29th year OF PUBLICATION

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Thursday 26 November 2026 | Srinagar | Vol: 29 | Issue: 288 | Pages: 08 | Price: ₹3

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65 Foreign Terrorists On Security Radar In J&K



KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Security agencies have intensified their hunt for an estimated 65 Pakistani terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir, days after the killing of Lateef Bhat, described by officials as the last active local terrorist in the Kashmir Valley, security establishment sources said.

Of the 65 foreign terrorists believed to be operating in the Union Territory, 35 are affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), 25 with Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), while the remaining five belong to other banned terrorist outfits, the sources said.

The terrorists have been on the radar of security agencies following confirmation of their presence through inputs received from different intelligence wings. Their movements and possible hideouts are being monitored, with security forces preparing operations based on intelligence inputs, officials said.

According to the sources, the majority of the | More on P6

Land of Five Reasi Terrorists Attached Under UAPA

Jammu and Kashmir Police have attached over 27 kanals of land belonging to five Reasi residents suspected of having exfiltrated to Pakistan for arms and ammunition training and allegedly attempting to revive terrorist activities in the region. Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat approved the attachment of the properties under Section 25 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, through an order issued on November 19. According to the order, evidence | More on P6



A woman buys fresh Kashmiri bread (Tsot) from a vendor on a frost-covered wooden walkway in the interiors of Dal Lake. KO Photo By Abid Bhat

Kashmir Shivers As Mercury Plunges, Shopian Records -4.2°C

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Kashmir continued to reel under intense cold conditions on Wednesday as temperatures dipped further across the Valley, with Shopian recording the season's lowest minimum temperature so far at minus 4.2 degrees Celsius.

Several parts of the Valley also witnessed fog and hazy conditions during the early morning hours, reducing visibility and prompting commuters to drive cautiously.

According to data shared by the Meteorological Department, Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 1.9 degrees Celsius, which was 2 degrees below the seasonal normal. Srinagar Airport recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius.

In south Kashmir, Pahalgam recorded minus 3.6 degrees Celsius, followed by Pulwama at minus 3.5 degrees, Anantnag at minus 2.8 degrees, and Qazigund and Konibal at minus 2.4 degrees each. Kokernag and Kulgam recorded minimum temperatures of 0.2 and 0.4 degrees Celsius, respectively.

In north and central Kashmir, Kupwara recorded minus 2.0 degrees Celsius, Bandipora minus 1.5 degrees, Ganderbal minus 0.5 degrees and Baramulla minus 0.1 degrees. | More on P6

Air Raid Mock Drill, Blackout In Anantnag Today

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: An air raid mock drill followed by a 10-minute blackout exercise will be conducted in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Thursday to assess emergency preparedness and familiarise residents with response protocols during crisis situations.

According to a public notice issued by the Office of the Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, the Civil Defence air raid drill will be held at 2 pm, while the blackout exercise will take place from 6:30 pm to 6:40 pm.

The administration has asked residents to switch off all lights and sources of illumination, including inverter and solar lights, torches, mobile phone lights and vehicle lights, immediately after the siren sounds at 6:30 pm.

Residents have also been advised to draw curtains or cover windows to prevent light from escaping during the exercise.

The notice further advises people to make necessary arrangements for elderly persons, children and those with health concerns in advance to ensure they are not distressed by the sudden darkness.

The administration said the exercise aims to familiarise citizens with emergency response protocols during blackout or crisis situations and assess the preparedness of both the public and the administration.

It clarified that the exercise is only a mock drill and not a real emergency, urging residents to remain calm and avoid panic.

The administration also assured that emergency services and critical care facilities would remain | More on P6

Address Gap Between Service Delays & Penalties: CM Omar

Reviews Public Services Guarantee Act, Seeks Stricter Accountability



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday called for stricter accountability in the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA), 2011, flagging the gap between delays in service delivery and the number of penalties imposed on officials responsible for such lapses.

Chairing a review meeting of the General Administration Department (GAD) to assess the implementation of the Act, the Chief Minister directed departments to address delays in delivering notified services and ensure that officials responsible for unjustified | More on P6

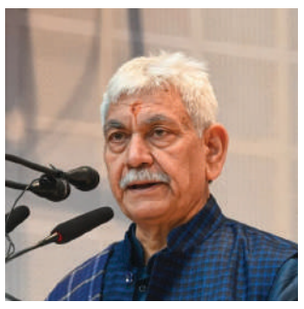
CM Pushes Wind, Solar Energy Expansion In J&K

Observer News Service

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday called for diversifying Jammu and Kashmir's renewable energy mix by exploring wind energy potential alongside accelerating solar power generation, while directing the Science and Technology | More on P6

Sports Build Discipline, Resilience & Leadership: LG

Observer News Service



Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said sports play a vital role in building discipline, resilience, teamwork and leadership qualities essential for nation-building.

