in Soho, London; Physician John Snow goes on to call it "the most terrible outbreak of cholera which ever occurred in this kingdom."
- 1864- Atlanta Campaign: Battle of Jonesboro, Georgia, 1900 casualties
- 1876- Ottoman sultan Murat V is deposed and succeeded by his brother Abd-ul-Hamid II
- 1889- Second International Electrical Congress adopts the joule as unit of energy (after James Prescott Joule), the watt as unit of power (after James Watt) and the quadrant as unit of electrical inductance (later renamed henry)
- 1894- The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act passed by Richard Seddon's Liberal government, making New Zealand the first country in the world to outlaw strikes in favour of compulsory arbitration
- 1897- British General Kitchener's army occupies Berber, North of Khartoum
- 1897- Thomas Edison patents the Kinetoscope [kinetographic camera], a device which produces moving pictures
- 1900 - British troops over run Johannesburg
- 1907 - Britain & Russia sign treaty with Afghanistan, Persia & Tibet
- 1907 - Britain, Russia & France form Triple Entente
- 1914 - German troops reconquer Soldau/Neidenburg East-Prussia
- 1915 - Brazil becomes a signatory to the Buenos Aires copyright treaty.
- 1917 - In China, Sun Yat-sen and his supporters' 'rump' parliament establishes a military government and elects Sun Yat-sen as commander-in-Chief
- 1923 - Mussolini orders the Greek Government to apologize for the deaths of an Italian general and his staff on the Greco-Albanian border
- 1929 - Committee chaired by Owen D. Young finalizes the "Young Plan" to reduce German reparations from World War I to 112 billion Gold Marks (\$US8 billion) paid over 59 years
- 1942 - Battle at Alam Halfa: German & Italians assault
- 1943 - Japanese occupiers intern Jewish Congregation of Sorabajo
- 1944 - Allied offensive at "Gothen-linie" Italy
- 1944 - French provisional government moves from Algiers to Paris
- 1944 - French troops liberate Bordeaux
- 1944 - Soviet & Romanian troops march into Bucharest
- 1957 - Federation of Malaya gains independence from Great Britain
- 1962 - Trinidad & Tobago gain independence from Britain (National Day)
- 1966 - "The Battle of Algiers", directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, starring Jean Martin, Saadi Yacef, premieres at the Vienna International Film Festival
- 1968 - 12,000 die in 7.8 quake destroys 60,000 buildings in NE Iran
- 1968 - Garfield Sobers becomes the first cricketer to hit 6 sixes in one over.
- 1976 - Trinidad & Tobago adopts constitution
- 1978 - Constitution adopted by Sri Lanka
- 1979 - Comet Howard-Koomur-Michels collides with Sun
- 1982 - USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1990 - East & West Germany sign a treaty to join legal & political systems
- 1994 - Last Russian soldiers leave Estonia & Latvia
- 1994 - Pentium computer beats world chess champ Garry Kasparov
- 1998 - North Korea reportedly launches Kwangmyongsong, its first satellite.

OBITUARY

We, at Government Polytechnic for Women, Srinagar, are deeply shocked and saddened to announce the untimely demise of our student, Ms. Mantasha Mubashir, of the 5th semester, Department of Food Technology, who left for her heavenly abode on 29th August 2026.

Ms. Mantasha was a bright and promising student. Her loss is a grievous blow to our institution and the academic community.

ThePrincipal,staff,andstudents of Government Polytechnic for Women Srinagar extend their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. We stand in solidarity with them and pray for strength and fortitude for the family to bear this irreparable loss. May her soul rest in peace.

**Principal
Government Polytechnic for Women
Bemina Srinagar**

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

WITH DEEPEST
CONDOLENCES

We mourn the sad demise of



TARIQ AHAMD ZARGAR

S/O GHULAM NABI SARVAR
RO ZOONIMAR NOWSHERA

چلے بھی گئے وہ اس دنیا کو الوداع کہہ کر
یادوں کی خوشبو چھوڑ گئے دل میں سا کر
نہ کوئی شکوہ، نہ کوئی فریاد باقی ہے
بس دعاؤں میں مانگتے ہیں ان کی مغفرت ہر دم

اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس میں اعلیٰ مقام عطا فرمائے
اور لواحقین کو صبر جمیل عطا کرے۔ آمین

Nepal Nightmare

The evidence has accumulated for years: contaminated waterways, mined riverbeds, damaged Karewas and failing waste systems. Nepal’s disaster has brought fresh urgency to an old warning.



Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

For two decades, I have used the Right to Information Act (RTI) to track environmental damage in Jammu and Kashmir. I have filed hundreds of applications, gathered thousands of pages of documents, and shared the findings with the press and the public.

The pattern is always the same: laws are clear, violations are blatant, penalties are imposed, and the destruction continues.

In Srinagar’s uptown, stormwater pumps built to keep the city dry during rains now run even in the heat of summer. They are pumping untreated sewage, including faecal sludge, kitchen waste, and industrial runoff, straight into the Doodh Ganga stream.

This stream is not a remote watercourse. It is a primary drinking water source for over half a million people and the lifeline of Hokersar Wetland, a Ramsar site recognised for its ecological value under international law.

Connecting stormwater pumps to sewerage lines is illegal under the Water Act of 1974, the Solid Waste Management Rules of 2016, and the Wetland Rules of 2017. Yet the practice goes on.

In 2021, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) to pay 41.67 crore in envi-

ronmental compensation. In 2022, it imposed another 35 crore in penalties, plus 1 crore in March that year. The Municipal Council Chadoora was also fined 1 crore.

These are unprecedented fines for the state. And still, untreated sewage continues to flow into the stream and wetland.

The same disregard plays out in the mining of Karewas and riverbeds in Pulwama and Budgam.

Karewas are ancient clay plateaus that store water, feed orchards, and preserve a fragile ecosystem.

Over the last several years, NKC Projects Pvt. Ltd., a construction firm working on the Srinagar Ring Road, has carved them up for clay and sand, paying a fraction of the legally due royalties. The company has also extracted boulders and gravel from the Rambhara, Romshi, Shali Ganga, and Sukhnag streams on a massive scale.

In 2022, after my petitions, the NGT banned NKC from mining in Pulwama and Budgam. The company simply moved to Beerwah, where locals counted about 200 truckloads a day being hauled from the Sukhnag stream between October 2022 and December 2024.

These operations were carried out without environmental clearance or public auction. Instead of stopping them, the administration issued “disposal permits” and “short-term permits” - in effect legalising the plunder.

In October 2024, the NGT formed a multi-agency committee of the central environment ministry, pollution control authorities, and the J&K fisheries department to inspect the site.

By January 2025, it had ordered an immediate halt to mining in Sukhnag and summoned the Deputy Commissioner of Budgam for approving 163 illegal permits.

While daytime operations have stopped,



night-time mining with heavy machinery continues in Qumiroo, Sail, Kangripora, and nearby villages, reportedly with the knowledge of mining officials.

Elsewhere, in Shali Ganga, NKC’s mining was halted three years ago. The company shifted upstream into Raithan Forest Range, gouging out water sources in Kachwari Hill, Draggar, and Watrad villages.

Even after a 80 lakh penalty was announced in the Assembly by the mining minister, credible sources indicate the money has not been recovered.

Waste management, the third major front of destruction, has also collapsed into malpractice.

Over the past decade, the central government has spent about 2,500 crore under the

Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) for rural sanitation. In many villages, toilets built under the scheme discharge directly into irrigation channels and streams. Waste segregation sheds have been constructed next to water bodies.

This violates national solid waste management rules, the Swachh Bharat guidelines, and the Water Act. It also ensures that pollution is built into the system, not cleaned out of it.

These are long-running, large-scale violations that threaten public health, agriculture, water security, and biodiversity.

The links are direct: sewage in the Doodh Ganga means contaminated drinking water for half a million people. Mining in the Karewas destroys orchards and natural water storage. Sand extraction from riverbeds increases

the risk of floods and damages fish habitats. Waste dumped into streams poisons irrigation channels and farmlands.

Officials cannot claim ignorance. They have been shown RTI documents, court orders, site photographs. They have been fined by the NGT. They have heard repeated appeals from citizens and environmentalists.

Still, they have allowed contractors to keep working, often by issuing the very permits that make illegal activity appear lawful.

The House Committee on Environment and Climate Change must act now.

