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EAM Warns Of 'Food Crisis' In Coming Months

Press Trust of India

New York, Sep 29: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has warned of a "major food crisis" in the coming months, in addition to the already significant fertiliser shortages the world is witnessing due to the Ukraine and Iran conflicts, saying the situation is "very very stressful" for Global South economies.

"... this is a big concern for us, which is, if you look at these two conflicts, the Ukraine and now the Iran-Gulf conflict, they've actually had a devastating impact on Global South economies," Jaishankar said during a conversation hosted at Asia Society here on Monday.

He said there is particular concern about the energy situation as the "market is very tight" and on top of that, if "people play politics with it, that adds to the complications in the market," as that will drive up prices at a time when people should actually be stabilising prices.

"So part of it is actually the security of oil supplies, and part of it is the politics of oil supplies, and they are feeding into each other, and they are creating a double crisis or an aggravated crisis," he said.

On the concerning food situation amid the raging global conflicts, Jaishankar said, "We are today looking at a situation where some of the major grain exporters will not be able to send out their shipments, particularly out to the Black Sea."

He said that | [More on P6](#)

1.3 Mn Errors Rectified In J&K Land Records: CM

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said more than 1.3 million clerical errors in land records have been identified and rectified as part of the ongoing digitisation and verification of Jamabandis across Jammu and Kashmir.

Replying to a question raised by MLA Devyani Rana during Question Hour in the ongoing Autumn Session of the J&K Legislative Assembly, Omar, who also holds the Revenue portfolio, said verification of digitised Jamabandis was currently underway in all districts.

He said the administration had put in place a digitisation process followed by an error-rectification mechanism to ensure the accuracy of land records.

The Chief Minister said the land-record system had been shifted from a static Oracle SQL-based database | [More on P6](#)

Statehood Resolution Sparks Fresh Storm In J&K Assembly

BJP seeks Speaker's removal over resolution; House witnesses heated exchanges and walkout

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly witnessed a fresh uproar on Tuesday over the adoption of a resolution seeking restoration of full statehood, with the BJP seeking the removal of Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather and the treasury benches accusing the opposition of disrupting proceedings.

The row erupted at the start of the day's proceedings, a day after the Assembly passed a resolution moved by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah demanding urgent restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma said the BJP had moved a motion seeking the Speaker's removal, alleging that the resolution



was allowed in violation of Assembly rules.

Sharma also alleged that the Speaker had allowed the resolution despite an opinion from the Law Department describing it as "unconstitutional".

"I leave it to the conscience

of the Speaker to step down from the chair," the LoP said.

The treasury benches responded with slogans against the opposition, prompting the Speaker to ask members to take their seats.

Rather defended his decision, saying he | [More on P6](#)

Bureaucratic Intervention Sparks Debate

Observer News Service

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly witnessed a sharp debate over communications reportedly sent by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and Law

Secretary Achal Sethi to the Assembly Secretariat regarding the resolution seeking restoration of statehood. The officials reportedly argued that the resolution was sub judice and should not be taken up in the House, according to reports.

The intervention came after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah moved the resolution, which was subsequently admitted by the Assembly. Assembly Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather questioned the reported communications, saying he was unaware

of any precedent where bureaucrats had written to the Assembly Secretariat seeking to prevent legislative business from being taken up. He also questioned why the communications had been sent without the approval of the | [More on P6](#)

5 Bills Passed, Two Salary Hike Bills Withdrawn

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Tuesday passed five Bills moved by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during the ongoing Autumn Session, while two other Bills seeking amendments to the salaries and allowances of ministers and legislators were withdrawn following opposition from BJP members.

Seven Bills had been moved by Omar in the House, of which five were passed and two were withdrawn.

The Bills passed by the Assembly cover municipal



BILLS PASSED COVER MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE, GST, Ease of Doing Business, legislators' pension and decriminalisation of offences.

governance, Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living, taxation, legislators' pension and decriminalisation of offences. | [More on P6](#)

J&K Govt Withholds Cabinet Reservation Details

Cites Assembly Rules, Says No proposal to relax existing EWS reservation criteria

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Tuesday declined to disclose details of cabinet recommendations on reservation or queries posed by the Union Government, citing secrecy provisions under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Legislative Assembly.

Responding to a question of MLA Handwara Sajad Gani Lone, the Minister in-charge Social Welfare said the cabinet's recommendations had already been submitted to the competent authority but could not be shared, reported news agency.

"The recommendations have been submitted to



the competent authority. However, in terms of Business Rule 38 of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, particularly clause (xxi), the present information sought by the Hon'ble Member being secret in nature relating to the decision and proceedings of the Cabinet cannot be provided," the reply stated.

On queries | [More on P6](#)

Empower Border Youth Through Education: LG

Calls for balance between culture and modern learning

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday called for greater empowerment of youth in Jammu and Kashmir's border areas through education, entrepreneurship, sports, culture and mentorship, saying children in remote villages should have equal access to opportunities available in urban centres.

Sinha made the remarks while addressing a felicitation ceremony for meritorious students organised by Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti in collaboration with the Jammu Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

Congratulating the students, teachers and parents, the LG said the honoured students were not merely winners of a competition but torchbearers of India's tradition of knowledge, literature



and culture.

Emphasising the importance of mother tongue, Sinha said language was not merely a medium of communication but also an expression of identity, memory and cultural sensibility.

He said Jammu and Kashmir's linguistic diversity reflected the confluence

of India's shared culture and noted that the National Education Policy places emphasis on early education in the mother tongue and Indian languages.

"The real development of Jammu Kashmir will come when a child in our border villages can say with confidence, 'I can fulfil | [More on P6](#)

Searches Underway Across 3 Border Districts

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Security forces have launched search operations at nearly a dozen locations across the border districts of Rajouri, Poonch and Kathua following reports of suspicious movements, officials said.

The searches are being jointly conducted by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF) in remote and densely forested areas of the three districts.

In Rajouri, searches are underway at Peer Khana, Potha Narota and Andh villages of Kalakote, besides Thanda Pani and Kansar in Sunderbani areas.

In Kathua, security forces are conducting searches in Panjwari, Kathera and adjoining areas, while in Poonch, operations are underway in Upper Kasbalari, Theratopa, Nagal Gali, Kalaban and Patnateer in the Mendhar sector.

The security personnel are carrying out extensive searches of forested stretches, natural hideouts and other vulnerable areas, officials said.

They said there has been no contact with the suspected persons so far. The forces, however, are maintaining heightened vigilance and conducting coordinated operations to track down suspected individuals and rule out the presence of terrorists or other anti-national elements. Jammu and Kashmir Director General | [More on P6](#)

J&K To Remain Dry Till Oct 4: MeT

Agencies

Srinagar: The Meteorological Centre on Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness generally dry weather till October 4, with light rain and snowfall expected over higher reaches on October 5 and 6.

According to the latest forecast, the weather is expected to remain generally dry on September 30 and from October 1 to 4.

"On October 5 and 6, the weather is likely to be partly to generally cloudy, with light rain, thunder and gusty winds at a few places. Light snowfall is also possible over the higher reaches during the period," the MeT centre said.

The weather is forecast to remain generally dry again on October 7 and 8.

Another spell of partly to generally cloudy weather is expected from October 9 to 11, when light rain, light snowfall over higher reaches, thunder and gusty winds | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir Turns to Science To Build Its Next Economy

At a three-day science congress in Awantipora, researchers and policymakers called for stronger links between laboratories, universities and the needs of a changing Jammu and Kashmir.

Syed Sammar Mehdi

Srinagar: On Tuesday morning, scientists, university leaders and government officials gathered at the Nund Reshi Auditorium in Awantipora to confront a question with consequences far beyond the campus: How can science help frame the future of Jammu and Kashmir?

The question opened the three-day J&K Science Congress 2026 at the Islamic University of Science and Technology, where researchers presented work on emerging technologies, scientific innovation and their possible applications to the region's development.

The Congress, organised



under the theme "Science, Innovations and Emerging Technologies for Sustainable J&K," brought

together academics and researchers from institutions across the country. Its first day combined two | [More on P6](#)

Premature Retirement No Punishment: HC

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has upheld the premature retirement of a government employee, observing that compulsory retirement does not amount to punishment and does not imply misconduct or incapacity.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Dr Pushpendra Singh Bhati and Justice Sanjeev Kumar allowed an appeal filed by the Government against the judgment of a Single Bench that had quashed the premature retirement of GM Lone and directed his reinstatement.



The case concerned Government Order No. 1264-GAD of 2016 dated November 21, 2016, under which Lone, after around 38 years of service and on attaining the age of 58 years, was prematurely retired under Article 226(2) of the J&K Civil Services Regulations.

The Government had contended that the Screening/Review Committee had considered Lone's service record, his alleged involvement in a vigilance case relating to an alleged demand and acceptance of Rs 9,000 as bribe, his general reputation and other relevant material before recommending | [More on P6](#)

146 Stone Crushers Face Closure Over Pollution Violations

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC) has inspected 517 stone-crusher units across the Union Territory since January 2025, issuing 229 legal notices and 146 closure directions for violations of environmental and pollution-control norms.

Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment Javed Ahmed Rana stated this in the Legislative Assembly while replying to a question raised by MLA Ajaz Ahmad Jan.

According to the government, 318 stone crushers were inspected in Kashmir Division, with 154 legal notices issued

and 112 closure directions served.

In Jammu Division, 199 inspections were conducted, resulting in 75 legal notices and 34 closure directions.

The minister said the directions were issued under the relevant provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

The action was taken against units found operating without the requisite No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the concerned Deputy Commissioner, without valid consent from the JKPCC, or without adequate pollution-control measures.

The | [More on P6](#)



No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

Note: This is a public notice issued for information of all concerned.

fko

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Dated: 28-09-2026

PARAS Health Srinagar Announces Special Heart Health Packages on World Heart Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar: PARAS Health Srinagar has announced special heart health packages on the occasion of World Heart Day, aimed at encouraging preventive cardiac care, timely screening and early medical consultation.

As part of the initiative, the hospital is offering a Healthy Heart Package at 999, bringing together essential cardiac screening and consultation services under a single package. The package includes a lipid profile, ECG, cardiac consultation and TMT/ECHO, subject to clinical assessment and availability.

The hospital has also announced angiography

ly medical consultation can play an important role in protecting heart health. Through these special packages, we want to make essential cardiac evaluation more accessible and encourage people to take proactive steps towards understanding their cardiovascular health," he said.

The initiative seeks to raise awareness about cardiovascular health and the importance of regular screening, particularly among individuals with known risk factors or a family history of cardiac disease.

The hospital said the Healthy Heart Package has been designed to provide a convenient first-level cardiac assessment,



at a special package price of 9,999 for patients who require the diagnostic procedure following medical evaluation and clinical advice.

Speaking about the initiative, Dr Murtuza Habib, Facility Director, PARAS Health Srinagar, emphasised the importance of addressing heart health proactively rather than waiting for symptoms to become severe.

"World Heart Day is an opportunity to remind people that prevention, timely screening and ear-

while the angiography package offers a special rate for patients for whom the procedure is medically advised.

Dr Habib said heart health should not be neglected until warning signs emerge.

"Heart health is not something that should be postponed until a warning sign appears. Regular health checks, awareness of risk factors and timely consultation can help people make informed decisions about their health," he said.