He made the remarks while inaugurating a newly constructed Multi-Utility Indoor Sports Arena at Sainik School Nagrota, where he interacted with cadets, faculty members and other dignitaries.

The Lieutenant Governor said sports and physical training have always held special importance in the military tradition, as soldiers are expected not only to possess physical strength but also to remain calm in difficult situations, make quick decisions, trust their comrades and face challenges with determination.

He said these qualities are developed on the sports field and urged cadets to focus on continuous self-improvement rather than merely pursuing medals.

Highlighting the significance of the new facility, Sinha said the indoor sports arena would provide cadets | More on P6

Sheshnag Project Row Sparks NC-PDP Face-off

NC accuses PDP, BJP of communalising issue; parties seek probe into alleged ecological damage

Agencies

Srinagar: The controversy over alleged environmental damage at Sheshnag Lake has triggered a political confrontation in Jammu and Kashmir, with the National Conference (NC) accusing the BJP and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of communalising the issue, while opposition parties have called for transparency and an assessment of the project's environmental impact.

NC chief spokesperson and MLA Tanvir Sadiq accused the BJP and PDP of giving the controversy a communal colour for political gains, alleging that an attempt was being made to portray the issue as Muslims opposing the project.

Questioning PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's recent visit to Sheshnag, Sadiq said the project was initiated in 2022, its memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed in 2023 and approval was granted in 2024. He questioned why objections had not been raised earlier.

Sadiq said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had directed the Forest and Environment Ministers to examine alleged deviations from the approved plan and submit a report.

"If any violation is found, appropriate action will be taken. We will not | More on P6

Chain Of Custody Lapses Lead To Acquittal In NDPS Case

KO Correspondent

Srinagar: The Court of Special Judge (NDPS Cases) here on Wednesday acquitted a Batmaloo resident in a narcotics case, holding that the prosecution failed to establish an unbroken chain of custody linking the seized contraband with the substance examined by the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL).

The accused, Asif Ashraf of Batmaloo Srinagar, was facing trial in FIR No. 16/2024 registered at Police Station Batmaloo under Sections 8 and 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

According to the prosecution, on February 17, 2024, a police naka party at Tengpora near the National Highway bypass intercepted a white Brezza vehicle bearing registration number DL5CR-1840. During its search, 22 bottles, each containing 100 ml of codeine-based cough syrup, were allegedly recovered from a white bag kept under the driver's seat.

The accused, who was driving the vehicle, was arrested and the vehicle and bottles were seized.

However, after examining the prosecution evidence, the court found serious | More on P6

J&K Revises Monthly Salary Deductions For Cancer Fund

Gazetted Employees to Contribute Rs 40, Non-Gazetted Rs 20 Monthly

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has revised the monthly contributions of government employees towards the Cancer Treatment Management Fund for Poor (CTMFP), fixing deductions of Rs 40 for Gazetted employees and Rs 20 for Non-Gazetted employees.

The Finance Department's Codes Division has issued a circular in this regard, following a General Administration Department order issued on August 31, 2026.

As per the revised instructions, Rs 480 will be contributed annually by each Gazetted employee through monthly deductions of Rs 40, while Non-Gazetted employees will contribute Rs 240 annually through deductions of Rs 20 per month.

The government has also clarified that the prescribed contributions are minimum amounts and employees are free to contribute more to the fund voluntarily. | More on P6

NLU, Skill Varsity Plans Stuck On Paper In J&K

Agencies

Srinagar: More than one year and eight months after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced the establishment of a National Law University (NLU) and a Skill and Entrepreneurship University in his 2025-26 Budget speech, the two projects remain on paper.

Presenting the Budget in the Legislative Assembly as the Finance Minister of Jammu & Kashmir on March 07, 2025, the CM had proposed a budgetary provision of Rs 50 crore for the establishment of a National Law University, for which legislation had already been enacted during the PDP-BJP government's tenure.



"Our Government is committed to establishing a National Law University (NLU) in Jammu & Kashmir to drive legal education reforms and research. With world-class training aligned to contemporary standards, the NLU will empower future legal professionals and enhance justice delivery. I propose a provision of 50 crore in the Budget for this transformative initiative," the Chief Minister had said.