It must investigate these violations, hold accountable the officials and contractors involved, enforce the environmental laws already in place, and ensure that mining, sewage disposal, and waste management follow legal norms.

The committee should visit these affected sites, from Srinagar’s pump stations to the mined-out riverbeds of Budgam, and hear directly from the communities living with the consequences.

I am ready to provide the documentary evidence: the RTI replies, the NGT orders, the photographs. What I cannot provide is more time.

Every day of delay means more sewage in our streams, more clay stripped from our Karewas, and more sand dug from our rivers.

The cost will not be measured only in crores lost to corruption, but in poisoned water, collapsing ecosystems, and lives diminished by disease and scarcity.

Kashmir’s environmental collapse is not inevitable. It is being permitted, and it can still be stopped.

The author is an environmental activist and policy analyst based in Kashmir. He chairs the J&K Climate Action Group and founded the Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. He can be reached at bhatrajamuzaffar@gmail.com.

Kashmir’s Battle of the Trees

Apple growers and poplar farmers are colliding over shade, roots and water, with little clear law to settle the disputes.



Mohammad Amin Mir

Picture two adjacent plots in a Kashmir village. One is an apple orchard, carefully cultivated over years. The other is a line of poplars, fast-growing, profit-friendly trees often planted for timber.

As the poplars shoot up, reaching 60 to 80 feet in just a decade, they begin casting long shadows over the orchard. Their leaves fall, roots stretch wide, and presence begins to impact the yield next door.

The orchard owner files a complaint. He says the shade is stunting his apples, the leaf fall is encouraging pests, and the roots are draining water from his soil. The poplar grower says it’s his land. He can do what he wants.

This isn’t just a local spat. It’s a signal of a slowly spreading tension across rural India as land use patterns shift, climate pressures build, and farming becomes less about food and more about returns.

Agriculture in Kashmir still employs around 60% of the population. The valley grows over 20 lakh metric tonnes of apples every year, contributing nearly 75% to India’s apple production.

At the same time, timber demand has created a poplar boom. Farmers are incentivised to plant fast-yielding trees, sometimes harvesting them in 10 to 12 years for plywood, packaging, and matchstick industries.

Schemes like the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) have pushed orchard expansion. Meanwhile, the poplar trade has turned timber into a second income stream for families.

Yet when these two models meet on opposite sides of a boundary, conflict follows.

At the heart of it is a legal and administrative vacuum. The Jammu & Kashmir Land Revenue Act, 1996 (Samvat), gives landowners the right to use their land within its agricultural classification.

That means an owner can plant poplars, or apples, if the land is not designated as forest, kahcharai (grazing), or protected. There’s no clause that says how close is too close, or whether shade counts as harm.

Indian civil law offers a few tools.

The Indian Easements Act, 1882 allows for the right to light and air if it’s been enjoyed without interruption for 20 years.

The law of private nuisance says that one landowner’s use of land must not interfere with a neighbour’s ability to enjoy theirs.

The trouble is, proving that interference, especially in a field, without surveillance or technical evidence, isn’t simple. Judicial precedents try to fill in the gaps.

In 2008, the Himachal Pradesh High Court ordered eucalyptus trees removed from near an orchard, ruling that “no landowner may exercise his right in such a way that it substantially harms his neighbour’s lawful use.”

In 2011, the Punjab & Haryana High Court upheld a 15-foot buffer zone for poplars after ruling they caused damage to an adjoining crop field.

In 2016, the Jammu & Kashmir High Court refused to issue a blanket ban but left the door open for “reasonable restrictions” if harm could be demonstrated.

These judgments help, but they aren’t law. And local revenue officials - tehsildars, patwaris - often lack both the jurisdiction and the clarity to act.

When orchardists complain, the standard response is a Girdawari, or field inspection. The patwari checks how close the poplars are, which way the shadows fall, whether the apple yield has dropped.

It’s a process vulnerable to bias, guesswork, and delay.

There’s also no uniform rulebook. One tehsil may permit poplars five feet from the boundary, another may insist on fifteen. One patwari may recommend pruning, another may ignore the complaint entirely.

By the time the matter reaches a civil court, the apples are already lost. So, too, is the trust between neighbours who once harvested together.

This needs fixing.

First, panchayats should have clear, enforceable guidelines on tree plantations, especially species like poplars and eucalyptus.

Like building bye-laws, these rules should set minimum distances, maximum heights near orchards, and bans near water bodies or electric lines. The Forest Rights Act and Panchayati Raj laws can be amended to support this.

Second, revenue records need to evolve. Just as a Tati-ma Shajira maps land parcels, orchard areas should carry an “influence zone”, a protective buffer recorded in land documents that restricts incompatible land use nearby.

Third, patwaris should be trained not just as record-keepers but as early conflict mediators. They are the first to see disputes forming during seasonal inspections. They should be empowered to flag risks, not wait for complaints.

Finally, the state should consider a Rural Land Use Mediation Panel at the block level.

Comprising agricultural officers, revenue officials, and local elders, such panels can offer faster, cheaper resolutions than courts. They also preserve the fabric of village life, which is slowly being torn by disputes that could be settled with dialogue.

What’s being lost is the trust between neighbours, the cooperation that has long defined rural Kashmir. When one farmer sees shade as income, and the other sees it as theft, the gap between them widens.

And when the law fails to offer answers, that gap becomes a wound.

India’s land laws were built in another century. They were written when most farmers grew the same crops, when land was abundant, and when the economy was simpler. Those conditions no longer exist.

Now, every acre is contested. Every plant is a potential business model. And every decision, of where to plant, what to grow, how high a tree can rise, carries consequences for the person next door.

Kashmir’s trees are now symbols of that shift. Where once they offered shade, they now cast suspicion. Where once they stood for growth, they now signal grievance.

And unless we update our rules, retrain our officials, and rebuild our village institutions, these disputes will keep growing. Like the poplars themselves, tall and unchecked.

— The author is a policy commentator and legal researcher based in Jammu & Kashmir. He can be reached at miramin354@gmail.com.

The Corporate Canopy

Green infrastructure can help Kashmir’s companies manage heat, costs and climate risk.



Mutaharra A W Deva

Business leaders in Kashmir now work in a reality where climate conditions influence every serious decision.

Heat waves grow stronger and last longer each year. Urban areas often record temperatures three to seven degrees higher than nearby rural belts.

This gradual rise increases cooling demand and puts pressure on electricity systems and company budgets.

Most Indian promoters, bankers, private equity firms, and board members understand that climate risk affects daily operations, asset value, and long term investment plans.

Tree planting in cities once looked like a municipal responsibility. But today, it stands out as a smart business decision.

It connects directly with employee performance, energy costs, building life, ESG disclosures, and brand reputation.

Urban forestry gives companies a practical way to build climate counter response. Extreme heat already reduces productivity in sectors like manufacturing, logistics, and construction.

It increases cooling expenses, raises insurance costs, and speeds up wear and tear on infrastructure. It also brings health concerns and stronger ESG scrutiny.

Industrial hubs in Delhi NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Srinagar face clear urban heat island risks. Boards now include heat exposure in physical climate risk reporting under global disclosure standards and India’s Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting framework.

Trees provide natural cooling, as their shade lowers surface temperatures and reduces heat absorption by buildings and roads. They release moisture into the air, improve airflow, absorb rainwater, and filter pollutants.

Unlike short term technical fixes, tree canopies provide benefits for decades. Well planned green cover around campuses, logistics parks, fac-

tories, and special economic zones can reduce surrounding temperatures by two to five degrees.

That reduction lowers cooling loads, improves worker comfort, strengthens retention, enhances brand value, and increases property valuation.

Forward looking boards now treat urban forestry as adaptive infrastructure. Independent directors and risk committees ask direct questions. Have we mapped heat exposure across all operations? Have we included green infrastructure in capital expenditure plans? Is climate adaptation built into enterprise risk systems? Are biodiversity and water impacts audited? Are greening targets measurable and verified?

Under the Companies Act 2013 and evolving governance standards, climate counter forms part of responsible leadership. Deal makers and investment advisors also include climate risk in due diligence.

They review asset heat exposure, estimate future cooling and insurance costs, and evaluate the stabilizing im-

“Real estate developers gain higher valuations and lower lifetime cooling expenses through smart canopy design. Technology firms use sustainable campuses to support talent retention. Hospitality businesses improve guest comfort and reduce energy demand through climate aware landscaping.

pact of green infrastructure on long term cash flow.