KU Charts Academic Roadmap at 57th Academic Council Meeting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The University of Kashmir (KU) convened the 57th meeting of its Academic Council under the chairpersonship of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan.

The meeting reviewed action-taken reports on resolutions adopted at earlier meetings and considered the confirmation of minutes of the Academic Council and its Standing Committee.

The Council took up a wide-ranging academic agenda, including programme regulations, academic collaborations, the

adoption and revision of statutes, curriculum matters, and proposals for new programmes across the University's campuses and affiliated institutions.

While chairing the meeting, Prof. Khan stressed that academic development must uphold established standards while responding to students' needs and the changing priorities of higher education. She emphasised that new programmes should be carefully assessed for their academic value, relevance and alignment with applicable guidelines.



File Pic

118 Km of Roads Upgraded in Srinagar This Financial Year: Govt

Agencies

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has macadamised or upgraded 118.06 km of roads across Srinagar district during the current financial year, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary informed the Assembly on Tuesday.

Replying to legislators' questions during the Autumn Session, Choudhary, according to KNO, said 15.43 km of roads had been upgraded in the Khanyar constituency under special development directives.

He said the Public Works (R&B) Department was continuing efforts to remove bottlenecks on key road corridors under the supervision of the High-Level Committee (HLC).

On Syed Meerakshah Road, he said 2.68 km of the 10.33-km stretch had been fully widened, while compensation and acquisition proceedings had been completed for 132 of the 332 affected structures.

For the Khanyar-Zadibal-Pandhrath Road corridor, 161 of 314 structures have been acquired, with around 2 km of the 12.45-km road widened.

On the Koolipora-Budoobagh Road, 231 metres of the 435-metre widening stretch has been completed and 14 of 29 structures cleared. The remaining 15 cases are being resolved

on a fast-track basis. The project has been approved at an estimated cost of Rs 4.5 crore, he said.

Choudhary said a proposal for widening and upgrading the Devi Angan-Hawal Road had been submitted under the CRIF scheme at an estimated cost of Rs 31.25 crore, including Rs 30 crore for land acquisition and utility shifting.

Work on the Alamgiri Bazar Chowk project has been approved under the UT Sector at an estimated cost of Rs 3.35 crore. The project includes acquisition of five structures and redesigning of the junction.

For the Buchpora-Hazratbal Road, approval of the revised DPR is awaited. Acquisition proceedings involving 34 structures have been initiated, of which two structures have been acquired and Rs 20 lakh disbursed from the Rs 7 crore allocated for bottleneck removal. The remaining amount is awaiting revalidation, he said.

Choudhary said the Babapora-Habba Kadal Road had been largely cleared, with only four structures remaining, while acquisition of 24 structures was pending on the Habba Kadal-Gowkadal Road.

On the Fateh Kadal-Habba Kadal road via Chinkral Mohalla, 176 structures fall within the widening stretch. Thirteen have been notified under

Section 4 and eight acquired through the HLC.

He said some projects were facing delays due to court cases, pending Section 4 notifications, family title disputes and compensation assessments. Following decisions taken at the 264th HLC meeting, the department is implementing a streamlined mechanism to expedite pending land acquisition cases.

On industrial corporations, the Deputy Chief Minister said 591 surplus employees had been identified in SICOP following the closure of its Marketing Wing and Raw Material Depots. The employees are currently engaged on 89-day arrangements.

He said surplus employees from SICOP and J&K Cements Limited had been deployed in J&K SIDCO, which is facing manpower shortages due to retirements. Skilled manpower is also being engaged through outsourcing where required. In addition, 30 surplus employees from other corporations have been deployed to organisations facing staff shortages.

Regarding SIDCO land at Balol, Choudhary said an anti-encroachment drive had led to the retrieval of 45 kanals of land, while efforts were underway to reclaim the remaining encroached area in coordination with the district administration.



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



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HIGHWAY STATUS



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



**HIJRI
CALENDAR**
17 Rabi-ul-Sani
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 02
ZUHR	12:22
ASR	4: 38
Magrib	6: 26
ISHA	7: 44

Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim

Fātiha Khwānī & Majālis-e-Isāl-e-Sawāb
on the Yawm-e-Chaharum of
Mawlānā Abdul Salam Bhat Sahib

Day: Thursday Date: 01/10/2026

Venue: Pahlloo, Brein, Nishat, Srinagar

First Session: 6:50 AM

Second Session: 10:30 AM

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Health and Medical Education Department GOVERNMENT NURSING COLLEG, PULWAMA

(Email: cmo.pulwama@jk.gov.in Website: www.gmcnanatnag.net Tele: 01933294470)

NOTICE

Subject: Admission to left over seats in the Allied and Healthcare Diploma Courses at Govt. Nursing College Pulwama.

Ref 1: No: SAHC-J&K/Notice/Leftover-Diploma/1/547-52 Dated: 24-09-2026

Pursuant to the notification issued by State Allied Health Care Council J&K vide referred above, applications are invited from eligible/ desired candidates for admission to left over seats in the following diploma Course at Govt. Nursing College Pulwama. Only Domiciles of the UT of Jammu & Kashmir are eligible for admission against the leftover seats.

S. No	Name of the Course	Total Seats	OM	EWS	ST1	ST2	SC	RBA
01	Laboratory Assistant (DMLT)	07	02	01	01	01	01	01

The selection of the candidates to such course shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations issued by INC & J&K Board of professional Entrance Examinations and J&K Paramedical Council/JK State Allied Health Care Council as referred above.

Important information:

- Application Forms will be available on the GMC Anantnag Website (www.gmcnanatnag.net) and on the District Pulwama's NIC website (<https://pulwama.gov.in>) from 01-10-2026 to 09-10-2026.
- Last date for submission of duly filled application forms shall be **10-10-2026** till 03 PM
- The application forms complete in all respects along with requisite documents and a requisite application fee amounting to Rs: 300/- (shall be deposited by the candidate against the pay-slip attached with the application form) are to be submitted in the office of the Principal Govt. Nursing College Pulwama.

No: GNC/Pul/Est./ *880-85*
Dated: *29-09-2026*

DIPK-6216/26
dated: 29-09-2026

Principal
Govt. Nursing College
Pulwama

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No:- 770-W/01/WA/JAT/2025 50-2026-27-PTK-DRM-JAT (to be opened on 21.10.2026) acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date 21.10.2026 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to the closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through payment modes available on the IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheques, Deposit receipts, FDR, etc. are not allowed.

Tender Type		Tendering Section	Bidding System		
Open		Works	Single Packet System		
Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time		
28.09.2026		07.10.2026	21.10.2026		
SN	Tender No.	Details of Tender	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1	50-2026-27-PTK-DRM-JAT	Protection and strengthening of piers 6, 7 & 10 to 13 of the upline and piers 2, 5 to 13 of the DN line bridge NO 188 JRC-PTK section under ADEN-PTK	41965913.31	60 Days	09 Months
Note: Contractors are advised to check the IREPS website for any corrigendum issued against this tender before submitting the bids					
					3379/26

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd.
IAPM Department, Zonal Office Srinagar,
M. A. Road, (Opposite Women's College), Srinagar-190001, Kashmir.
0194-2452658, Ext.: 132; iapmd.kmr@jkmail.com

Possession Notice

Notice under Section 13 (4) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 read with Rule 8 (1) of the Security (Enforcement) Interest Rules, 2002

Whereas the Authorized Officer of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank Limited under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notice dated **30.01.2026** thereby calling upon the Borrower namely Mr. Irfan Ahmad Mayer (Borrower) S/O Shafiq Ahmad Mayer R/O Iqbal Colony, Shalteng to repay an amount of Rs 1665177.92 (**Rupees Sixteen lacs Sixty Five Thousand one hundred seventy seven paise ninety two only**) being the balance outstanding as on **31.12.2025** in the accounts of the Borrower, within 60 days from the date of the said notice together with the future interest and other charges thereon.

The said borrower having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the said borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned being authorized officer of the J & K Bank Ltd. has taken possession of the mortgage property described herein below, in exercise of the powers conferred on me under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules, on 28.09.2026

The said borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned against dealing with the said property in any manner whatsoever and any dealings with the said property will be subject to the charge of the J&K Bank Limited for the amount in aggregating to **Rs. 1836834.92Dr (Rupees eighteen Lac Thirty Six Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Four paise Ninety two only)** as on 31.08.2026 together with future interest thereon from **01.09.2026** and other charges incurred or to be incurred.

The borrowers attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property:

A piece of land measuring land measuring 4 kanals belonging to Mr. Nadeem Ahmad Mayer under Khasra No 1717 min, Khata No 670, Khewat No 147 at Mouza Gupt Ganga, Tehsil Srinagar (North), District Srinagar

Authorized Officer

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Office of the Deputy Chief Education Officer, 3rd Floor Mini-Secretariat Complex, Arhama Shopian

Fax No:- 01933-260479 , Telephone: 01933-260980,

AUCTION NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information of the general public and all interested bidders that the dilapidated building block of Govt. Middle School Rakhama is proposed to be disposed of through public auction on 03.10.2026 (Saturday) at 11:00 AM at the premises of Govt. Middle School Rakhama.

All interested and eligible bidders are hereby invited to participate in the auction. The auction shall be conducted strictly as per the prescribed rules and procedures governing disposal/dismantling structures. of condemned/dilapidated the government

The auction shall be conducted in the presence of the Deputy Chief Education Officer, Shopian, who is the Chairperson/ Head of the Dismantling Committee, along with other members of the Committee.

Interested bidders may participate in the auction at the scheduled date, time and venue.

No: DY.CEO/SPN/PLG/104-07

DIPK-6228/26

Dated: 29/09/2026

DY. Chief Education Officer
Shopian

KASHMIR OBSERVER™

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja
Switchboard: (0194) 2502327 | +91 8899256463
Editorial: (0194) 2502327
Email: editor@kashmirobsvserver.net

KO VIEW

Science Before the Storm

An ounce of prevention, as they say, is worth a pound of cure. Kashmir has learned that lesson from its rivers, orchards and mountains. A blocked stream can flood a village, while a poor winter can trouble an orchard and a dry spring can leave farmers counting losses before the season has properly begun. Nature keeps its own accounts, and Kashmir is beginning to see how costly those accounts can become when warning signs go unmeasured. That is why the J&K Science Congress at the Islamic University of Science and Technology in Awantipora needs spotlight beyond its three-day programme. The gathering brings scientists, academics and researchers together around science, innovation and emerging technology. Its larger significance lies in a simple question: can Kashmir use scientific knowledge to solve the problems already appearing around it? Climate change makes that question hard to postpone. Research published in Scientific Reports found that glaciers in the Upper Indus Basin lost an average of about 0.35 metres in thickness annually between 2000 and 2012. Researchers estimated cumulative glacier mass loss at about 70 billion tonnes. A Nature study also recorded rapid glacier thinning in the Jammu-Kashmir region during the first decade of this century. Those figures eventually reach the valley floor. Glaciers feed rivers, while rivers support farms, towns and hydropower. Changes in snow and ice can alter water supplies and increase pressure on communities exposed to floods and landslides. Scientific monitoring can help planners see these changes before they become expensive emergencies. The same principle applies to farming. Kashmir's horticulture economy depends heavily on weather, water and soil. Research can help identify crops and growing methods suited to changing temperatures, improve irrigation, reduce pesticide use and cut post-harvest losses. Better forecasting can help farmers make decisions with evidence rather than instinct. Science also belongs in the economic discussion. Kashmir needs new businesses and better productivity in sectors ranging from agriculture and tourism to energy and manufacturing. Universities can become places where local problems turn into research projects and research projects turn into useful technologies. A method that saves water, improves cold storage or detects crop disease earlier can have an economic value far beyond a laboratory. The list of questions keeps growing. How will changing snowfall affect water supplies? Which slopes face greater landslide risks? How can towns manage waste? Where can renewable energy work efficiently? How can new technologies create jobs for educated young people? These are practical questions, and practical questions need evidence. A science congress cannot answer them by itself. Speeches end and researchers return to their institutions. The real test comes when universities share laboratories, departments use research in planning, businesses test new ideas and scientific findings reach farmers, engineers and ordinary citizens. Kashmir has spent generations reading the mountains for signs of what comes next. Science gives that old instinct better tools. A glacier can be measured, a river can be monitored, a crop can be tested, and a changing climate can be studied. That is where prevention begins. And for Kashmir, prevention may prove far cheaper than the cure.