On October 29, 2025, the Chief Minister announced that the National Law University would start functioning from Ompora in Budgam from the next financial year.

He made the announcement while replying to a discussion on a resolution moved by Congress MLA Nizam-ud-Din Bhat seeking the establishment of the National Law University in Srinagar.

However, despite the CM's announcement and budgetary allocation, the proposed university is yet | More on P6

IIT Mandi Researcher Develops AI Model To Predict Changes In Wildlife Populations

Press Trust Of India



Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi have claimed to develop a mathematical modelling framework that uses artificial intelligence (AI) techniques to predict changes in wildlife populations.

The model can help scientists understand how predator and prey populations influence each other and forecast their future numbers, the institute said on Friday in a statement.

The research focuses on the wolf and moose populations of Isle Royale National Park, a 544-square-kilometre island in Lake Superior, Michigan, USA.

Wolves are the primary natural predators of moose in the park, with the latter accounting for nearly 90 per cent of wolves' winter diet.

Their populations have been monitored annually since 1959, one of the world's longest-running records of predator-prey populations.

Over the decades, both populations have witnessed significant ups and downs. For instance, wolf numbers declined sharply in the early 1980s following a disease outbreak, while the moose population declined in the mid-1990s.

The research has been conducted by Dr Nitu Kumari, Professor at the School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, along with her PhD student, Anurag Singh.

The researchers developed a model that uses historical population data to estimate how quickly moose reproduce, how wolf populations change naturally, and how predation affects the moose population.

Using these estimates, the model can forecast population trends for up to five years.

The researchers tested two different approaches to understand how wolves hunt moose.

Their findings showed that the model based on the relationship between predator and prey numbers performed better than the alternative approach. It also successfully identified periods of unusual population decline in the historical data.

For the period between 2020 and 2024, the model predicted an increase in wolf numbers and a decline in moose numbers, broadly matching the population trends subsequently observed in the park.

According to Prof Kumari, this is the first study, to the best of her knowledge, to use a self-adaptive mathematical modelling framework combining physics-informed neural networks and transfer learning to study predator-prey population fluctuations.

Prof Kumari recently gave an interview to a US-based news outlet, The Primary, whose article on the research is expected to be published online soon, the statement said.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION LANGATE

Final Notice

M/s Shan Constructions
Prop. Farooq Ahmad Paul
R/o Summerbugh, Lasjan, Budgam.

No: EE/RnB/L/4200-02
Date: 25-11-2026

Subject: Construction of Drains, Lanes, Protection Bunds and Tiles at Different Places of MC Langate

References:

1. Allotment No. SE/R&B/K/530-33 of 2025-26 dated 02-05-2026.
2. Notice No. AEE/SDL/265-66 dated 06-07-2026.
3. Notice No. AEE/SDL/464-65 dated 22-08-2026.
4. Notice No. AEE/SDL/509-10 dated 08-09-2026.
5. Notice No. AEE/SDL/645-47 dated 21-10-2026.
6. Final Notice No. AEE/SDL/764-66 dated 19-11-2026.

It is hereby notified that the work **"Construction of Drains, Lanes, Protection Bunds and Tiles at Different Places of MC Langate"** allotted to your agency continues to progress at an extremely slow and unsatisfactory pace despite repeated instructions and notices issued by sub-divisional office from time to time, including the Final Notice referred above.

It has been observed that, notwithstanding repeated directions to mobilize adequate resources and expedite the execution of the work, no tangible improvement has been achieved. Further, no meaningful activity has been carried out at the work sites during the last two days, resulting in complete stagnation of the work.

The matter is viewed seriously, particularly in view of the limited working season remaining. The continued delay and non-performance on your part are likely to jeopardize the timely completion of the work and may also result in the lapse of allocated funds.

In view of the above and your persistent failure to comply with the directions issued by this office, you are hereby called upon to **immediately augment the deployment of men, machinery, and other requisite resources and ensure substantial progress on all work fronts without any further delay.**

Failing which, this office shall be constrained to initiate action under the relevant provisions of the contract agreement, including rescission of the contract and other consequential measures as admissible under rules, at your risk and cost, without any further notice.