Strong green assets improve credit ratings, attract sustainability linked finance, and support access to green bonds.

Many companies in Kashmir already conduct plantation drives. Strong management can turn these efforts into structured programs with climate suitable species, survival audits, proper water planning, dedicated maintenance budgets, community partnerships, and third party verification.

Lifecycle planning ensures measurable canopy growth and clear heat reduction data.

Manufacturing units benefit from green buffers that reduce dust and thermal stress, which improves labour output and machine efficiency.

Real estate developers gain higher valuations and lower lifetime cooling expenses through smart canopy design. Technology firms use sustainable

campuses to support talent retention. Hospitality businesses improve guest comfort and reduce energy demand through climate aware landscaping.

Water discipline remains essential in Kashmir. Boards can direct treated wastewater for irrigation, install drip systems, select native and drought resistant species, and maintain soil moisture carefully.

Responsible greening strengthens overall resource management and protects water balance.

Several companies now create board level climate committees, link greening targets with ESG metrics, connect executive incentives with results, track canopy growth through satellite tools, and publish heat data transparently.

This approach places climate strategy at the center of governance.

Investors reward firms that demonstrate adaptation readiness, credible ESG reporting, biodiversity protection, and community engagement.

Well managed urban forestry pro-

grams build trust, control costs, and stabilize operational risk.

Cooling works best through a combined approach. Companies can expand tree cover, install cool roofs, apply reflective materials, develop green roofs, use permeable pavements, and restore water bodies. Trees form the foundation of this mix.

Rising temperatures will test Kashmir’s infrastructure and business continuity. Urban forestry now stands as risk protection, capital preservation, and long term value creation.

Companies that treat trees as core infrastructure will remain strong and competitive in a warmer future.

The author is a certified independent director and environmental governance expert who writes on corporate governance, ESG, and climate policy.

J&K United Shia Council Formed to Champion Community Rights



Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: A new socio-religious body, the "Jammu & Kashmir United Shia Council," was formally announced on Saturday, with its leadership stating that the organisation aims to safeguard the rights and interests of the Shia community while promoting unity, social reform and constructive engagement across Jammu and Kashmir.

The announcement was made during a press conference in Srinagar, where interim chairman Bilal Ahmad Haji described the formation of the Council as a "historic and significant step" for the community.

"This is not merely the establishment of an organisation, but the declaration of a collective vision and renewed sense of purpose," Haji said while addressing media persons.

He said the Council emerged after extensive consultations among scholars, intellectuals, jurists, educationists and members of the Shia community from different regions and backgrounds, who collectively felt the need for a strong and organised representative platform.

According to the leadership, the Council seeks to address issues concerning the community in religious, social, political, educational, economic and cultural spheres.

Haji said the Shia community of Jammu and Kashmir possessed a rich intellectual and cultural heritage rooted in "knowledge, sacrifice, faith and tolerance," adding that the changing socio-political environment required a unified body capable of articulating community concerns and aspirations effectively.

"The Council will work towards the protection, representation and advancement of the community's legitimate rights and interests," he said.

Describing the organisation as "a comprehensive movement rather than merely an institution," the interim chairman said the Council would focus on strengthening unity within

the community, promoting sectarian harmony and peaceful coexistence, ensuring transparency in the management of Shia Auqaf (religious endowments), and encouraging educational and social upliftment.

He added that guiding the younger generation towards a "positive, constructive and purposeful direction" would remain one of the key priorities of the organisation.

General Secretary Tanveer Ahmad said the Council would function as an inclusive platform and would not represent "any individual, faction or vested interest."

"It is intended to serve as the collective voice of the community, and its doors remain open to all those committed to sincerity, integrity and public service," he said.

The office bearers announced that the Council's central office would be based in Srinagar, while its organisational structure would extend to district, tehsil, locality and village levels to ensure broader grassroots participation and outreach.

The leadership said the organisation would operate through a "transparent, accountable and participatory framework" and remain closely connected with people at the grassroots level.

They also announced plans to establish an advisory council comprising scholars, lawyers, social workers, educationists and experts from various fields to provide policy guidance and formulate research-based recommendations aimed at community welfare and development.

"Our objective is to create a platform where vision is supported by strategy, and where collective wisdom guides meaningful action," the leadership said.

The Council further asserted that it would pursue a constructive and democratic approach in addressing community issues, stressing its commitment to dialogue, constitutional methods and peaceful engagement rather than confrontational politics.

Motorcyclist Killed After Accident in Pampore Area

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A 28-year-old motorcyclist died after a road accident in Seerbagh Shalina area of Pampore on Saturday, officials said.

Officials said the deceased was identified as Ghulam Hassan Sofi, son of Mohammad Sultan Sofi, a resident of Seerbagh Shalina.

According to officials, the victim was riding a motorcycle when he allegedly lost control and skid-

ded off the road in the area.

He was shifted to Sub-District Hospital Pampore, where doctors declared him brought dead.

The body was later brought to SMHS Hospital Srinagar for radiological examination and other medico-legal formalities.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident and further investigation has been initiated. [KNT]

Samagra Shiksha, Other Initiatives Transforming School Education in Shopian

Observer News Service

Srinagar: School Education Department Shopian has emerged as a leading example of educational transformation during the financial year 2025-26 by undertaking wide-ranging initiatives focused on quality education, digital learning, inclusive development and student welfare.

Through sustained efforts under various flagship programmes and schemes, the department has significantly strengthened educational infrastructure, improved literacy outcomes and enhanced access to learning opportunities for all sections of society.

The district has witnessed remarkable progress in infrastructure upgradation, smart learning initiatives and welfare support for Children With Special Needs (CWSN), reflecting the Government's commitment towards equitable and modernised education.

As part of digital transformation initiatives, 42 schools were strengthened under Smart School



interventions. Further enhancing digital education, 25 schools were covered under the Smart Class Project at an estimated cost of Rs 45 lakh. The project included installation of smart boards, computers, IT infrastructure and modern teaching-learning equipment aimed at making classrooms more interactive, technology-enabled and student-friendly.

Besides, 74 smart stands were installed across schools to facilitate smart learning practices.

Under the Kindergarten initiative, 130 schools were covered

Family Support Key to Fighting Drug Addiction: Experts

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Emotional support from families can play a decisive role in helping people overcome addiction, experts said, stressing that recovery is not possible through medicines and counselling alone.

As concerns continue to grow over the rising number of drug addiction cases in Jammu & Kashmir, mental health professionals and doctors working in de-addiction centres have underlined the importance of compassion, understanding and active family participation in the rehabilitation process.

Speaking to KNO, Samreena Jan, a counsellor at an Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) in South Kashmir, said individuals battling substance abuse often need emotional reassurance more than anything else during their recovery journey.

She said patients who receive consistent encouragement, care and acceptance from their family members tend to show stronger commitment towards sobriety and are less likely to relapse.

"Family support creates emotional stability for recovering addicts. When a person feels accepted rather than judged, it becomes easier for them to regain confidence and continue treatment sincerely," she said.

Jan added that while professional counselling, medication and rehabilitation programmes are essential, long-term recovery largely depends on the environment a patient returns to after treatment.

According to her, many recovering addicts struggle to reintegrate into society because they continue to face criticism, taunts and mistrust from their own relatives and community members.

She warned that such be-



haviour often becomes one of the major causes of relapse. "In many cases, relapse is not due to treatment failure but because recovering addicts are constantly reminded of their past mistakes and made to feel unwanted. A judgmental attitude only pushes them deeper into isolation and addiction again," she said.

The counsellor urged families and society to adopt a compassionate and supportive approach towards those trying to rebuild their lives after addiction.

Dr Aadil, a medical officer at ATF Shopian, said opioid addiction, especially heroin abuse, continues to dominate the cases reported at treatment facilities in Kashmir.

"Nearly 90 to 95 per cent of patients visiting our centre are heroin users," he said, adding that out of around 650 registered patients at the ATF in District Hospital Shopian, almost all are male.

Dr Aadil said the role of parents and guardians extends far beyond simply bringing patients to hospitals or rehabilitation centres. He advised parents to remain actively involved in their children's daily lives by observing behavioural changes, monitoring social circles and

paying attention to unusual activities or possessions.