Will Congress Finally Take
on Gyanesh Kumar?

After years of missed opportunities and political missteps, Congress faces another test over the Election Commission and the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.



Haider Abbas

Even a cursory look at recent elections, particularly after 2014, when the BJP came to power at the Centre, reveals widespread political unrest in the country. In states where anti-incumbency against the BJP was palpable, and where BJP legislators and leaders were literally "shoed" and had their clothes torn, the party not only won but often did so by thumping margins. How did the BJP manage it? Why was it able to do so? Much of the answer lies in the languidness of the Opposition. When demonetisation was implemented in 2016 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought 50 days to change the destiny of the country, what actually changed? The change was real, of course. The whole country stood in queues outside banks, told that they were doing it for nationalism, to fight terrorism and to end fake currency, all key themes of the BJP's campaign. Did all three objectives materialise? Certainly not. But the BJP mastered the art of making the nation receptive to its political narrative, with a heavy dose of hyper-nationalism that helped it continue its rule. Why did the Opposition, led by the Congress, falter? Its most prominent leader, Rahul Gandhi, too had stood in line outside a bank. By 2023, the Gujarat model had excelled. It was reported that counterfeit Rs 500 notes had surged by 291 per cent in Gujarat. Data from the National Crime Records Bureau showed that Gujarat accounted for a massive 98 per cent of the country's total seizures of fake Rs 2,000 notes in a single year, making it a major centre for high-value counterfeit operations. This was the Prime Minister's home turf. Pulwama happened just before the 2019 general elections, and the BJP returned to power. In 2024, the BJP emerged as the single largest party but failed to secure a majority on its own. Had it done so, even the semblance of constitutional restraint that remained might have disappeared. BJP MP from Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, Lallu Singh, had openly said that with a two-thirds majority, the BJP would rewrite the Constitution. Congress should have led a nationwide campaign against demonetisation from the very beginning. Instead, it let the issue pass. Around 100 deaths were reported amid the long queues outside banks during that period, including during the extreme winter of 2016.

Congress faltered again when four Supreme Court judges publicly raised concerns about the functioning of the judiciary in January 2018. Had Congress called for a nationwide sit-in, with black bands on arms and ribbons tied around mouths outside the Supreme Court, and demanded the Prime Minister's resignation, the political situation might have unfolded differently in 2019. The BJP has since gained ground in almost every part of the country. Longtime Congress figures chose to leave the party, including Milind Deora, Alpesh Thakor, Sunil Jakhar, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Ghulam Nabi Azad. There could be an entire chapter on the who's who of those who have left Congress. In 2017, Congress won 17 of 40 seats in Goa, but its leadership did not stake a claim to form the government. In Assam, Congress did not form an alliance with Badruddin Ajmal's party and lost to the BJP in 2016. The BJP has remained in power there since then. In 2023, when Congress was widely expected to form the government in Madhya Pradesh, its chief ministerial face, Kamal Nath, said that 82 per cent of Indians are Hindus and that India was already a Hindu Rashtra. The BJP returned to power, while Congress did not seek his resignation. Rajasthan's story is no better. Bitter infighting between Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot contributed to Congress's defeat by the BJP in 2023. Hardik Patel, who became a prominent face of the Patidar movement and an anti-BJP figure in Gujarat, eventually resigned from Congress. He won the 2022 Assembly election on a BJP ticket. In 2015, ahead of the Bihar Assembly polls, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat called for a review of the reservation system, triggering a political backlash. A brief reprieve followed when Nitish Kumar became chief minister with Tejashwi Yadav as his deputy. Nitish Kumar later broke with his alliance partner and returned to the BJP, an arrangement that continues today. Congress rode on the Rashtriya Janata Dal's support in Bihar, winning 27 of 243 seats in 2015, 19 in 2020 and six in 2025. A similar story has unfolded for Congress in Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The BJP has secured three consecutive terms in Haryana. It also won all four Lok Sabha seats in Himachal Pradesh in 2024 despite Congress being in power in the state. The Aam Aadmi Party did put some brakes on the BJP, first in Delhi between 2015 and 2025, but the way the party has since fractured is there for all to see. Punjab has remained resistant to the BJP's expansion. The BJP won two of the state's 13 Lok Sabha seats in both 2014 and 2019, and none in 2024. It has not been in power there since 2017. Congress and AAP have both had a role in that political contest. Now Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, among the most closely watched states, are headed for Assembly elections in 2027. In West Bengal, the BJP failed to defeat Mamata Banerjee even after Prime Minister Narendra Modi re-

peatedly used the slogan "O Didi" during the 2021 campaign. The BJP finally came to power in 2026, following the implementation of the Special Intensive Revision, while Congress failed to mount a formidable challenge. CPI(M) cadres, too, moved towards the BJP after Mamata Banerjee's rise. Congress's hesitant stance on the use of Electronic Voting Machines since 2014 has been clear. Had the party refused to contest elections using EVMs, demanded a return to ballot boxes and launched a nationwide protest, the political course might have been different. Worse still, Congress sharpened its attacks on non-Congress Opposition forces such as AAP and Mamata Banerjee. Congress returned to power in Karnataka in 2023 after securing a major electoral mandate, with the party benefiting from strong Muslim support. The party also entered into an alliance with the Janata Dal (Secular)-led forces for the 2024 general elections. Now, with serious questions being raised over Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's role in the implementation of the SIR, Congress faces another test. An investigation by The Indian Express reported that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had formally raised objections at least 14 times over a 10-month period regarding decisions and orders concerning electoral rolls. The Election Commission, however, has said that the correspondence cited in the report related to an officer on deputation and maintained that key decisions were taken by the full Commission. For Congress, the question is whether to wait for another Opposition party to launch a movement demanding Gyanesh Kumar's resignation or to lead a nationwide campaign of its own. Congress President Rahul Gandhi has been campaigning against what he calls "vote theft", largely through public meetings and press conferences. The present controversy gives Congress another opportunity to confront the Election Commission directly. The party needs to decide whether it will turn its allegations into a sustained political movement. Uttar Pradesh, where Congress is allied with the Samajwadi Party, will be a particularly important test in 2027. The Opposition has already demanded action against Gyanesh Kumar. The Supreme Court has also agreed to hear a petition challenging his functioning and the legality of the SIR exercise. The question now is whether Congress can turn its criticism into political action. The BJP has already faced political pressure over the Election Commission controversy. Will Congress succeed in making Gyanesh Kumar the next major test? No wonder the BJP and its allies are rallying around Gyanesh Kumar.

The author is a former UP State Information Commissioner and a political analyst. He can be reached at rizvisha4u@yahoo.com.

The Garbage on Our Common Land

Shamilat lands are a shared inheritance. Their growing use as dumping grounds threatens public health, nature and village life



Mohammad Amin Mir

Land is everything in Jammu and Kashmir. It feeds families, keeps economy going, and shapes who we are. Every village is built around its fields, orchards, and open spaces. And among all these, Shamilat land is special. It belongs to the entire village. Shamilat land is meant for grazing cattle, for walking paths, for ponds and streams, and for everyone to use together. Our old revenue laws treat it as common property. The government is supposed to protect it so that it serves the whole community. The idea is simple: some land should stay open for everyone's benefit instead of being divided into private pieces. But today, many of these common lands have become garbage dumps. In villages and towns across Kashmir, you see plastic bags, household waste, and construction rubble piled up on them. Places that were once for animals to graze, for kids to play, and for people to gather are now covered in trash. This shows a serious breakdown in how we take care of what belongs to all of us. So, how did we get here? First, many people do not fully understand what Shamilat land is or why it matters. They see open ground and think it is just empty space. Second, proper waste collection is still missing in many areas, so people throw garbage wherever they find room. As our population grows, we produce more waste, but the systems to handle it have not kept up. And because the land belongs to everyone, sometimes no



one feels truly responsible for protecting it. The damage is real and it spreads fast. Trash leaks poisons into the soil and ruins it for future use. Chemicals flow into our groundwater and streams. Rotting waste fills the air with harmful gases and makes breathing difficult. The fields and ponds that once supported birds, insects, and plants lose their life. Even the climate suffers because open dumps release methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. This garbage also hurts our health by drawing flies, mosquitoes, and rats that carry diseases. Families living nearby get sick more often. Children playing around these sites face real danger, and older people struggle with the bad air. Over time, these dirty spaces make the whole community feel neglected and sad.

There are economic losses too, as land that could become a park, a better grazing ground, or a community space stays useless. Houses near these dumps also lose value. The government has to spend our money cleaning up the mess, which takes away from other important work. And these sites often create fights between neighbours about who should fix them. The good news is that we already have laws to protect these lands. Revenue rules clearly say Shamilat land must serve the public good. Environmental laws punish illegal dumping. Officials have the power to mark boundaries, remove encroachments, and take action against violators. But laws alone will not save anything without us getting involved. Village committees can keep a regular eye on these com-

mon lands. We need awareness drives to help everyone understand why Shamilat land is important. People can come together for clean-up days to restore these places and feel proud again. And most importantly, we should report violations and push our local leaders to act. The government also has clear work to do. They need to clearly mark and record all Shamilat land so there is no confusion. Revenue officials should inspect these sites regularly. There must be real penalties for those who dump waste there. Putting land records online would bring more transparency. We also need better ways to handle our waste. Every household should separate wet and dry waste at home. Kitchen waste can easily turn into compost for farms. Towns and villages need proper treatment plants instead of just dumping everything openly. And we must keep teaching people simple habits for responsible waste disposal. Our ancestors had a synergic and sustainable system. Village elders and community norms protected common lands through cooperation and mutual understanding. We should bring back that spirit and blend it with modern rules and technology. Schools, youth groups, and social media can play a big role by teaching the next generation why public property and a clean environment matter. When our children grow up caring about shared spaces, real change becomes possible. At its heart, Shamilat land is our shared inheritance from the past, something we must pass on to our children. Protecting it is about clean air, good health, and a stronger community. Kashmir confronts a moment that will determine the fate of its common lands. The way we treat these shared spaces reveals how deeply we value our collective future. When citizens and authorities act in partnership, these lands can reclaim their true purpose: strengthening community life and serving the common good.

The author works in the revenue department and can be reached at miramin354@gmail.com

The Kashmir Marriages That Lasted Only Months

Behind short-lived marriages are conflicting accounts of abuse, incompatibility, undisclosed circumstances and money, with courts often left to untangle what happened.