This shall be treated as a **FINAL AND LAST OPPORTUNITY** to improve the performance and complete the work within the stipulated time frame.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Langate

DIPK-7946/26
DATED: 25-11-2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform to the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my aadhar as MUNAWAR AYOUB While as my actual name is MANAWWAR AYOUB C/O MOHAMMAD AYOUB R/O BIJIDARAH TANGDHAR KUPWARA District KUPWARA 193225 Now I want to apply for the correction of the same if anybody is having any objection he/she may contact concerned authority within the period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.

MANAWWAR AYOUB
C/O :- MOHAMMAD AYOUB
R/O :- BIJIDARAH TANGDHAR, KUPWARA FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform to the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my aadhar as URWA JAAN While as my actual name is ARWAA JAVEED C/O JAVEED AHMAD MIR R/O KALAROOCH KUPWARA District KUPWARA 193222 Now I want to apply for the correction of the same if anybody is having any objection he/she may contact concerned authority within the period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.

ARWAA JAVEED
C/O :- JAVEED AHMAD MIR
R/O :- KALAROOCH, KUPWARA QNS

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my 10th pass marks card annual regular 2025 at somewhere bearing registration No...2407000000670006 session oct Nov 2025 .Now I am applying for its duplicate if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of JKBOSE Srinagar/GOVT HR SEC SCHOOL KREERI within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained

Name....FAIZAN RASHID
S/O ...ABDUL RASHID RATHER FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is inform to the general public that my name has been wrongly mentioned in my aadhar as KHATONI BEGUM While as my actual name is ZYTOONA BEGUM C/O FAROOQ AHMAD R/O TULWARI KUPWARA District KUPWARA 193222 Now I want to apply for the correction of the same if anybody is having any objection he/she may contact concerned authority within the period of seven days after that no objection will be entertained.

ZYTOONA BEGUM
C/O :- FAROOQ AHMAD
R/O :- TULWARI, KUPWARA FKO

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 2475 3707 9438 the name is entered as Syed Insha Geelani while my actual name is Nisha Jan. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
Nisha Jan
W/O Syed Sajad Hussain Geelani
R/o Peerbagh Hyderpora Srinagar. MCB

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 9205 4350 8417 the name is entered as Sajad Hussain Geelani while my actual name is Syed Sajad Hussain Geelani. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
Syed Sajad Hussain Geelani
S/O Syed Noor Uddin
R/o Peerbagh Hyderpora Srinagar. MCB

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, WAZIRA AKHTER, D/o GH HASSAN SOFI,R/o Kremshora Tehsil Khansahib District Budgam hereby notify the general public that my name is correctly recorded as WAZIRA AKHTER in my 10th Class Board Certificate, whereas it has inadvertently been mentioned as WAZIRA BANO in my initial appointment order.
Accordingly, the necessary correction may kindly be made in the official records, and my name may be rectified from WAZIRA BANO to WAZIRA AKHTER.
Any person having an objection to the proposed correction may submit the same in writing to the Department of Custodian General, J&K, Jammu, within seven (07) days from the date of publication of this notice. Objections received after the expiry of the stipulated period shall not be entertained.
WAZIRA AKHTER
D/o GH HASSAN SOFI R/o Kremshora Tehsil Khansahib
District Budgam rko

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in School records of my son FAIZAN NAZIR RATHER the name is entered as FAIZAN NAZEER RATHER S/O NAZEER AHMAD RATHER while his actual name is FAIZAN NAZIR RATHER S/O NAZIR AHMAD RATHER. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact STAR PUBLIC SCHOOL WATERHAIL BUDGAM with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
NAZIR AHMAD RATHER F/o FAIZAN NAZIR RATHER
R/o WATERHAIL KHANSAHIB BUDGAM CELL. 9797346760
mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that I, Nayeem Ahmad Lone, S/o Gh. Mohammad Lone, R/o Wanigam Payeen, Pattan, have applied for a Krishi Vikas Pesticides and Fertilizer License. Anybody having any objection in this regard may submit the same before the concerned office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections shall be entertained thereafter.
fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer ID no: 02010400124214 from Syed Gayaz Ud Din TO Shugufta Gayas. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned PDD office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Shugufta Gayas FKO

IN THE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE 1 CLASS AT PAMPORE

Case No.22/2026
Date of Institution: 17/11/26

In the case of
Gulzar Ahmad Lone
S/o: Ab. Rashid Lone
R/o: Nagander Khrew ...(Applicant)

VERSUS

Registrar Birth & Deaths
Block Development Officer Pampore
...(Non Applicant)