"If parents notice sudden behavioural changes, withdrawal from family interactions or suspicious habits, they should immediately seek professional help instead of ignoring the signs," he said.

The doctor further said that treatment facilities are providing free medical care, counselling and rehabilitation support to addicts, while family counselling sessions are also being organised to educate relatives about handling addiction with patience and empathy.

"These sessions help families understand that addiction is a medical and psychological condition, not merely a moral failing. Supportive behaviour from loved ones significantly improves recovery outcomes," he added.

Experts believe that involving families in the recovery process not only strengthens the patient emotionally but also helps relatives cope with the social and psychological challenges associated with addiction.

They said collective efforts by families, healthcare professionals, educational institutions and society are essential to tackle the menace.

‘Diabetes, Hypertension Main Causes of Kidney Failure in Kashmir’

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Senior urologist Dr Saleem Wani on Saturday said diabetes and hypertension have emerged as the leading causes of kidney failure in Kashmir, while warning that smoking, substance abuse and delayed diagnosis are contributing to the growing burden of kidney and bladder-related diseases in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking with KNO, Dr Wani said uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension are the primary reasons behind rising kidney failure cases, followed by stone diseases and other structural disorders affecting kidneys, ureters and bladder.

"Diabetes and hypertension are lifestyle diseases and are the number one causes of kidney failure. If these diseases are kept under control and lifestyle modifications are adopted, there are high chances of preventing complications," he said.

He stressed the importance of effective glycaemic control, blood pressure regulation and salt restriction to reduce the risk of kidney damage.



"The diabetes treatment should be done under proper medical supervision. Patients should keep their blood pressure under control and follow dietary precautions," he advised.

Dr Wani said the long-term effects of uncontrolled diabetes often damage multiple organs, including the kidneys, eyes and heart, adding that patients should regularly consult nephrologists, ophthalmologists and cardiologists for timely monitoring.

"After several years, diabetes starts affecting the kidneys, eyes and heart simultaneously; therefore, regular check-ups become very important," he said.

The urologist expressed concern over the increasing trend of cigarette smoking and substance

abuse among youth in Kashmir, saying both are becoming major public health threats. "Smoking and substance abuse go side by side and become the cause of very dangerous diseases," he said, while urging people to support anti-drug campaigns and avoid tobacco use.

Linking smoking directly with bladder cancer, Dr Wani said cigarette smoking remains the single biggest risk factor behind the disease.

"We treat and operate many patients, but even after treatment, some continue smoking, because of which the toxic effects remain in the body and the disease progresses further," he said.

He stressed that early diagnosis remains the key to cancer prevention and treatment, saying awareness about symptoms is essential for timely detection.

"The symptoms of bladder cancer include blood in urine and a burning sensation during urination. If a smoker notices blood in urine, he should immediately consult a doctor as it can be an early sign of cancer," he said.

J&K to Receive 200 E-Buses for Tourism, Pilgrimage in Eco-Sensitive Areas

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is set to receive 200 electric buses under the PM E Drive Scheme, a major push towards sustainable and eco-friendly public transport in the Union Territory.

According to KNO, Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H. D. Kumaraswamy conveyed the approval in an official communication addressed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The proposal for the allocation of electric buses was submitted by the Jammu and Kashmir government following a request made by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the letter states.

The 200 e-buses are to be deployed for tourism and pilgrimage activities in the ecologically



sensitive and hilly regions of Jammu and Kashmir. The Union Minister said the move would help advance the objectives of green mobility and reduce vehicular emissions in environmentally sensitive areas.

The communication further mentions that CESL has been directed to include 200 electric buses for Jammu and Kashmir while issuing the next tender under the PM E-Drive Scheme.

Ganderbal Residents Urge Admin to Remove Russian Poplar Trees

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Residents across several areas of central Kashmir's Ganderbal district are facing growing health concerns due to pollen released by Russian poplar trees, with locals alleging that authorities have failed to address the issue despite repeated pleas.

Residents from Ganderbal, Nagbal, Gund, Cherwan, Hayan, Palpora, Ninhama and Kangan, said that the pollen from Russian poplar trees has triggered severe respiratory problems, including allergies, breathing difficulties and asthma-related complications, particularly during the spring season.

Muhammad Sahil, a resident of Kangan, said that patients suffering from allergies and pre-existing respiratory ailments are the worst affected. "The administration must immediately remove the Russian poplar trees and replace them with non-allergenic alternatives," he urged.

Health expert Dr Zakira said pollen allergy remains one of the major causes of respiratory

illnesses during the pollination season. "A significant number of patients visiting hospitals during this period suffer from pollen-related allergies and respiratory distress," the doctor said, adding that despite existing guidelines, little progress has been made on the ground.

Advocate Mudasir said that despite legal directions issued in 2015 for the removal of Russian poplar trees, the authorities have failed to implement the orders. He termed the issue a serious public health concern and called for urgent intervention.

Another resident, Saliq, said the pollen has severely affected asthma and allergy patients, leading to worsening symptoms and increased health complications.

Residents have demanded immediate action from the administration to cut down the Russian poplar trees and replace them with safer alternatives to reduce health risks and public suffering.

Mehbooba Mufti Questions Bulldozer Action Against Drug Peddlers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti said on Saturday that strict action should be taken against drug peddlers, but innocent families should not suffer by having their houses demolished.

While addressing a party convention in central Kashmir's Budgam district, the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir said, "If anyone is involved in drug trafficking, they should be jailed, but you should also ask those police personnel who release them after taking money from them. Why are their houses being bulldozed? What is the fault of the family members? Why are you demolishing their houses? There is no justice."

According to PTI, She also criticised chief minister Omar Abdullah over the coercive action, saying, "Omar, if the people had liked bulldozer baba,

why would they have voted for you? People voted for you and gave you 50 MLAs thinking you will safeguard them."

Referring to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's padyatra as part of the Nasha Mukti J-K Abhiyaan in south Kashmir's Anantnag district earlier in the day, the PDP president alleged that government employees, school teachers and students were directed to arrive for the event at 6:30 am.

"I will not name the person who messaged me at midnight last night. That person said the LG is organising Nasha Mukti Abhiyaan event in Anantnag, but all employees and schools, including women and girls, have been directed to arrive at 6:30 am. I want to tell the LG that the campaign is a good initiative, but... making them wait, I think, is an excess," she said.

The PDP chief accused the

20-Year-Old Booked Under PSA for Repeated Criminal Activities in Jammu

Observer News Service

Jammu: District Magistrate Jammu Rakesh Minhas has ordered the preventive detention of an alleged habitual offender from the Janipur area under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), citing repeated involvement in criminal activities allegedly affecting public peace and order.

Officials identified the accused as Veer Vikrant Singh, a resident of Paloura in Janipur area of Jammu.

According to officials, the detention order was issued after a dossier was submitted by Jammu Police through the office of the Senior Superintendent of Police Jammu, detailing the accused's alleged criminal history and activities.

Acting under Section 8(1)(a) of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978, the District Magistrate directed that the accused be placed under preventive detention in view of what authorities described as a continuing threat to public order.

Following the issuance of the detention warrant, the accused was shifted to District Jail Udhampur, where he has been lodged under PSA provisions.

Police officials said the accused, despite being around 20 years old, had accumulated a significant criminal record and was allegedly involved in multiple FIRs registered at police stations including Bakshi Nagar, Janipur and Nagrota.

Authorities alleged that the cases against him included unlawful possession and use of weapons, armed assaults involving swords and hockey sticks, criminal intimidation, robbery, and incidents of firing outside residential houses.

Officials claimed that his activities had created fear among residents in several localities and had repeatedly disturbed public order in parts of Jammu district.

According to police sources, the accused allegedly continued to engage in criminal activities even after securing bail in ear-

lier cases.

Officials said this pattern of repeated involvement in criminal cases despite legal action prompted authorities to invoke preventive detention laws.

"The detention became necessary to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of peace and stability," an official said.

According to KNT, Police officials maintained that preventive detention under the PSA was invoked after assessing the nature of allegations, the frequency of criminal cases, and the perceived impact on public order.

The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act allows authorities to detain individuals preventively in cases linked to activities considered harmful to public order or security of the state.

Officials said further legal proceedings in the pending criminal cases against the accused would continue separately under relevant provisions of law. [KNT]

Auqib Nabi to Play 3 Matches for Surrey

PTI

Mumbai, Aug 30: Promising pacer Auqib Nabi on Saturday left for the UK to play three matches for Surrey in the County Championship Division One with an eye on India's tour of New Zealand in October.