Mohammad Ilyas Bhat

The marriage had lasted about fifteen days when the woman returned to her parents.

She had married a man who had already been through a divorce. According to his account, he learned after the wedding that some personal circumstances had never been disclosed to him. He also believed that his wife had expected a different financial life and felt disappointed after learning what he could actually afford.

The wedding gifts and her mehr went with her, he said.

The marriage itself had barely begun. The arguments that followed would last considerably longer.

I have heard several such stories in Kashmir in recent years. The details differ, and so do the accounts given by husbands, wives and their families. Some describe abuse, others speak of incompatibility, undisclosed circumstances, financial expectations or allegations they say were never proved.

Religious figures eventually become involved, families meet behind closed doors, and lawyers enter the picture. Jewellery, gifts, mehr, maintenance and property become subjects of dispute.

The speed of some of these breakups has become part of the wider discussion about marriage in the valley.

One case involved the son of a friend. His marriage lasted almost a year. According to his family, they learned after the wedding that the bride had obsessive-compulsive disorder. They said they accepted her condition and treated her as a member of the family. Her mother-in-law continued cooking for her and treated her, they said, as she would have treated a daughter.

The husband worked in Bangalore. About a month after the wedding, he returned there for his job, and his wife joined him later.

The family said disagreements gradually emerged over ordinary household arrangements. They believed she struggled with some responsibilities and that her husband tried to accommodate her. When arguments arose around meals, they said, he sometimes suggested eating outside rather than allowing disagreements at home to grow.

Eventually, she returned to Kashmir.

She stayed for some time with her in-laws before going to her parental home. According to the husband's family, she took jewellery and cash with her. The marriage

later ended in divorce after disputes involving money and the family's financial circumstances.

At one point, according to the same account, she raised allegations against her husband before a Mufti. The family said the issue was later discussed and that the dispute over the jewellery became linked to her father's debts. Their account was that the gifts and jewellery had already been disposed of because he was struggling financially.

The details remain contested. Such accounts can describe how families experience a matrimonial dispute, but they cannot establish disputed facts on their own.

Another case involved a journalist whose wife, according to his account, remained distant from him almost from the beginning of their marriage. She eventually returned to her parental home. About fifteen days later, she came back and told him that she wanted the marriage to end.

She later left with jewellery and gifts she had received during the wedding, according to the husband's side. His family also said allegations were made against him.

These cases cannot establish a social trend. They come largely through personal accounts, and the complete facts of a disputed marriage may emerge only when both spouses speak and the evidence enters a legal record.

The broader figures, however, point to considerable strain inside families.

Data presented before the J&K Legislative Assembly showed reported domestic violence cases rising from 893 in 2023-24 to 1,979 in 2024-25, an increase of about 121 per cent.

These figures do not establish how many marriages ended within their first year or whether those breakups resulted from violence, incompatibility or other disputes.

Family-court lawyers in Srinagar say they see many young women seeking Khula, often women in their twenties. Lawyers describe cases in which women seek separation during the first year of marriage, citing abuse, incompatibility and disputes inside the marital home.

Those accounts have added fuel to a phrase increasingly used in public discussions: "runaway brides."

The phrase can make a complicated marriage sound simple.

A woman who leaves soon after her wedding may have experienced abuse. She may have discovered a serious circumstance that had been concealed before marriage. She may have found the relationship unbearable. She may even have concluded that she and her husband could not live together.

Another woman may leave after refusing attempts at reconciliation. Financial disputes may follow. Jewellery or mehr may become part of the case. Allegations may emerge against both spouses.

The facts can change from one household to another.



A wedding in Kashmir can bring two families together in a single room, but a failed marriage can send those same families into separate corners, where memories become allegations and allegations become cases.

The same principle applies to husbands who find themselves accused of matrimonial misconduct.

Men involved in such disputes describe allegations involving cruelty, harassment, dowry, impotence and other forms of misconduct. Some also face claims involving maintenance, jewellery, gifts or property.

Legal expenses can consume savings, parents can become involved in disputes that began between two people, while professional relationships can suffer as private allegations become known to colleagues and relatives.

A marriage that lasted a few months can produce litigation lasting years.

The other side of the story is equally important. Women have faced domestic violence, abandonment, dowry harassment and economic abuse. Legal protection exists because these forms of mistreatment cause real harm.

The challenge for the legal system is to examine competing claims through evidence.

A woman who reports domestic violence needs protection when the facts support it. A husband facing an allegation needs a meaningful opportunity to respond. Medical claims can be examined through competent medical evidence.

Financial claims can be tested through documents. Where deliberate fabrication is established, the law can provide remedies regardless of gender.

Money often turns a painful separation into a prolonged dispute.

People sometimes describe matrimonial law in Kashmir through sweeping claims that a bride can take everything or that a husband loses everything once a case begins. The legal reality is considerably more specific.

Jewellery can be personally owned property, a gift or an item whose ownership becomes disputed. Mehr has a distinct place under Muslim personal law. Maintenance depends on the applicable law and the circumstances of the spouses. Property claims depend on ownership and evidence.

The Supreme Court's 2024 ruling also affirmed that a divorced Muslim woman can seek maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, alongside remedies available under the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, subject to the circumstances of the case.

The real question, then, is how fairly such claims are examined and decided.

Some of the difficulty begins even

before lawyers enter the picture.

Families preparing for a nikah can spend months discussing salaries, education, employment, property, social standing, clothes, food and the wedding guest list. Questions about married life can receive far less attention.

Where will the couple live? Will the wife continue working? Who will support elderly parents? How will expenses be divided? Are there significant medical conditions that need disclosure? Has either person been married before? Are there children from an earlier marriage? What responsibilities will the couple have at home? How will major financial decisions be made?

These questions can feel uncomfortable before a wedding. They can become painful after it.

A medical condition does not automatically make someone unsuitable for marriage. A person entering marriage, however, needs truthful information about significant circumstances that could affect married life.

The same principle applies to previous marriages, children and serious financial obligations.

The wedding itself can also create a false sense of security.

Families can spend heavily on one day and assume that the scale of the celebration says something about the strength of the marriage.

But a decorated hall cannot settle disagreements over work or money, jewellery cannot create trust, and a large guest list cannot teach two people how to live together.

Mehr has a legitimate place in a Muslim marriage contract. Gifts can remain gifts rather than becoming instruments in a later dispute. Financial expectations can be discussed before the nikah, when both sides still have the freedom to make an informed decision.

The most difficult cases begin when the marriage ends while the

legal dispute continues.

A couple can separate within months but remain tied up in court for years. Legal fees keep adding up, family meetings continue, allegations are repeated, and private disputes enter court proceedings before finding their way back into the family in new forms.

Children can suffer deeply when they become part of such disputes.

Arguments over custody, expenses and access can place them between parents who have stopped speaking to one another. A legal order can settle a particular issue while leaving relationships damaged for years.

Matrimonial justice therefore needs both fairness and timely proceedings.

Relevant medical allegations need competent evidence. Financial claims need supporting records. Both spouses need a meaningful opportunity to present their cases. Courts can encourage reconciliation when both parties genuinely want it, while protecting anyone facing abuse.

The most useful intervention may begin before the wedding.

A family sitting around a table before the nikah can ask questions that a courtroom may spend years examining later. Health, employment, money, parents, children, living arrangements and household responsibilities may seem awkward subjects during wedding preparations. They become far harder once a marriage has broken down.

None of those discussions can guarantee a successful marriage. They can give two people a clearer understanding of the life they are choosing.

I keep returning to the man whose marriage lasted fifteen days.

His story is only one account. It cannot establish why that marriage failed, and it cannot tell us what the woman experienced.

Somewhere between the wedding and the separation, two people who had agreed to build a life together reached a point where they could no longer continue.

That is the larger story behind the arguments over Khula, divorce, domestic violence, jewellery and maintenance.

A wedding in Kashmir can bring two families together in a single room, but a failed marriage can send those same families into separate corners, where memories become allegations and allegations become cases.

The photographs remain from the day they stood together.

The harder question begins afterward: whether the people in those photographs were given enough truth, time and understanding before they promised to become a family.

— The author works in agricultural seed production and is currently writing his first short story collection in Kashmir. He can be reached at mbhatilyas@gmail.com.

A Bag Full of Hope

Rain, rejection and long walks have become part of life for a teenage bookseller in Srinagar.



Subail Manzoor

On a rain-soaked evening in Srinagar, under the leaky roof of a small grocery store near Zero Bridge, a young boy stood out from the consumerist rush swirling around him. The downpour had driven everyone into a chaotic, damp huddle.

Soaked to the bone, Zubair

Ahmad Khan held out a heavy, waterlogged book. Rain dripped from his hair and glistened on his cheeks as he asked in a soft, hopeful voice, "Baya, Qitaab ma hyeakh?"

Brother, would you like to buy a book?

At just 15, Zubair carries a burden heavier than his sack of books.

From Golab Bagh Dargah, he is the man of his house: responsible for three sisters and a younger brother.

His father, Shabir Ahmad Khan, passed away years ago, leaving behind silence and a responsibility that demanded filling.

"I studied till the fifth grade," Zubair says, a faint smile brushing his lips, too mature for his young face. "But I couldn't continue after that. I

don't miss it though."

His words end in silence, but his big, watchful eyes speak volumes.

He became a man long before his fifteenth birthday, a presence marked by silent strength and hardened kindness.

But the road isn't easy. For every person who buys a book to encourage him, others mock his efforts.

"I go from person to person," he explains, birds chirping and traffic humming in the background. "Some look me in the eye and laugh. They say, 'Who reads books now? Everyone has a mobile phone. Do you think people have time for this?'"

He doesn't sound bitter, just tired of the same story, day after day.

"Others say I'm wasting my time and energy," Zubair continues. "That I'm a fool for trying to make a living this way."

These harsh words become the cold wind he braces against every morning.

The breakthrough came in Batamaloo, where a kind bookseller trusted him with stock. With a bag slung over his shoulder, as full as his hope, Zubair began his journey two years ago.

Today, he is a familiar figure on Zero Bridge. He knows every alley, every shop, every chef. Locals know his spirit, calling him "tez", quick-witted, stubborn, and hardworking. "Yi chu ladki jaan, bas tez chu thoda," chuckles a shopkeeper. He's a good guy, just a bit hot-headed.

Zubair's day begins at 7 a.m.

and often ends around 1 a.m. "I can't find a lift, so I walk back," he says simply.

He treks across the sleeping city, carrying a bag of politics, classics, and religious texts in three languages, lighter than the responsibility weighing on his shoulders.

He earns about ₹600 a month. "In the first month, I earned ₹3,000," he recalls, a rare smile breaking through. "I was so happy I cried in front of my mother."

What keeps him going is simple: the rare kindness of someone who buys a book not to read, but to say, "I see you. I see your effort."

His solemn resolve is to one day marry off his three sisters, all by himself.

"When my father died, I had no choice," Zubair says, his

voice steady, without self-pity.

He looks you in the eye, the laughter of strangers still echoing, and answers the silent question they all ask: Why don't you beg?

"I'd rather die than beg," he says firmly. "I'm happy selling books. Even if it's little, as long as I'm trying, that's enough."