In the matter of:
Application for Registration of Date of Birth of applicant, and issuing the certificate thereof under Section 13 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.
CORAM: Mahjabeen Akhter JO CODE: JK00280

NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

Whereas, the above titled petition has been filed by the applicant in this Court seeking direction to the non-applicant for Registration of Date of Birth. Whereas through the medium of this notice, the public at large is informed that in case, anyone has any objection in issuance of direction with respect to the Registration of Date of Birth of Applicant namely Gulzar Ahmad Lone S/o: Ab. Rashid Lone R/o: Nagander Khrew Pampore (who has been born on 02-01-1990) to the non-applicant he/she/they shall file the same before this Court in person or through counsel within 07 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection will be entertained and matter will be taken up for disposal in according with law.
Given under my hand and Seal of the Court today on 21/11/26
No.
Dated: 21/11/2026

(Mahjabeen Akhter)
U.I.D No. JK00280
FKO Munsiff/JMIC Pampore

IN THE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE 1st CLASS AT PAMPORE

Case No. 38/2026
Date of Institution: 17/11/2

In the case of:
Mohammad Rafiq Lone S/o: Abdul Rashid Lone
R/o: Nagander Khrew

VERSUS

...(Applicant)

Registrar Birth & Deaths
Block Development Officer Pampore
(Non Applicant)

In the matter of:

Application for Registration of Date of Birth of applicant, and issuing the certificate thereof under Section 13 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.
CORAM: Mahjabeen Akhter JO CODE: JK00280

NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

Whereas, the above titled petition has been filed by the applicant in this Court seeking direction to the non-applicant for Registration of Date of Birth. Whereas through the medium of this notice, the public at large is informed that in case, anyone has any objection in issuance of direction with respect to the Registration of Date of Birth of Applicant namely Mohammad Rafiq Lone S/o: Abdul Rashid Lone R/o: Nagander Khrew Pampore (who has been born on 05-03-1996) to the non-applicant he/she/they shall file the same before this Court in person or through counsel within 07 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection will be entertained and matter will be taken up for disposal in according with law.
Given under my hand and Seal of the Court today on g 21/11/26
No.

(Mahjabeen Akhter)
Dated: 21/11/2026 U.I.D No. JK00280
FKO Munsiff/JMIC Pampore

IN THE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE 1 CLASS AT PAMPORE

Case No. 629/2026
Date of Institution: 6-11-2036

In the case of:
Tariq Ahmad Lone S/o Ab. Majeed Lone
R/o: Shar Shali Pampore (Applicant)

VERSUS

Registrar Birth & Deaths
Block Development Officer Pampore
(Non Applicant)

In the matter of:
Application for Registration of Date of Birth of applicant's ward namely Rehan Tariq Lone S/o: Tariq Ahmad Lone R/o: Shar Shali, and issuing the certificate thereof under Section 13 of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.
CORAM: Mahjabeen Akhter JO CODE: JK00280

NOTICE FOR GENERAL PUBLIC

Whereas, the above titled petition has been filed by the applicant in this Court seeking direction to the non-applicant for Registration of Date of Birth. Whereas through the medium of this notice, the public at large is informed that in case, anyone has any objection in issuance of direction with respect to the Registration of Date of Birth of Applicant's ward Rehan Tariq Lone S/o: Tariq Ahmad Lone R/o: Shar Shali Pampore (who has been born on 03-11-2012) to the non-applicant he/she/they shall file the same before this Court in person or through counsel within 07 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no objection will be entertained and matter will be taken up for disposal in according with law.
Given under my hand and Seal of the Court today on 23-11-26
No.
Dated: 3/12/2026

(Mahjabeen Akhter)
U.I.D No. JK00280 Munsiff/JMIC
FKO Pampore

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شبیر احمد چوہان ولد محمد ابراہیم چوہان ساکن سبدن بڈگام۔
mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) SANIYA PARVAIZ BHAT to (New name) SANIYA PARVAIZ . In future i will be known as (new Name) SANIYA PARVAIZ.
If any body having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.
mcb

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name)
Faizan to (new name)
Faizan Qayoom . In future i will be known as (new name) Faizan Qayoom.
If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact passport office srinagar, within 7 days.
After 7 days no objection will be accepted.
Media line advt

PUBLIC NOTICE

The electricity connection with consumer ID: 0202030003490 registered in the name of Ali Mohammad Rainayee is proposed to be transferred in favour of Ashiq Hussain Rainayee, S/o Ali Mohamma Rainayee R/o House No 38,Balgarden, Srinagar .
If anybody has any objection, he/she may contact concerned department within 7 Days after that no objection shall be entertained.
Media Line Advt

Srinagar Steps Up War Against Drugs

359 arrested, Rs 138-cr properties attached, 200 bank accounts frozen; 251 FIRs registered in major crackdown; DC stresses inter-departmental coordination, SSP calls for intelligence-led action against drug networks

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police have registered 251 FIRs, arrested 359 alleged drug peddlers, attached properties worth over Rs 138 crore and frozen 200 bank accounts as a part of an intensified crackdown against narcotics in the district.