The Jammu and Kashmir pacer was recently drafted into the Indian squad as a replacement for the injured

Jasprit Bumrah in the two-Test series in Sri Lanka but did not get a chance to make his debut.

"Nabi has left for the UK from Dubai and will look to play their match against Yorkshire on Wednesday," a source told PTI.

The leading wicket-taker in last season's Ranji Trophy, which Jammu and Kashmir won for the first time, Nabi is also expected to return in

time for India's four-day un-official Tests against Australia A in Puducherry. The series starts on September 22.

It was reported earlier that Surrey were in search of a swing bowler, and there were talks taking place to get Nabi playing a few matches for the club. Following the contest against Yorkshire from September 2-5, Surrey are set to take on Sussex from September 8-11 and Glamorgan from September 15-18.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Curiosity Is First

proposed three initiatives for the Gurukul: a Values and Science Innovation Centre to facilitate dialogue between Indian knowledge traditions and modern science; a Service and Society Campaign to engage students in activities such as cleanliness, digital literacy and environmental protection; and Future Skills and Ethical Technology to prepare students for emerging technologies with a focus on responsibility and ethics.

Sinha said he was confident that the Gurukul would emerge as a centre of education where tradition and modernity enrich one another and where students develop into "aware, sensitive and virtuous citizens".

"Knowledge is complete only when it is accompanied by compassion, humility, and a sense of responsibility towards humanity," he said.

He also appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board to improve convenience, safety and facilities for devotees, saying the achievements reflected dedication, discipline and a spirit of service.

Mahamandleshwar Shri Swami Vishveshvaranand Giriiji Maharaj, Dr Ashok Bhan, Lalit Bhasin and Suresh Kumar Sharma, members of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Padma Shri Prof Vishwa Murti Shastri, member of the Governing Council of SMVD Gurukul; SMVDSB CEO Sachin Kumar Vaishya; Additional CEO Alok Kumar Maurya; senior officers and staff of the Shrine Board; and faculty members, parents and students of the Gurukul attended the celebrations.

Uzbekistan Confers

two civilisations.

Speaking after receiving the honour, Modi said it was a matter of great pride and humility for him.

He noted that Indians are familiar with the word 'Dostlik', which means friendship, saying the word itself captures the sentiment at the heart of India-Uzbekistan relations.

"On behalf of all Indians, I sincerely thank the people of Uzbekistan, the government, and my dear friend, the President. I accept this highest honour with utmost humility and dedicate it to the centuries-old friendship between our two countries and our shared heritage," he said.

The Uzbek honour adds to a list of top state and civilian awards conferred on Modi by several countries for his leadership and contribution to bilateral relations.

In July, Indonesia conferred its highest civilian award, the 'Bintang Adipurna of the Republic of Indonesia', on Modi in recognition of his contribution to strengthening bilateral ties.

In June, Seychelles conferred its highest national honour, the 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon', on him for his leadership in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Earlier this year, Israel conferred the 'Medal of the Knesset' on Modi, making him its first recipient. Russia had conferred its highest state decoration, the 'Order of St. Andrew the Apostle', on him in 2024 for his contribution to deepening the strategic partnership between the two countries.

The United States had also awarded Modi the 'Legion of Merit' in 2020 for his leadership in strengthening the India-US strategic partnership.

Modi is on a two-day visit to Uzbekistan aimed at strengthening cooperation in areas including trade, clean energy and connectivity.

On Sunday, Modi held talks with Mirziyoyev, following which India and Uzbekistan agreed to elevate their bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

The two countries also set a target of USD 5 billion in bilateral trade by 2030 and agreed to expand cooperation in trade and investment, digital public infrastructure, defence, health-care, critical minerals, agriculture, education and tourism.

Modi will travel from Tashkent to Kyrgyzstan to participate in the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, scheduled for August 31 and September 1.

Widespread Rain

remain isolated in Kashmir and scattered in Jammu.

The weather office has also forecast isolated thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph in Jammu division during September 2-5.

Meanwhile, temperatures have remained above normal across much of J&K. Maximum temperatures were 3-5 degrees Celsius above normal at many places in Kashmir and 1-2 degrees above normal in Jammu during the past 24 hours.

Kupwara recorded the highest maximum temperature in Kashmir at 34.2 degrees Celsius, while Kathua recorded 35.4 degrees Celsius in Jammu.

Night temperatures also remained above normal, with minimum temperatures 2-5

degrees Celsius above normal at many places in Kashmir and 1-4 degrees above normal in Jammu.

Gulmarg recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Kashmir at 14 degrees Celsius, while Baderwah recorded 18 degrees Celsius in Jammu.

Kathua AWS recorded the highest rainfall of 23 mm during the preceding period.

For Sunday, the IMD has forecast partly cloudy skies with light rain or thunderstorms in Srinagar, with the maximum temperature expected to be around 30 degrees Celsius and the minimum around 22 degrees Celsius.

Jammu is likely to receive light to moderate rain or thunderstorms, with temperatures expected to remain around 34 degrees Celsius during the day and 28 degrees Celsius at night.

The IMD has advised people to remain alert and keep themselves updated about weather developments, particularly in areas vulnerable to landslides, mudslides and flash floods.

Make India

as it should be since women account for approximately 46 percent of the beneficiaries of the 'PM SVANidhi Yojana'.

"This means that around 35 lakh women across the country are expanding their businesses by connecting with this scheme," he asserted.

Referring to two women -- one from Ghaziabad and the other from Bengaluru --- who have benefitted from the 'PM SVANidhi Yojana', the prime minister said when a woman's business grows, the future of her entire family advances along with it. "Children receive better education, household needs are met, and the woman's self-confidence is strengthened. This is, indeed, a living example of 'women's empowerment'," he said.

Modi said the month of August brings with it myriad hues of patriotism all around as during this time, the spirit of love for the nation intensifies in everyone's heart.

He said the 'National Handloom Day', the anniversary of the 'Quit India Movement', the 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' make this month special and the 'Independence Day' and 'National Space Day' fill every countryman with pride.

The prime minister said the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign further strengthens this sentiment and this year has become even more special as it marks the 150th anniversary of 'Vande Mataram'.

He said this celebration of the tricolour was not limited to India alone; this year, through the 'Suryapath Tiranga' initiative, the national flag embarked on a unique journey across the globe.

"The tricolour was hoisted in Suva, Fiji, at the first light of dawn. Subsequently, it was unfurled at Indian Missions and Posts across Asia, Africa, Europe, and eventually San Francisco in America. You can imagine how magnificent those scenes must have been; as the Sun traversed across the world, the Indian tricolour was hoisted in its wake," he said.

Referring to the 'Mission ShaktiSAT', Modi said today the dreams of the country's daughters are soaring from the earth to outer space.

"And you will be proud to know that India is bringing together thousands of daughters who are nurturing such dreams, from across the globe. This initiative is named 'Mission ShaktiSAT,'" he said.

The prime minister said through it, 12,000 girl students from 108 countries are getting the opportunity to learn satellite technology and to advance in the field of innovation.

"The goal of this entire initiative is truly special: preparations are underway to send a satellite - developed entirely through the participation of female students - into lunar orbit," he said.

In his radio address, Modi also referred to the rising demand for avocados.

Hardly anyone knew about this fruit in the past and both its value and demand were low. However, today it is frequently seen on dining tables, he said.

"It has become a preferred choice in the health and premium markets. This is also very helpful for our farmer brothers and sisters," he said.

The prime minister said many farmers, who were earlier cultivating other crops, are now engaged in avocado farming, which is allowing them to earn additional income.

During the radio address, Modi also shared the inspirational stories of Mumbai resident Krishna Seshadri, who has started a website called www.bharatarajya.com which shares information about little-know erstwhile kingdoms of India.

He also spoke about Nagaland's Phek district resident Vesalu Puro, who has benefitted from flower cultivation, and Odisha's Maithili Bhue, who is now involved in forest conservation, among others.

The prime minister is currently on a state visit to Uzbekistan and the radio broadcast is usually recorded a few days in advance and played on the last Sunday of every month.

FDA Bans Sale

Taj Desi Ghee (Batch No. 134), Daawat Fresh (Batch No. VT09), Nand Krishna Cow Ghee (Batch No. PC-05-26), Vandu Cow Ghee (Batch No. D143), Dairy Milk Desi Ghee (Batch No. OM12), and Mohan Dairy Ghee (Batch No. 06).