As the rain eased that evening, the call for prayers echoed over the Jhelum. Elated by the simple thought of thanking God, Zubair made his way to the mosque, a brief pause for a soul that refuses to quit, choosing the weight of books over the lightness of pity.

— The author is a Srinagar-born MBA student in Malaysia and a former national-level football and MMA athlete.

He looks you in the eye, the laughter of strangers still echoing, and answers the silent question they all ask: Why don't you beg?

CM Schools First-Time MLA On Question Hour Procedure In J&K Assembly

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday schooled first-time BJP MLA Devyani Rana on Question Hour procedure in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly after the House's youngest member raised an unrelated issue while asking supplementaries. Rana, daughter of Abdullah's one-time close confidante who

later joined the BJP, had asked a question on digitisation of land records in Jammu and Kashmir. The Chief Minister replied as per procedure. However, when Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather allowed Rana to ask a supplementary question, she sought to "advise" the government on how the Uttar Pradesh government was using women's services to distribute electricity bills.

As the Nagrota MLA went on with her suggestion, Abdullah intervened, saying Rana needed to learn the House's proceedings. "The honourable is new here. May be her seniors need to teach her about the procedure of the House," Abdullah said. The Speaker told Rana that she would have to confine her supplementary to the question she had listed for Question

Hour. As Rana did not relent, the speaker called for the next question listed in the business for the day. On Monday, Abdullah -- while replying to the debate on the statehood resolution -- lamented that Rana raised the slogans of 'Jammu ke jaichand' against some members of the treasury benches. "It is unfortunate that Rana

Number Of Women Judges In Supreme Court Likely To Go Up To Three

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The number of women judges in the Supreme Court is likely to go up to three in the coming days with the top court collegium recommending Gujarat High Court Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal for elevation. People aware of the procedure to appoint Supreme Court and high court judges said her name, along with those of Justices Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court,

and Aparesh Kumar Singh, Chief Justice of Telangana High Court, is likely to be cleared in the next few days for elevation to the top court. At present, the Supreme Court has two women judges-- Justice B V Nagarathna, who has been a judge in the top court since August 31, 2021, and Justice Venkita Subramani Mohana who was elevated to the apex court on June 2 this year. Once Justice Agarwal is elevated to the top court, she and Justice Nagarathna will have background of having served in

high courts. Justice Mohana was elevated directly from the Bar. She had been a senior advocate of the Supreme Court. Justice Nagarathna will also become the Chief Justice of India for more than a month in 2027. Justice Agarwal enrolled as an advocate in December 1990. After a practice of 21 years, she was elevated as Additional Judge of Allahabad High Court in November 2011 and, thereafter, took oath as a Permanent Judge in August 2013.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Statehood Resolution

was aware of his powers and functions and asked members not to teach him how to perform his duties.

"I know what my powers and functions are as a Speaker. There is a procedure for it, which I informed you yesterday. Do not teach me how to function," Rather said.

BJP Stages Walkout As BJP members continued raising slogans, Rather referred to BJP MLA R S Pathania and said the procedure for moving a motion against the Speaker was laid down under Rule 215.

"You are a good lawyer; you can bring the motion. If you read Rule No 215, the procedure to be followed is laid down in it. A motion should be entered in the list of business any day after 14 days of submission of the motion," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Chaudhary said the Assembly was meant for discussion and not sloganeering.

"The BJP should have spoken on the resolution yesterday and told the House that they don't want statehood and special status for Jammu and Kashmir. They are sabotaging everything," Chaudhary said, urging the opposition to put forward its position peacefully.

When the Speaker called for Question Hour, BJP MLAs staged a walkout but later returned to their seats.

Row Over 2000 Autonomy Resolution

During Zero Hour, BJP MLA P K Gupta referred to Minister Sakina Itoo's remarks that the BJP had supported the autonomy resolution in 2000 and said his father and former MLA Shiv Charan Gupta had not supported it.

Chaudhary, referring to members of the then ruling party, said Gupta's father had "helped us by staging a walkout". "Stop doing this drama," Chaudhary said.

Itoo said the BJP should first apologise to the Speaker for the language used in the House on Monday.

The exchanges escalated, with BJP members shouting towards the treasury benches. National Conference MLA Altaf Kaloo also briefly moved towards the Well of the House following a verbal exchange with BJP members. The BJP MLAs later returned to their seats.

Omar Clarifies Farooq's Stand Chief Minister Omar Abdullah later said he had been asked by his party's high command to clarify the record on the 2000 autonomy resolution.

Omar said National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, who was the Leader of the House at the time, had not voted in favour of the autonomy resolution but had staged a walkout.

"He did not vote in favour of the autonomy and staged a walkout. But he did not vote against the resolution," Omar said.

Farooq Abdullah, a three-time former chief minister, had arrived in the Assembly during Zero Hour and watched the proceedings from the Speaker's gallery. Rather welcomed his presence in the House.

EAM Warns of

the world is looking at significant fertiliser shortages because the key producers are in West Asia and Russia, and their fertiliser production has been impacted.

Combined with impacts of climate patterns like a super El Nino, Jaishankar said, "there is going to be a major food crisis probably in the coming months. So if you have energy as a big crunch, and then food and fertilisers on top of it, and finance because every time there's a conflict, money moves towards safe harbours and away from the Global South, the net result of it has been really very very stressful."

He said policymakers can't say that such a situation was not intended.

"Countries should not be so self-centred that you're in your own world and take your decision and say, 'Well, it was not my intention to make your life difficult.'"

Jaishankar said that "sound common sense" should ensure that the basic needs of a whole lot of countries should not be so neglected that they are put in distress situations. "And that is a concern that we have."

Jaishankar said the energy crisis is

creating instability.

"We have already seen it after the Ukraine war. We saw in our neighbourhood the direct result of that in political instability, and my fear is what is happening in Iran and the Gulf is going to feed, is going to aggravate," he said.

On countries coming under pressure, he said there would be countries who would obviously maintain their independence and their autonomy. "Some others would find it harder to do so. So those of us who are autonomous, we'd like to see more of us who are autonomous. But it's not a black and white scenario. It would depend on the issue and the stakes involved. There'll be cases where countries would make adjustments. There'll be cases where they would fight back," he said.

5 Bills Passed,

The House passed the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 2026, moved by Omar in his capacity as Minister Incharge, Housing and Urban Development.

It also passed the Jammu and Kashmir Ease of Doing Business Bill, 2026, moved by Omar as Minister Incharge, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

The legislation seeks to replace permission-based control with rule-based governance and enable citizens and enterprises to plan, invest and operate with greater confidence. It also aims to promote Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living, generate employment, attract investment and support long-term economic growth.

As Finance Minister, Omar moved the Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2026, seeking amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.

The House also passed the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislature Members' Pension (Amendment) Bill, 2026, seeking amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislature Members' Pension Act, 1984.

The fifth legislation, the Jammu and Kashmir Decriminalisation and Rationalisation of Offences Bill, 2026, seeks to amend various enactments to decriminalise and rationalise offences in a bid to promote Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business. It also provides for repeal of certain enactments.

Pathania Seeks House Panel on Municipal Bill

The Assembly also held discussions on the Municipal (Amendment) Bill, with BJP MLA R S Pathania questioning the proposed changes.

Pathania said he was unable to understand the objective of the amendments and raised concerns over provisions related to delimitation of municipal wards.

He said references to the Deputy Commissioner, State Election Commission or any other authority in the Bill created confusion and alleged that the government was seeking to assume powers relating to delimitation.

Pathania demanded that the Bill be referred to a House committee for examination and also questioned whether the government intended to hold panchayat and municipal elections.

Responding to Pathania, Omar said the amendments were aimed at removing ambiguity in the existing legislation.

"We wanted to remove confusion about five-member municipal bodies and seven-member bodies in the Act. There will be a minimum of seven members in each of the municipal bodies," Abdullah said.

He said the marking of territorial jurisdiction of wards was already carried out by the respective Deputy Commissioners.

"In the past also, DCs did it. We have removed the CEO to remove confusion," he said.

On local body elections, Omar said the government was serious about holding panchayat elections but did not specify a date.

He said the elections would be held "at an appropriate time" and appealed to the House to pass what he described as minor amendments aimed at removing confusion from the existing law.

The Municipal Amendment Bill was subsequently passed by voice vote.

Salary Bills Draw BJP Opposition

The two Bills withdrawn by the

government related to proposed amendments to the salaries and allowances of ministers, Ministers of State and members of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislature.

One sought to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Ministers and Ministers of State Salaries Act, 1956, while the other sought amendments to the Salaries and Allowances of Members of the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislature Act, 1960.

BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma opposed the salary proposals, arguing that the government should instead focus on daily wagers and employees seeking regularisation. He also raised the issue of risk allowance for employees.

Omar said he had anticipated that the issue would be politicised, adding that he had personally questioned the need for the proposed increase but had introduced the Bills following demands from some legislators.

He said the Bills could not be passed without unanimous support.

Omar also questioned why no BJP member had submitted a dissenting note during the committee process examining the salary proposals.

NC MLA Javid Baig alleged that BJP members were opposing the proposals because they wanted salaries to be increased to Rs 3 lakh.

Following the objections, Omar announced withdrawal of the two salary Bills. The House subsequently approved their withdrawal by voice vote.

The separate Pension (Amendment) Bill, however, was passed by voice vote, with BJP members also supporting it.

Bureaucratic Intervention concerned minister.

Congress MLA Nizamuddin Bhat termed the intervention "bureaucratic overreach" and urged the Speaker to make the Law Secretary's communication part of the Assembly record.

"The chief secretary and law secretary had written a letter, advising against the resolution. This challenges the powers of the Speaker and the government. I want to understand that can the officers act as government?" Bhat said.

He questioned the extent of the Assembly's authority if its legislative business could be challenged by officials.

"If the powers of this House are so curtailed, why are we here? What are we doing?" he asked.

Bhat said the officials were challenging the authority of the Speaker and sought that the communication be made part of the House record and discussed in the Assembly.

"Is this Legislature a panchayat?" he asked.

National Conference MLA Nazir Gurezi also accused the BJP of challenging the dignity of the House.

'This Can Only Happen in a UT': Omar

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also holds the Law portfolio, said he had no prior knowledge of the communications sent by the officials.

"As the Law Minister, I have no information; the Law Secretary sent an opinion to you (Speaker). The Chief Secretary also sent you an opinion on the resolution. But I am unaware. This can only happen in a UT, not a state," Abdullah said.

Omar questioned how officials could issue an opinion against a resolution moved by the Chief Minister who also holds the Law portfolio.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the administrative difficulties faced under the Union Territory arrangement and said the loss of statehood and special status had left people feeling "humiliated". He maintained that restoration of statehood was a matter of right.

National Conference chief spokesperson and MLA Tanvir Sadiq also reacted to the reported intervention, saying the episode itself underlined the need for restoration of statehood.

In a post on X, Sadiq questioned the reported move by senior officials to approach the Assembly Secretariat over a resolution introduced by the elected Chief Minister, allegedly without the knowledge of the concerned minister.

The episode opened a broader debate in the House over the relationship between the elected legislature and the bureaucracy under Jammu and Kashmir's present Union Territory framework.

The statehood resolution had been adopted by the Assembly on Monday after heated proceedings and a walk-out by BJP members. The issue continued to dominate Tuesday's proceedings, with the Speaker's authority, the role of the bureaucracy and the BJP's objections remaining at the centre of the debate.