Laboratory analysis revealed the presence of beta-sitosterol — a marker for vegetable oil adulteration — along with positive Baudouin test results, abnormal fatty-acid profiles, and significant deviations from prescribed physico-chemical parameters, officials said.

The samples were originally collected from Anantnag, Shangus, Larnoo, Bijbehara, Samba, Kathua, Jammu, Tral, and Pampore.

The FDA has directed all Food Business Operators (FBOs), wholesalers, distributors, and retailers to immediately halt sales and ensure the complete withdrawal of these batches from the market. The affected businesses have been given 48 hours to declare their remaining stock to the concerned Designated Officer.

Enforcement agencies have been placed on high alert to monitor compliance and prevent any further circulation of the prohibited products.

"Ghee is required to be derived exclusively from milk or milk products. Any added matter not exclusively derived from milk fat is not permitted for sale under the applicable food safety standards," the FDA reiterated in its prohibitory order.

The ban, effective immediately across Jammu and Kashmir, has been enforced in the larger interest of public health and consumer safety. The FDA has urged consumers to exercise caution, verify brand names, batch numbers, and packing dates while purchasing ghee, and report any availability of the banned batches to the nearest food safety authority.

In an official statement, the FDA clarified that the prohibitory measure is precautionary and does not curtail the statutory right of the concerned FBOs to seek re-analysis through an FSSAI-notified Referral Laboratory.

The crackdown comes amid growing concerns over food adulteration in the region and underscores the administration's commitment to stringent enforcement of quality standards. (KNS)

J&K Approves

during a review meeting on Saturday announced that the Public Works Department (PWD) will begin repairs shortly as tenders are finalised and also directed officials to perform structural audits and prioritize works in consultation with camp residents and commandants.

The PWD is formulating a project to upgrade internal roads, parks, schools, dispensaries, and the Sub-District Hospital in Jagti, while to address water shortages, the Jal Shakti Department is conceiving a Rs 10 crore project to augment water supply in Jagti Township, supported by regular quality testing and tanker supply.

A Rs 11.5-crore sewage treatment plant project has been finalised for the Nagrota, Muthi-Buta Nagar, and Purkhoo camps.

More than 2,600 families have accessed social sector schemes following the digitisation of migrant ration cards, with a second outreach drive set to launch in mid-September to assist with welfare and skill development applications.

Karwali also directed senior officers to conduct weekly camp visits to address resident grievances and track developmental progress.

It was also decided that another round of extensive outreach camp shall be conducted from the second week of September at various locations in Jammu to create awareness in filling of applications about various welfare schemes, and self employment and skill development schemes of the government, the statement said.

The relief and rehabilitation commissioner said senior officers were directed to ensure weekly visits in the camps assigned to them as per the duty roster and take stock of all development works and grievances of the camp inmates including those related to immovable properties in Kashmir Valley.

However, the residents are not sure that the money could be of any help to complete the mammoth task mentioned by the government. "You cannot cure cancer with a bandage; it requires chemotherapy or surgery," said advocate Vishva Ranjan Pandita and expressed concern over how extensive works, such as slab repairs, plastering, kitchen and bathroom renovations, and civil works, can be executed safely with what he termed a meagre budget.

Social activist Vinod Kherra highlighted that heavily rusted reinforcement iron is already visible in several blocks. Before spending money on paint and superficial repairs, he insisted that the structural integrity of these buildings must be scientifically assessed.

"In several buildings, exposed and heavily rusted reinforcement iron is already visible. Before spending money on plaster, paint, flooring or other superficial repairs, the structural integrity of these buildings must be scientifically assessed. If the structures are found unsafe, they require reconstruction or major structural rehabilitation, not another layer of plaster," he said.

Kashmiri Pandit activist Naveen Bhat said that the government must conduct a formal engineering survey to fund genuine, permanent solutions rather than making deteriorating buildings temporarily presentable.

"The government needs to assess the actual requirement through a proper engineering survey and provide adequate funds accordingly. The objective must be to provide displaced families with safe and dignified housing, not merely make deteriorating buildings look presentable," Bhat said.

Drawing a similarity, he said a bandage may cover a wound, but it cannot cure cancer "likewise, cosmetic repairs cannot cure decades of structural neglect".

"The government must address the root of the problem if it genuinely wants to provide a permanent and dignified solution to the displaced Kashmiri Pandits," he added.

Earlier this month, PTI had reported on the crumbling township and daily hardships of the people of Jagti township, which includes 4,242

two-room flats distributed among 24 buildings and provides accommodation for about 5,600 families.

Each family has a unit of 495 sq ft which consists of a bedroom, a kitchen and a lobby. Even though there is serious overcrowding and families are growing, about 80 flats are still un-occupied and more than half of the 200 commercial shops in the township have never been assigned.

Locals said that the buildings are rapidly falling into disrepair -- the outer plaster is coming off while the inside walls are affected by continuous water seepage. The condition gets worse during the monsoon when the leaking roofs result in serious water accumulation inside, they said.

Gujjar Leaders

questioning. Three of them later died from injuries allegedly sustained while in custody at the Company Operating Base in Mastan Dhara. A purported video showing the alleged torture of detainees subsequently surfaced on social media.

Following a Court of Inquiry ordered by the Headquarters of XVI Corps, administrative action was taken against Acharya, who was then commanding 13 Sector, for failing to exercise proper command

and control, improper handling of civilians and failing to prevent excesses.

Gujjar community leader Shahnawaz Choudhary criticised the AFT order, describing it as a "complete betrayal of the community".

"The fact that the senior Army officer has been censured for two years but now a tribunal order has directed that this action of the officer will not be reflected in his personal record makes a mockery of our judicial system," he said.

Choudhary said the decision could affect accountability and argued that removing the censure from the officer's record could facilitate his future promotion.

He also called for a response to submissions made during the proceedings alleging that senior military leadership, including the then Corps Commander of XVI Corps based at Nagrota, was present in a control room at Dera Ki Gali during the period when the civilians were allegedly subjected to torture.

"One cannot escape the issue of moral and operational responsibility by taking refuge in legal technicalities," he said.

Social activist Zahid Parwaz also called for an investigation into the alleged role of senior commanders, warning that any failure to address command responsibility could set a "dangerous precedent" for civil-military accountability in sensitive areas.

"Justice cannot be treated as a symbolic slap on the wrist that fades away with the arrival of the season of promotions," Parwaz said.

Sharif Chouhan, former Senior Superintendent of Jammu and Kashmir Police and general secretary of the Gujjar Desh Charitable Trust, said accountability was essential to maintaining the credibility and discipline of the armed forces.

"If internal submissions establish that top operational commanders knew about systemic atrocities being committed by their men just kilometres away, then the decision of the tribunal in diluting record entries will be detrimental to the discipline of the armed forces," he said.

During the proceedings, Acharya had challenged the censure and argued that senior officers, including the Corps Commander of XVI Corps and the General Officer Commanding of Counter Insurgency Force Romeo, were present in the control room during the operations and should therefore share responsibility.

He had also alleged that there was a case of the Corps Commander acting as a judge in his own cause.

The tribunal rejected these submissions, observing that the direction, control and supervision of ground operations rested with the sector commander and commanding officer.

The AFT also noted that the applicable guidelines under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990, prohibit the use of physical force and third-degree methods against civilians.

However, relying on the Ministry of Defence policy dated October 30, 2023, which provides for a two-year duration of "Severe Displeasure" imposed by a Corps Commander, the tribunal directed that the punishment be deleted from the administrative file.

The tribunal said the direction was being issued as an exception in this particular case. Prominent Gujjar community leaders and activists have expressed concern over the Armed Forces Tribunal's decision to remove from the administrative record a punitive censure imposed on a senior Army officer in connection with the custodial deaths of three civilians in Poonch in December 2023.

The AFT, while dismissing Brigadier Padmasambhava Acharya's challenge to the "Severe Displeasure" censure imposed on him on July 8, 2024, directed that the punishment be deleted from his administrative file after taking into account a Ministry of Defence policy that limits the duration of such censure to two years.

The tribunal clarified that the deletion of the punishment from the record was being ordered as an exception in the particular case.