Searches Underway

of Police Nalin Prabhat on visited Rajouri and reviewed the ongoing operations with senior officers, officials said.

Prabhat was accompanied by Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Tejinder Singh, and other senior police officers.

The DGP held a detailed review of the ongoing operations and took stock of the security situation and operational preparedness in the district.

Senior officers of Rajouri Police briefed Prabhat on the ongoing searches and security measures in the area.

J&K To Remain

may occur at scattered places. The Meteorological Centre advised farmers to continue harvesting apples and paddy along with other agricultural operations during the period. (KNO)

Empower Border

my dreams," Sinha said. He outlined five key areas for youth empowerment in border areas: education and technology, employment and entrepreneurship, sports and culture, access to opportunities, and guidance and mentorship.

Sinha called for smart classrooms, digital libraries and skill-development opportunities to be extended to remote villages. He also stressed the need to create opportunities for youth in handicrafts, horticulture, agriculture, tourism and local industries so that they become job-creators rather than only job-seekers.

He said scholarships, digital platforms, training programmes and national and international competition opportunities should also be accessible to youth living in border areas.

The LG also directed officials to facilitate mentorship for students by ensuring that professionals from Jammu and Kashmir visit border-area children or connect with them through programmes in Srinagar and Jammu.

Urging students to embrace modern knowledge while remaining connected to their roots, Sinha said, "Take pride in your language, understand your culture, and at the same time move forward to touch new horizons in science, technology, entrepreneurship and modern knowledge."

He also lauded the efforts of Wadies Hindi Shiksha Samiti in promoting the Hindi language and congratulated the students honoured at the event.

Senior officials, including Principal Secretary Culture Brij Mohan Sharma, Commissioner Secretary School Education Ram Niwas Sharma, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg, SSP Srinagar G V SundEEP Chakravarty, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo and Secretary JKAACL Harvinder Kour, attended the ceremony.

J&K Govt Withholds

relating to communications between the Centre and the J&K Government, the Minister reiterated the same position, again invoking Rule 38, clause (xxi), to underline that cabinet proceedings are confidential and cannot be disclosed.

Rule 38 deals with admissibility of questions. Clause (xxi) specifies that questions shall not seek information about matters which are secret in nature, such as cabinet decisions, proceedings, or advice tendered to the Governor where constitutional, statutory, or conventional obligations prevent disclosure.

The Minister further said that there is no proposal under consideration to relax the existing criteria for reservation under the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category, including the prescribed asset-based conditions.

Asked whether the Government intends to provide proportionate representation in reservation categories, including Open Merit (OM), based on population figures once the 2027 Census data is published, the Minister said the matter would be examined

in accordance with applicable legal provisions.

"The issue shall be considered as and when the publication of Census-2027 data becomes available to the Government," the reply noted.

According to official figures, 384249 reserved category certificates (81.7%) have been issued in Jammu Division and 86198 (18.3%) in Kashmir Division. Similarly, 49953 certificates (81.6%) have been rejected in Jammu Division and 11316 (18.4%) in Kashmir Division.

1.3 Mn Errors

to a dynamic PostgreSQL platform. More than 1.3 million clerical errors have since been identified and rectified across the land records.

He said each entry in the digitised record undergoes a three-stage verification process under the Maker-Checker-Approver framework. A digital trail is also maintained for changes made to Jamabandis to ensure accountability and traceability.

Omar said more than 6,800 village-level grievance redressal camps had been conducted across J&K for public reading of land records and disposal of grievances.

The government has also developed the JK Zameen Sudhaar Portal, allowing people to access their land records online and register grievances. The grievances received through the portal are monitored for timely disposal.

The Chief Minister further said that, in collaboration with BISAG-N, a Backlog Mutation Module had been developed to systematically update Record of Rights data up to 2026.

For field-level supervision and verification, senior revenue officers have been designated as District Mentors and Prabharri officers, while UT-level, district-level and inter-tehsil verification teams have also been deployed.

On discrepancies between original manual revenue records and digitised Jamabandis, Omar said the verification process was underway across all districts and the existing institutional mechanisms were being used to identify and rectify discrepancies.

He said landowners could inspect digitised records through the JK Zameen Sudhaar Portal and submit grievances regarding entries affecting ownership, inheritance, partition or transfer of land.

Grievances involving clerical or other non-quasi-judicial errors are examined and corrected by competent revenue authorities under the prescribed procedure, he added.

The Chief Minister said the ongoing verification, correction and grievance-redressal mechanisms were aimed at improving the accuracy, transparency and accountability of land records in Jammu and Kashmir.

146 Stone Crushers

government also informed the House that four stone crushers had been approved for establishment in Poonch district since January 2025. The approved units are located in Seeri Chowana, Salotri and Bhainch areas.

Rana said permissions for establishing and operating stone crushers in J&K are being granted only after compliance with prescribed environmental norms, siting criteria and applicable regulations.

He said the consents were granted in accordance with criteria prescribed by the competent authority and the environmental guidelines governing the establishment and operation of stone crushers in the Union Territory.

The minister said the applicable regulatory framework includes JKPC Order No. 70 of 2025 dated May 9, 2025, and the subsequent amendment to the siting criteria issued through JKPC Order No. 124-JKPC of 2025 dated August 30, 2025.

The government further informed the Assembly that 58 applications for consent to establish and operate stone crushers had been received between January 1, 2025 and the date of the reply.

Of these, 27 applications were approved, 28 rejected and one application remains under process.

Premature Retirement

his retirement. Lone, however, had challenged the action, maintaining that his service record was satisfactory, that he had earned promotions during his career and that the vigilance allegations were

unproved as the criminal proceedings were still pending.

The Division Bench observed that compulsory retirement is not punitive in nature and does not amount to dismissal or removal as punishment.

"The Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized that compulsory retirement does not amount to punishment and does not imply misconduct or incapacity," the Division Bench said, adding, "The purpose is not to punish the employee for a particular act but to assess his continued utility from the standpoint of public administration."

The court, however, made it clear that the power cannot be exercised arbitrarily. It held that the competent authority must base its opinion on relevant and cogent material and consider the employee's entire service record, with appropriate emphasis on the later years. Judicial review remains available where a decision is mala fide, arbitrary, based on no evidence, or where relevant material has been ignored or extraneous considerations relied upon, the court said.

Consequently, the High Court set aside the Single Bench judgment dated October 5, 2018, and upheld the Government's order dated November 21, 2016, prematurely retiring Lone.

Kashmir Turns to Science

plenary lectures, an inaugural session, technical discussions and a poster presentation.

Prof. Dinesh Singh, vice chairman of the J&K Higher Education Council and chief guest, pointed to fields that are rapidly defining the next generation of scientific research: quantum computing, artificial intelligence and nuclear fusion.

India remains deficient in these areas, he said, calling for faster efforts to build capacity.

That challenge takes on particular significance in a region whose development has long depended on agriculture, tourism, natural resources and public institutions. The Congress sought to place universities and research laboratories within a wider economic and social project.

Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, the IUST vice chancellor, described the gathering as an example of a "true Multiversity," bringing scientists, academics and researchers together from universities and institutions across India.

He argued that universities in J&K need to function as interconnected ecosystems where research, innovation and entrepreneurship reinforce one another. High-end research infrastructure, he said, also needs wider institutional use so researchers can pursue advanced work without duplicating costly facilities.

The goal, he said, is to pool institutional strengths, empower researchers and turn scientific knowledge into solutions for society. His remarks linked the Congress to the broader vision of a sustainable and developed J&K, aligned with the national Viksit Bharat programme.

Babila Rakwal, commissioner secretary of the J&K Science and Technology Department, placed the focus on another challenge: turning research into practical results.

Research and its application need stronger links, she said. The themes discussed at the Congress, she added, reach beyond academic debate and connect directly with social progress.

The gathering included Prof. Vinod Kumar Gaur, former secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences; Prof. Mohammad Mobin, vice chancellor of Cluster University Srinagar; and Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, vice chancellor of the Central University of Kashmir.

Dr. Aabid Hussain Shalla, dean of research at IUST, delivered the welcome address, while the proceedings of the J&K Science Congress were released during the inaugural session.

The scientific programme began with a plenary lecture by Prof. Sourav Pal of Ashoka University in Sonapat, followed by a lecture from Prof. Singh. Technical sessions and a poster presentation then gave researchers an opportunity to present their work and exchange ideas.

The Congress continues for two more days. Its real test will come beyond the auditorium, as J&K seeks to turn scientific research and new technologies into solutions for its people and economy.

NHPC Hydro Projects Generate Rs 5,537 Crore for J&K in 5 Years

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In past five years Jammu and Kashmir has received substantial revenue of Rs 5537 crores from NHPC projects operating in the Union Territory.

According to KNO, the government in a reply to question tabled by MLA Shakti Raj Parihar said that the power generated from the hydropower projects owned and operated by JKPDCL Government of J&K, in accordance with the applicable power allocation arrangements.

The government informed the house that "During the last five financial years, JKPDCL has sold a total of 19,222.21 Million Units (MU) of electricity to the UT of Jammu & Kashmir at an average selling price of Rs. 2.033 per unit."

"However, JKPDCL has paid an amount of Rs. 745.151 crore to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir on account of Water Usage Charges (WUC) during the



last five financial years," the government said.

It also said, "The UT of Jammu and Kashmir has received substantial revenue from NHPC projects over the last five financial years, totalling Rs 3582.06 Crore in Water Usage Charges and Rs 1955.26 Crore in the monetised value of 12 percent free power plus 1 percent LADF, across its various power stations with a

combined installed capacity of 2250 MW."

The house was further informed that apart from the direct financial benefits accruing to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the form of free power, water usage charges and taxes and duties, hydropower projects also generate substantial indirect economic benefits locally.

"The implementation and op-

eration of such projects create a continuous chain of economic activities, thereby contributing to employment generation, development of local enterprises and strengthening of the ancillary service sector," the government said.

It also said that the continuous requirement of operation, maintenance, repair and upkeep of hydropower projects generates recurring opportunities for contracting agencies and local service providers.

"A substantial portion of such maintenance and ancillary works, particularly routine, minor and specialised works, is undertaken through contractors and agencies operating in and around the project area, sustained business. opportunities firms and entrepreneurs," the government informed the house.

It also informed that during the operational phase of a hydropower project, various activities

such as housekeeping, security, transportation, equipment handling, support services, routine maintenance and other ancillary operations require engagement of outsourced manpower and service providers.

The government further said that these activities provide regular employment and livelihood opportunities to local residents, including skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

"Thus, the operation of hydropower projects creates a continuous local economic ecosystem, wherein expenditure on maintenance works, contracts, procurement and outsourced services circulates within the project area and contributes to employment generation, income enhancement and the growth of local businesses and development of skilled manpower for future requirement of up-coming projects," the government informed—(with KNO inputs)

Mission YUVA: Over 1 Lakh Applications, Rs 1,769 Crore Disbursed

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that 1,00,407 applications have been received under Mission YUVA as of August 31, 2026, of which 36,077 have been sanctioned and 32,156 disbursed by banks, involving credit disbursement of Rs 1,769 crore.

The information was provided by the Labour & Employment Department in response to a starred question raised by MLA Surjit Singh Slathia (Samba) regarding unemployment and the measures being taken by the government to address the issue.

The department, as per KNO, said the government has been taking various measures to enhance employability, facilitate employment opportunities and promote self-employment among youth.