The case relates to the Army operation launched following an ambush near Dera Ki Gali in Poonch on December 21, 2023, in which four soldiers were killed and two of them were mutilated.

During subsequent searches, several civilians were detained for questioning. Three of them later died from injuries allegedly sustained while in custody at the Company Operating Base in Mastan Dhara. A purported video showing the alleged torture of detainees subsequently surfaced on social media.

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Death Toll

south from the Himalayan border region, carried the floodwaters downstream, creating havoc on August 26.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi on Saturday said that more than 275 Indians and 128 persons of Indian origin remained missing or non-contactable in Nepal. On Sunday, the MEA in its X handle shared a list of 149 people who were rescued.

HC Quashes JKB

Director and CEO of the Bank can exercise powers under Clause 12.29. These include an investigation by a State, UT or Central investigating agency; a finding that the employee was directly or indirectly involved in terrorist or anti-national activities or that his activities posed a threat to national security and the sovereignty, security and integrity of the country; advice for removal or dismissal by a competent government authority not below the rank of Principal Secretary or Director General of Police; and dismissal on the basis of such advice without departmental proceedings.

The Court made it clear that unless these conditions were fulfilled, an employee of the Bank could not be removed or dismissed without holding a departmental inquiry.

The Court also drew a clear distinction between the powers of the President or Governor under Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution and those of the J&K Bank's Managing Director and CEO under Clause 12.29 of the OSM. It rejected the respondents' contention that the two provisions were in pari materia, observing that Article 311(2)(c) does not contemplate a prior investigation or advice from another authority before the President or Governor decides that, in the interest of the security of the State, it is not expedient to hold an inquiry.

In contrast, the Court said, Clause 12.29 specifically incorporates these safeguards as mandatory preconditions before the Bank's MD and CEO can dispense with a regular inquiry. It further observed that while the President and Governor are high constitutional functionaries vested with such powers, the same level of discretion cannot be extended to an officer such as the Managing Director and CEO of a bank, which is why specific safeguards were deliberately incorporated in Clause 12.29.

Turning to the facts of the case, the Court noted that it was an admitted position that no FIR had been registered against the petitioner. While the petitioner argued that an investigation could not exist without registration of an FIR, the respondents contended that the term "investigation" under Clause 12.29 should be interpreted more broadly and could include collection of material even without an FIR.

The Court later held that although an FIR was not an essential prerequisite, the discreet verification and information gathered from confidential sources in the present case did not amount to an investigation as required under Clause 12.29. Consequently, it quashed the dismissal order and restored the petitioner to the status he held immediately before his dismissal, while leaving it open to the respondents to proceed afresh in accordance with the prescribed procedure or conduct a regular departmental inquiry.

SHORT TAKES

Police Attach House Acquired Through Proceeds Of Drug Trafficking

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As part of its continued crackdown on narcotics-related activities, police in Shopian have attached a residential house valued at 16,77,448/- belonging to Hilal Ahmad Dar son of Gh Ahmad Dar resident of Vehil Shopian. The property was identified as having been acquired through proceeds generated from the illegal trade of drugs and narcotics. Accordingly, the said property has been attached in connection with FIR No. 80/2024 of Police Station Shopian.

The attachment proceedings were carried out in the presence of duly constituted police team, Executive Magistrate, Lambardar and Chowkidar, ensuring full compliance with all legal procedures and maintaining transparency.

Police reiterates its firm commitment to eradicating the menace of drugs by targeting both offenders and the financial assets generated through illicit activities. The general public is urged to come forward with any information regarding drug trafficking or related activities.

Wild Bhang Destroyed at Jabadar, Bijhama

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Continuing its sustained campaign against drug abuse and illicit cultivation of narcotic substances, Police in Baramulla conducted a Bhang destruction drive at Jabadar, Bijhama.

During the drive, wild Bhang plants found growing in the area were identified and destroyed. The operation was conducted peacefully and smoothly, with police personnel ensuring proper supervision throughout.

Police remains committed to eliminating the sources of drug abuse and urges the public to extend full cooperation in keeping their communities drug-free and safe.

10 Motorised Pumps and One Tractor Seized in Sopore

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Continuing its sustained action against illegal mining, Police in Sopore seized 10 motorised pumps/equipment allegedly being used for illegal extraction of minerals, besides one tractor involved in transportation of illegally extracted material, at different locations across Police District Sopore.

The seizures were made during intensified checking and enforcement against illegal mining activities. The seized equipment and vehicle have been taken into possession and necessary legal action has been initiated as per law.

Police remains committed to working in close coordination with the Geology & Mining and Irrigation & Flood Control Departments and extending all necessary assistance, as and when required, for effective action against illegal mining and related activities.

Suspected Criminal Held with Pistol in Jammu

Press Trust of India

JAMMU: A suspected criminal was arrested with a pistol and a 'toka' (sharp-edged weapon) on the outskirts of Jammu city on Sunday, police said.

A police party on routine patrolling noticed the person moving under suspicious circumstances at Malik Market in the Narwal area and stopped him for frisking, a police spokesman said.

A pistol and a toka were recovered from his possession, following which he was taken into custody and arrested, he said.

The recovered weapons were seized as per the prescribed procedure, the spokesman said.

PM Modi Hails Amarnath Yatra's Scientific Waste Management Model in Mann Ki Baat

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 30: The comprehensive sanitation and scientific waste management system implemented during the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 has received national recognition, with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi highlighting the Yatra's sanitation arrangements and scientific waste management model in the latest episode of "Mann Ki Baat".

The Prime Minister's mention comes shortly after conclusion of the Yatra on August 28, 2026. It appreciably recognises the coordinated efforts undertaken to manage sanitation and waste across the challenging Himalayan terrain.

The Directorate of Rural Sanitation, Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, J&K, implemented a comprehensive sanitation and waste management framework across the Baltal and Pahalgam axes, base camps and key Yatra locations. The system had been designed to cater to the requirements of lakhs of pilgrims while ensuring that cleanliness and environmental protection remained central to management of the pilgrimage.

As part of the extensive sanitation arrangements, over 8,000 sanitation facilities and supporting infrastructure were deployed across the Yatra ecosystem. These included prefabricated sanitation structures, toilets, bathing facilities



and pucca bases, providing pilgrims with clean, safe and dignified sanitation facilities during the pilgrimage.

The infrastructure was backed by dedicated sanitation personnel deployed across the Yatra routes, camps and high-footfall areas. Their responsibilities extended beyond routine cleaning and included the continuous upkeep of sanitation facilities, cleanliness of public spaces, prevention of litter accumulation and maintenance of hygienic conditions along the pilgrimage routes.

A robust scientific solid waste management system was simultaneously operationalised to manage the substantial quantum of waste generated during the Yatra.

The system ensured end-to-end waste management, covering segregation at source, collection, transportation, processing and scientific

disposal. It ensured that waste generated at base camps and along the Yatra routes was systematically channelled for appropriate processing.

Under the Zero Waste to Landfill approach, a total of 414.46 metric tonnes of waste was collected and processed during the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026.

The intervention assumed particular significance given the fragile ecological character of the Himalayan terrain through which the Yatra passes. Integrating sanitation infrastructure with scientific waste management helped minimise the environmental footprint of the large-scale pilgrimage while maintaining essential public health and hygiene standards.

Similarly, IEC interventions were undertaken to encourage the pilgrims to adopt responsible waste management practices, use desig-

nated sanitation facilities and contribute towards maintaining cleanliness of the Yatra environment.

The emphasis was on promoting a "Swachh Yatra" culture, positioning cleanliness and responsible waste disposal as a shared responsibility involving the administration, sanitation workforce, pilgrims, service providers and other stakeholders. The technology-enabled monitoring and field-level supervision further strengthened the system by supporting oversight of sanitation services and waste management operations across the Yatra routes and camps.

Prime Minister's mention of the sanitation and waste management efforts in Mann Ki Baat provides national recognition to the concerted efforts undertaken by the administration and sanitation teams to establish a sustainable framework for managing the waste and sanitation during one of the country's major annual pilgrimages.

"With over 8,000 sanitation facilities deployed and 414.46 MT of waste collected and processed, the Yatra has demonstrated how infrastructure, manpower, technology and behavioural change can work together to create a cleaner and more environmentally responsible pilgrimage experience," said Director General Rural Sanitation, J&K, Anoo Malhotra.