The Labour & Employment Department is presently implementing Mission YUVA (Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan), aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, self-employment and sustainable livelihood opportunities among youth.

Under Mission YUVA, interventions are being

undertaken for enterprise development, credit enablement, subsidy/interest subvention, market linkage, capacity building and ecosystem creation.

The department further said it is facilitating skill development training through District Employment & Counselling Centres (DECCs) across districts to enhance employability and job-readiness of unemployed youth.

As per the reply, 5.50 lakh-plus potential entrepreneurs have been identified across Jammu and Kashmir through a data-driven baseline survey involving door-to-door enumeration of households and registered and unregistered enterprises.

The outreach covered approximately 3 lakh rural women, 50,000 youth and more than 20,000 potential entrepreneurs through targeted campaigns.

The Mission envisages facilitating establishment of 1.37 lakh-plus new enterprises and generation of 4.25 lakh-plus employment opportunities.

Agriculture and allied sectors account for approximately 21 per cent of the applications received.

The government said

1,00,407 applications had been received under Mission YUVA, with loans worth Rs 1,996 crore sanctioned, of which Rs 1,769 crore was disbursed to 32,156 beneficiaries. It added that 3,003 enterprises were financed and more than Rs 100 crore was disbursed in a single day, contributing to the crossing of the Rs 1,000-crore disbursement milestone.

Of the total applications, 77,850 were verified by SBDUs, 70,114 were sent to banks, 36,077 were sanctioned and 32,156 were disbursed.

An Agri Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme has also been launched to facilitate collateral-free credit of up to Rs 10 lakh, with 85 per cent guarantee coverage.

The department said 20 Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) have been established across all districts, besides 82 Business Help Desks (BHDs) at the sub-division level. As on August 31, 2026, 1,322 positions under the Institutional Business Support Mechanism had been filled.

A network of 295 training institutions has been created with 403 active trainers, and more than 36,000 training comple-

tions have been recorded. As many as 477 mentors have been onboarded, while 2,500 applicants have completed structured enterprise mentorship.

The government said 18,969 applications were received from women applicants, while among the cases disbursed, 759 pertained to women belonging to Self-Help Groups. A total of 80,052 applications were received from rural areas. 96 per cent of applications pertained to small/nano units.

A further 7,755 youth have benefited under the Mumkin, Tejaswini and Spurring Entrepreneurship Innovative (SEI) schemes since their inception.

Responding to whether the government intends to provide a monthly stipend to unemployed youth, the department said there is presently no such proposal, keeping in view the overall financial position and resource constraints of the Union Territory.

However, the Labour & Employment Department provides a stipend of Rs 1,000 per month to eligible candidates undergoing Skill Development Courses of three months' duration, subject to prescribed terms and conditions—(KNO)

Rs 9.99 Cr Sanctioned for Chadoora Bridge Restoration: Govt

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that the rehabilitation work of the main bridge at Chadoora has been awarded for Rs 999.54 lakh, with the work presently in progress.

The information was provided by the Public Works (R&B) Department in response to a starred question raised by Chadoora MLA Ali Mohammad Dar regarding the status of bridges in the constituency.

According to the government reply, the main bridge at Chadoora town was declared unsafe and closed to vehicular traffic with effect from November 28, 2025.

The bridge was subsequently technically inspected by NIT Srinagar, following which recommendations were received on February 2, 2026. Based on the recommendations, the DPR for rehabilitation was prepared, and Administrative Approval was accorded for Rs 999.54 lakh.

The government said the work was awarded on August 3, 2026, and is currently in progress.

Regarding the alternate bridge near New Bus Stand, Chadoora, the department said the bridge has already been constructed. However, its approach road connecting it with Chadoora-Maibugh Road remains incomplete due to pending land acquisition.

An amount of Rs 50 lakh has been provided under UT Capex 2026-27 for completion of the approach road. The land acquisition process and alignment feasibility are presently in progress, following which the approach road and commissioning of the bridge will be taken up.

26,544 EWS Certificates Issued in J&K in Last Two Years: Govt

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that 26,544 Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) certificates were issued across the Union Territory during the last two years, with 24,058 issued in Jammu Division and 2,486 in Kashmir Division.

The information was provided by the Revenue Department in response to an unstarred question raised by MLA Surjit Singh Slathia regarding the number of EWS certificates issued in Jammu and Kashmir and the government's position on revisiting the existing criteria. The department said that 2,486 EWS certificates were issued in Kashmir Division during the period under review.

Among Kashmir districts, Anantnag recorded 583 certificates, followed by Kulgam with 618, Baramulla 315, Budgam 254, Pulwama 157, Srinagar 174, Kupwara 80, Bandipora 82, Ganderbal 70 and Shopian 153.

In Jammu Division, 24,058 EWS certificates were issued. Jammu recorded the highest number with 5,075 certificates, followed by Kathua with 5,865, Samba 4,614, Udhampur 3,435, Doda 1,804, Ramban 1,440, Reasi 1,381, Kishtwar 429, Rajouri 12 and Poonch three.

Regarding Samba district, the government said 4,614 EWS certificates were issued constituency-wise, including 1,083 in Vijaypur, 1,854 in Samba and 1,677 in Ramgarh.

On whether the government intends to review or revisit the existing criteria for issuance of EWS certificates, the Revenue Department said the criteria are already prescribed under the J&K Reservation Rules read with SRO 518 dated September 2, 2019.

The department said the existing criteria are in conformity with applicable constitutional and legal provisions and are being implemented. It further clarified that there is no proposal at present to review or revisit the criteria—(KNO)

145 GDCs, 111 Technical Institutions Functioning across J&K: Govt

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that 145 Government Degree Colleges (GDCs) are presently functioning across the Union Territory, including six in Bandipora district.

The information was provided by the Higher Education Department in response to an unstarred question raised by Bandipora MLA Nizam-ud-din Bhat regarding the number of higher and technical educational institutions functioning across J&K, with specific reference to Bandipora constituency.

The department, as reported by KNO, said that out of the 145 functional Government Degree Colleges across J&K, six are located in Bandipora. Regarding technical institutions, the government said there are 54 Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), 31 private ITIs, 22 Government Polytechnics and four private Polytechnics functioning across the UT.

The department further said that two technical institutions are presently functioning in Bandipora constituency—one Government ITI and one Government Polytechnic—(KNO)

335 Medical Officers Appointed, 290 Posts under Recruitment in J&K: Govt

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that efforts are underway to address staff shortages in health institutions across Akhnoor constituency, with 335 Medical Officers having already received appointment orders and recruitment for 290 non-gazetted posts in Jammu Division currently in progress.

The information was provided by the Health and Medical Education Department in a written reply to a question tabled by MLA Mohan Lal Bhagat, who had sought details about the availability of medical, paramedical and other staff in Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Akhnoor, Community Health Centre (CHC) Jaurian and other health institutions in the constituency.—(KNO)

From Folk Roots to a New Beat: Fankar-E-Kashmir Season 4 Puts Young Talent in the Spotlight

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: From the timeless strings of the santoor and rabab to contemporary folk, Fankar-E-Kashmir Season 4 brought together a vibrant new generation of Kashmiri musicians, culminating in a grand finale at Tagore Hall, Srinagar, on September 28.

The fourth edition of the cultural initiative saw nearly 120 young artists register, with 70 making it to the live audition stage and the final 15 performers earning a place at the grand finale. The two-day auditions featured 35 performers each day and witnessed a notable rise in instrumentalists, alongside emerging contemporary voices, including two rappers.

Azaan Ayoub Mir of Manasbal was adjudged the Fankar-E-Kashmir 2026 title winner, while Umer Majeed, a young santoor player from Mugund, HMT, emerged as the runner-up.

Organised by Kashmir Rabab Academy, ShowCase Events and The Eagle, Fankar-E-Kashmir has steadily evolved from a folk-music showcase into a wider platform combining live performances, mentorship, knowledge sessions, recording opportunities and professional exposure for young artists.

"This year, we are see-



ing a particularly diverse pool of talent, with many instrumentalists and even rappers coming forward. It shows that Kashmir's musical tradition is not static. Young artists are finding new ways to interpret and carry it forward," journalist and of Founder, Kashmir Rabab Academy, Nazir Ganai, said.

Angelina Fernandes, Founder, The Eagle, said the initiative had grown considerably since its inception, with the platform working to connect emerging artists with recognition and professional opportunities beyond Kashmir.

Nanni Singh, Chief Executive, ShowCase Events, said Fankar-E-Kashmir was focused on creating sustained opportunities for young talent while contributing to a wider cultural economy around local music.

The initiative has also

brought together institutional and community partners. The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) supported the initiative, while Sustainable Research & Advocacy Foundation (SIRAF) joined as the NGO partner and RAAB Foundation came on board as the Title Sponsor.

With its mix of traditional folk voices, instrumentalists and contemporary performers, Season 4 underscored the changing landscape of Kashmir's music scene—where heritage and experimentation are increasingly finding space on the same stage.

As Fankar-E-Kashmir enters its next chapter, its larger ambition remains clear: to keep Kashmir's folk traditions alive while giving its young artists the stage, mentorship and opportunities to take their music forward.

Gunfight Breaks Out in Central Kashmir

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Encounter breaks out in Gurwatkalan area of central Kashmir's Budgam district on Tuesday, officials said. An official said that a joint team of security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the area following specific inputs. As forces zeroed in on the suspected spot, hiding terrorists opened fire, triggering an encounter, he said. Meanwhile, operation in the area was on as this report was being filed.

More details awaited. (GNS)

No Proposal to Relax EWS Criteria: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that there is currently no proposal under consideration to relax the existing criteria for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), including doing away with the prescribed asset-based criteria.

The information was provided by the Social Welfare Department in response to a starred question raised by Handwara MLA Sajad Gani Lone regarding category certificates and reservation-related issues.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sumera Farooq W/o Parvaze Ahmad Khan R/o Near Masjid Noor Shehjaar Colony Nowshera, Srinagar hereby declare that my particulars has been incorrectly recorded as Sumaira Parveen W/o Parveen Ahmad Khan R/o Mandibal Nowshera Srinagar in my Aadhaar No. 6907 0998 8167, while as my correct particulars as per my Domicile Certificate are SUMERA FAROOQ W/O PARVAZE AHMAD KHAN R/o Near Masjid Noor Shehjaar Colony Nowshera, Srinagar. Now the same is to be corrected. Objections if any, must reach concerned authorities within a week at the most.

Ahsan Advt.

NOTICE

It is information to the general public that my name in my Aadhaar Card bearing No.- 4292-7695-9203 has been wrongly entered as Mohammad Ahsan Pandith which is incorrect. While my correct and actual Name is Ahsan Pandith. Now I want the same to be corrected. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/ she may file his/her objection in the Concerned Authority, within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Ahsan Pandith
S/o Mohd Pandith
R/o Goshbugh Aglar Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN KHANSAHIB

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject: Publication of ward wise merit cum eligibility list of female candidates for engagement as Sangini (AWW) Raiyar Beerwah-A Phase-IV 2025 objections thereof.