Mursal-e-Azam Conference organised on the auspicious occasion of Jashn-e-Milad-e-Sadiqain (AS) at Madrasa-tul-Quran Darul Uloom, Mirgund, Budgam. (KO Photo)

Statehood Will Return, Article 370 Will Not: JK BJP to Mirwaiz

Press Trust of India

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the BJP on Sunday hit out at Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq for urging political parties to unite for the restoration of Article 370, claiming that such statements are attempts to provoke the public and disrupt the peaceful atmosphere that has emerged in the valley after years of violence.

BJP spokesperson Altaf Thakur said Parliament took a "historic" constitutional decision on August 5, 2019, and the Supreme Court subsequently upheld the abrogation of Article 370.

"Mirwaiz Umar Farooq should understand that Article 370 is not coming back. Parliament has buried Article 370 forever, and no political party, leader or pressure group can reverse that constitutional reality," Thakur said.

He said such calls risked dragging Kashmir back into the politics of the past. "Statements of this nature are meant

to provoke people and vitiate the peaceful atmosphere in the Valley once again. This will never be allowed. The nation has paid a very heavy price for the return of peace to Kashmir. The sacrifices of our brave security forces and civilians, including political workers who laid down their lives for peace and democracy, cannot be allowed to be undermined or challenged through politically motivated statements," Thakur said.

He noted that Kashmir has experienced enough bloodshed, shutdowns, stone-pelting, and disruption, and that the people should not be pushed into another cycle of instability.

"Those who attempt to revive old fault lines must understand that Kashmir has moved ahead. Our youth want education, employment, entrepreneurship, investment, tourism and opportunities. They do not want to return to an era when shutdown calendars dictated their lives and violence dictated the future," he said.

**LG Felicitates Stakeholders for Successful Amarnath Yatra 2026**

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 30: The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha felicitated officers of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, Civil Administration, Army, CAPFs, J&K Police, BRO, medical professionals, service providers, and other stakeholders for successful conduct of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026. He said pilgrimage is a celebration of the collective resolve that transformed hardships into duty, chal-

lenges into opportunities, and service into a form of spiritual practice.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor expressed gratitude to the officers, security personnel, sanitation workers, pony operators, pithu bearers, palanquin carriers, langar volunteers and medical staff who ensured a smooth, secure and dignified Yatra despite difficult terrain and adverse weather. He said the achievement was not the success of any single institution or department but of "Team

Jammu Kashmir" as a whole.

It is pertinent to mention that the holy yatra was conducted over 57 days, from 3 July to 28 August 2026. Adverse weather posed serious challenges for more than 10 days and approximately 4.80 lakh devotees had darshan of Baba Barfani. 82% of pilgrims completed darshan within the first 20 days; 95% within the first month. 54,000 service providers were registered, including 31,000 pony operators, pithu bearers and palan-

quin carriers; 6,400 tent and shop operators; and 7,700 langar volunteers. Around 1.87 lakh pilgrims availed palanquin and pony services and 93 medical facilities were set up along the route, with 595 clinical beds and 26 oxygen booths. A total 1,430 doctors and nursing personnel were on round-the-clock duty, supported by 48 ambulances. 7,900 toilets were installed and maintained by 7,900 sanitation workers as part of a zero-waste Yatra initiative. Holding capacity

was raised to 63,000 within the Yatra area and 54,000 across Jammu and Kashmir divisions. Aadhaar-based registration helped address the challenge of duplicate registrations. Real-time monitoring was ensured through twice-daily coordination meetings (3 a.m. and 8 p.m.) led by Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, CEO of the Shrine Board and the Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, with nodal officers, police, Divisional Commissioners and camp officers.

Pakistan Rights Body Flags Force, Questions PoK Polls



Press Trust of India

Lahore, Aug 30: Pakistan's human rights body has said the state resorted to "disproportionate use of force" against protesters in the PoK and raised serious questions about the credibility of the electoral process marred with violence and allegations of massive rigging.

A report by the fact finding mission of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) released on Saturday attributed the unrest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to longstanding political and socio-economic grievances, institutional distrust and governance deficits.

"An increasingly confrontational state response, including the disproportionate use of force has further deepened polarisation and eroded public trust," the HRCP said and added its mission received sharply conflicting accounts about the scale of violence and the conduct of security forces.

Elections to 45 seats to the so-called PoK legislative assembly were held in three phases from July 27 to August 10.

Opposition Calls Bhagwat's US Remarks 'Doublespeak'

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Aug 30 : The Opposition on Sunday accused RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat of indulging in doublespeak over his remarks on diversity in the US, even as the BJP hailed him, saying he has shown the world what Hinduism actually means.

Addressing events in the US, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief said that unity in diversity is in Bharat's DNA, underscoring that it has to be celebrated, respected and accepted.

He also said that if any Hindu thinks that there should be no Muslims in Bharat, he will not remain a Hindu.

The Congress, Trinamool Congress, Aam Aadmi Party and other opposition parties said Bhagwat should convey this to BJP leaders and outfits that "spread hatred between Hindus and Muslims".

Reacting to the remarks in the US, Congress spokesperson Shama Mohamed said that Bhagwat should "stop lying" and alleged that the RSS' DNA has "hatred and communalism".

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal took a swipe at Bhagwat, saying he was left wondering whether it was Congress leader Rahul Gandhi or the Sangh chief speaking.

Sibal, a leading opposition voice and a senior advocate, hit out at Bhagwat, saying "you accept diversity abroad;



you do not tolerate diversity at home".

TMC MP Sagarika Ghose said that a "chilling duplicity" was on display and asked Bhagwat not to be "intellectually and morally dishonest". Make sure actions in India match words delivered abroad, she said.

"Shri Bhagwat speaks 'acceptable' language overseas but will the message be heard by the following in the @BJP4India @RSSorg Sangh Parivar: Bajrang Dal, whose vigilantes have bashed up Muslims and attacked Christian ceremonies, attack Christians and continue to do so with impunity. VHP, which looks for temples below mosques and wants India to be rid of mosques

"Hindutva groups like Sri Ram Sena who spew vile language against minorities. @BJP4India which doesn't have a single Muslim MP in Lok Sabha and whose top leaders speak in grotesquely hateful tones against Muslims....," she said on X.

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi also lashed out at the RSS chief.

"This is the oldest trick in the RSS playbook: some words are for the world, and some are for its own members. The RSS has never disavowed its key thinkers and writers. What do they say about Muslims and other minorities?"

Owaisi alleged the RSS opposes democracy and has consistently demanded a dictatorship. "For the RSS, Indian Muslims and Christians are 'internal threats' number one and two, respectively.

"Golwalkar's Bunch of Thoughts has a long chapter titled 'Internal Threats', in which Muslim and Christian citizens of India are described as threats number one and two, respectively," Owaisi said. "My request to Bhagwat is that he should just recite choice extracts from the poisonous works of Savarkar, Hedgewar, Gol-

SC to Hear Plea on Anonymous Party Cash Donations

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Aug 30: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea which challenged the validity of a provision of the Income Tax Act that allows political parties to receive "anonymous" cash donations below Rs 2,000.

The plea said this lack of transparency undermines the purity of the election process, as it deprives voters of the crucial knowledge about the source of political funding, including the donors and their motives, preventing them from making a rational, intelligent and fully informed decision while casting their vote.

According to the top court cause list, a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta is likely to hear the matter.

The top court had earlier issued notices to the Centre, Election Commission and others seeking their responses on the petition.

The plea filed by petitioner Khem Singh Bhati has also sought a direction to the poll panel to prescribe as a condition for registration of a political party and allotment of the election symbol that no amount can be received in cash by any political party.

The plea sought the striking down of Clause (d) of section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961, as unconstitutional, and also referred to the apex court's 2024 judgement which scrapped the electoral bonds scheme.

"The petitioner is seeking direction that the political parties must disclose the name and all other particulars of the person paying any amount of money to it, and no amount can be received in cash so as to maintain transparency in the political funding," the plea, filed said.

Section 13A of the Act deals with the special provision relating to the incomes of political parties.

The plea said section 13A was introduced in the Act and income of a political party received by way of interest on securities, income from house property or income from other sources and any income by way of voluntary contributions are exempted from the computation of total income.

The plea has also sought a direction to the poll panel to scrutinise Form 24A contribution reports of all recognised political parties and to require them to deposit the amount received by way of contributions for which address and/or PAN have not been furnished.

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