- Whereas, 01 vacancies of Sangini (AWW) were identified in ICDS Project Khansahib in light of the HR Policy issued by Government vide no: 222 JK (SWD) Dated: 30-11-2022 in AWC Raiyar Beerwah-A.
- Whereas, these 01 vacancies were advertised in prominent local dailies vide advertisement notice no. 04 of 2026 dated: 21-07-2026 to invite application from desirous candidates as per eligibility
- Whereas, 02 applications forms have been received by this office till lock date from three electoral wards.
- Whereas, merit / eligibility list in respect of Raiyar Beerwah-A ward 02 has been formulated on the basis of marks percentage secured by the candidate in 12th examination and the said merit list was put before the district level selection committee for approval and publication.
- Whereas, the tentative merit list of the candidate pertaining to ward no. 02 was placed before the district level committee for accord of approval in respect of ward no 02 Raiyar Beerwah for the publication of merit list in the local dailies to invite objections if any from all concerned within 10 days.

Now, in view of the above the ward wise tentative merit list of one selected candidates of Poshan project khansahib forming annexure A to this letter from ward no. 02 is published in prominent local dailies to invite objections if any regarding the merit of the candidate and being resident of ward from all concerned within the period of ten days. No objection shall be entertained after expiry of stipulated time period and the merit list shall be considered final for selection of the candidate.

No. CDPO/Poshan/Ksb/2026/2823-34
Dated: 28/09/2025

Child Development Project Officer
Poshan Khansahib

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT KHANSAHIB

Tentative merit list for the post of SANGINIS (AWW) in KHANSAHIB vide this office Advertised Notice:- 04 Dated 21/07/2026
LOCATION OF AWC RAIYAR BEERWAH 'A' **W.NO 06**

S.No	Index No	Name of the Candidate	Parentage	Residence	D.O.B	Qualification	10+2 Merit					Remarks
							Max Marks	Marks obtained	Any relation with retired AWW/ AWH	Add (2) Points as per HR Policy	Total % age	
1	1	DILSHADA BANO	D/O MOHD YOUSUF HAAM	RAIYAR BEERWAH	12/10/2003	12TH	500	415	No	NO	83	

Child Development Project
Officer Khansahib
(Member Secretary)

District Social Welfare
officer Budgam
(Member)

Assistant Director
Employment Budgam
(Member)

General Manager DIC
Budgam
(Member)

District Programme Officer
ICDS Budgam
(Chair person)

DIPK-6208-26
DT: 29-09-2026

Netanyahu Meets Emirati Leader in Secret Trip to UAE

AP/ Trans Asia

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the United Arab Emirates on Sunday and met with the country's president, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, both countries confirmed on Monday.

According to CNN, the secret meeting was dominated by discussion of Iran, an arena where the two countries have deepened their cooperation, including during the current Iran war.

WAM, the state news agency of the UAE, confirmed that Sheikh Mohammed and Netanyahu held a meeting in the country on Sunday.

The two leaders "discussed bilateral relations between the UAE and Israel and ways to

strengthen and further develop them," WAM reported.

The Israeli Prime Minister's office said that the meeting focused on "strengthening relations between the two countries and regional challenges".

Earlier Israel's Channel 12 TV station reported that Netanyahu held an hour-long meeting with the UAE's president on Sunday.

Netanyahu flew on a private plane to Abu Dhabi around noon Sunday and spent four hours in the UAE, Channel 12 reported.

During the visit, he held an hour-long meeting with the UAE's president, according to two people who were briefed on the trip. Channel 12 reported Monday that the meeting took place at the airport.

After meeting with bin Za-



yed, Netanyahu held an expanded meeting with senior officials from several other Middle Eastern countries, including several that don't have ties with Israel, the Kan public broadcaster reported.

Among the planes that landed in Abu Dhabi at the same time as Netanyahu's visit were a government plane from Libya, a Hercules aircraft from Morocco, a

military plane from Qatar and an Emirati government plane that came from Riyadh, Times of Israel reported.

The expanded session was held to discuss regional cooperation against Iran, Kan reported.

Also on Monday evening, Netanyahu's office announced that the Shin Bet security agency filed a complaint with the IDF Military Censor, demanding that it take legal action against Channel 12 for revealing Netanyahu's trip while he was still en route back to Israel, claiming that the network had risked the premier's safety.

The announcement also revealed that Netanyahu's wife, Sara, made the trip, as well as Mossad director Roman Gofman, National Security Council head

Shmuel Ben-Ezra, Military Secretary Maj. Gen. Guy Markizeno, and the head of the Shin Bet Security Division. No reason was given for the inclusion of Netanyahu's wife in the entourage.

Late Monday, the UAE confirmed the meeting, saying the two leaders discussed bilateral relations "and ways to strengthen and develop them."

Netanyahu's office also said late Monday the meeting focused "solely on strengthening relations".

It also said the Shin Bet security agency had filed a complaint accusing Channel 12 of violating censorship rules by reporting his visit before he had returned to Israel.

In May, Netanyahu's office said the prime minister had se-

cretly visited the UAE in March, during the early days of the Iran war, calling it a "historic breakthrough". The UAE foreign ministry, however, denied his claim at the time as "completely unfounded".

During the war with Iran, Israel also deployed an Iron Dome missile defence system to the UAE, and Israeli officials have said security cooperation between the two countries reached unprecedented levels.

Meanwhile, the European Union's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, said the bloc is applying for observer status in a Saudi-led maritime defence coalition formed to protect the kingdom's energy exports. The EU already has six vessels deployed to the Red Sea to protect shipping.

Unlikely Electoral Alliance Takes Shape in Palestine

AP

ISTANBUL: Hamas and the allied Islamic Jihad group have agreed to form an unlikely electoral coalition with a former top Fatah official who has close ties to the United Arab Emirates, Israel's closest ally in the Middle East, Palestinian officials told The Associated Press.

The alliance could be well positioned to threaten the dominance of President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party over the internationally recognised Palestinian Authority — but only if the first national elections in 20 years actually happen, which is very much in doubt.

Abbas has said parliamentary elections will be held Nov. 28 in Gaza and the West Bank. But he has repeatedly delayed elections, most recently in 2021, when Fatah appeared headed for defeat. When Hamas won the last elections, in 2006, Israel and Western countries boycotted its government, fuelling months of unrest that led to its takeover of Gaza the following year.

Islamic Jihad deputy Secretary General Mohammed al-Hindi confirmed the formation of the electoral alliance in a rare interview with The Associated Press in Istanbul on Monday. He said it would support "a unified national list" that could be made up of independent figures

rather than members of the groups.

It would include a bloc led by Mohammed Dahlan, a former Fatah security chief who was exiled in 2010 after a bitter falling-out with Abbas and had previously been driven from Gaza by Hamas. Dahlan has since cultivated close ties with the UAE, where he serves as an adviser to the ruler.

The UAE was the driving force behind the 2020 Abraham Accords, and Dahlan himself has extensive contacts with US and Israeli officials, making him an unlikely ally for Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which have fought Israel for decades. The alliance appears to be rooted in shared frustration with Abbas.

New alliance takes aim at Abbas

Abbas' leadership of the Palestinian Authority, which has limited autonomy over parts of the occupied West Bank, is deeply unpopular among Palestinians who see it as autocratic, corrupt and ineffective.

The 90-year-old Abbas has clung to power since his own mandate expired in 2009, while Hamas continues to control parts of Gaza three years into a brutal war with Israel.

Dimitri Diliani, spokesperson for Dahlan's Reformist Democratic Faction, confirmed the electoral alliance in a statement that took

a swipe at Abbas' leadership, saying "the Palestinian Authority has failed Gaza and the Palestinian people everywhere."

He said several other Palestinian groups are also part of the alliance and there are efforts to bring "all other factions and independent professionals into uniting around one national rebuilding program."

Hamas said in August that Dahlan and Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya had met in Cairo and discussed ways to "end the monopolization of national decision-making and formulate a comprehensive national strategy." Hamas and Fatah officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Past attempts at Palestinian unity have failed

Al-Hindi said the decision to launch the alliance came after attempts to bring together all factions in a "dialogue for internal consensus on the overall Palestinian issue" failed to bear fruit.

There have been multiple attempts over the years to bring Hamas and Islamic Jihad into the Fatah-led Palestine Liberation Organisation, the highest body representing the Palestinian cause internationally, but all have foundered.

A main sticking point has been the PLO's recognition of Israel.

While Hamas officials have said they are willing to accept a Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem — territories Israel seized in the 1967 Mideast war — they have stopped short of recognising Israel, while Islamic Jihad takes a harder line.

Both are considered terrorist groups by the US and other Western countries, which have voiced support for Palestinian democracy over the years while rejecting any government that includes Hamas. Fatah and Hamas are the most popular factions by far, though many Palestinians are frustrated with both.

Al-Hindi said his group — which has historically not participated in elections run by the Palestinian Authority — will not directly run any candidates but will "support a national list that is agreed upon."

Violence is ongoing in Gaza and the West Bank

The scheduled elections come at a precarious time.

In the West Bank, attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians have intensified. In Gaza, a ceasefire that took effect in October 2025 has halted the heaviest fighting, but the Israeli military has seized control of more of the territory and continued strikes, which it says are in response to threats.

Spring Census Maps 14,468 Water Sources Across 10 states

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The second part of the country's first-ever spring census has enumerated 14,468 springs across 10 states, with Manipur and Maharashtra accounting for the largest number of such water sources, according to a report of the Jal Shakti Ministry.

The report was released at the valedictory ceremony of the ninth India International Water Week (IIWW) 2026 at Bharat Mandapam on September 25.

The census identified 3,941 springs in Manipur, 3,652 in Maharashtra, 1,957 in Odisha, 1,686 in West Bengal, 1,196 in Goa, 1,049 in Tripura, 792 in Assam, 148 in Telangana, 34 in Andhra Pradesh and 13 in Rajasthan.

The report, titled 'First Census of Springs (Volume II, Part-II)', covers Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tripura and West Bengal.

The report calls for sys-

tematic mapping to identify vulnerable and critical springs, ensure their protection during infrastructure development and facilitate preparation of detailed project reports for springshed management programmes.

An earlier Volume II report covering Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Sikkim and Tamil Nadu was published on India Water Day 2026.

According to the report, Maharashtra has 2,629 perennial, 909 seasonal and 114 dried springs. Of its 3,652 springs, 3,612 are located in rural areas and 40 in urban areas. About 86.5 per cent are publicly owned and 13.5 per cent privately owned. Of 3,508 springs assessed for resource threats, 265, or 7.6 per cent, face threats.

Manipur has 3,419 perennial, 457 seasonal and 65 dried springs among its 3,941 inventoried springs. In the northeastern state, 91.4 per cent springs are publicly owned. Of the springs assessed for resource threats, 1,336, or 34.5 per cent,

face threats. In the state, residents use 3,127 springs, while 634 are used by non-residents and 113 by wild animals.

According to the report, Odisha has 1,957 springs, including 1,568 perennial, 315 seasonal and 74 dried springs. Nearly 96 per cent are publicly owned and 99.2 per cent are located in rural areas. Of 1,878 springs assessed for resource threats, 295, or 15.7 per cent, face threats.

Similarly, West Bengal has 1,686 springs, including 1,568 in rural areas and 118 in urban areas. Darjeeling accounts for 1,200 springs and Kalimpong for 427. The report says springs constitute an important source of drinking water in many rural and tribal communities in these districts.

Out of 1,196 springs in Goa, 1,105 are perennial, 66 seasonal and 25 dried springs. Of these, 662 are publicly owned and 509 privately owned. Resource threats are reported in 61 springs, or 5.2 per cent of those assessed.

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