Figures were shared during a meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) Committee, chaired by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo and attended by SSP Srinagar Dr G.V. Sundeep Chakravarthy, to review ongoing anti-narcotics measures and strengthen the fight against drug trafficking and substance abuse.

The meeting reviewed enforcement against drug supply networks, regulatory measures, preventive interventions and rehabilitation facilities, besides implementation of the Common Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for dealing with accused persons, action against illicit cannabis cultivation and measures to prevent misuse of pharmaceutical drugs.

The Committee was informed that 21 movable and 110 immovable properties, collectively valued at over Rs 138 crore and linked to drug traffickers, had been attached. Besides, 200 bank accounts had been frozen following financial investigations.

The Transport Department has also suspended or cancelled 108 driving licences and suspended the Registration Certificates (RCs) of 64 vehicles as part of enforcement measures against drug-related offences.

'CLOSER COORDINATION MUST TO DISMANTLE DRUG SUPPLY NETWORKS'

Stressing sustained action, DC Labroo called for closer coordination among departments and enforcement agencies to dismantle drug supply networks and prevent substance abuse, particularly among youth.

He directed the Excise and other concerned departments to take effective measures to eradicate cannabis cultivation across the district and reiterated the zero-tolerance policy towards government employees found involved in NDPS cases.

Labroo further directed that cases involving commercial quantities of narcotic substances be periodically monitored by Police, Transport, Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and Prosecution agencies. Investigating agencies were asked to establish forward and backward linkages in NDPS cases to identify suppliers, financiers and kingpins behind trafficking networks.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need to strengthen rehabilitation facilities and ensure proper care, treatment and reintegration of individuals affected by substance abuse.

The Drug Controller, in coordination with District Police and NCB, was also directed to ensure strict regulation and monitoring of pharmaceutical shops across Srinagar.

'IDENTIFY VULNERABLE AREAS, DRUG DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS'

SSP Chakravarthy stressed sustained surveillance of drug trafficking networks, intelligence-sharing among enforcement agencies and effective investigation of NDPS cases. He also called for identifying vulnerable areas and drug distribution channels and establishing forward and backward linkages to dismantle the entire supply chain.

The meeting also reviewed preparations for the implementation of the nationwide 100 Weeks Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan announced by the Prime Minister, with emphasis on awareness generation, community participation and preventive interventions.

Alamgari Bazar Chowk To Get ₹3.33-Crore Makeover

Five structures to be removed as junction widening project aims to ease old city's traffic congestion

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: In a move aimed at easing traffic congestion in Srinagar's old city, MLA Zadibal and National Conference Chief Spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for the widening, upgradation and beautification of Alamgari Bazar Chowk.

The project, estimated to cost 333.70 lakh, is expected to bring considerable changes to the busy junction, which has long faced traffic congestion due to limited road space and the movement of pedestrians through the crowded marketplace.

Being executed by the Public Works Department (R&B), the project involves the acquisition of five structures spread over 2,823.79 square feet to facilitate the widening and improvement of the junction.

Of the total project cost, 173 lakh has been earmarked for construction, while 160.70 lakh will be spent on land acquisition.

The proposed work goes beyond road widening. It includes the development of pedestrian footpaths, installation of interlocking paver blocks and cobblestones, improved drainage, road macadamisation and the removal of existing obstructions to ensure smoother movement.

The junction will also receive a facelift with the installation of streetlights, decorative illuminated signage, road safety fixtures, bollards and a digital display board. Road markings, reflective studs and improved traffic signage are also part of the plan.

The project is particularly significant for the old city, where narrow roads and heavy pedestrian movement often make traffic management difficult. Once completed, the improved junction is expected to provide better connectivity and make movement through the area more convenient for commuters and local residents.

The redevelopment is also expected to ease the movement of large Muharram processions, which pass through different parts of Shehr-e-Khaas, by improving the available road space around the junction.

According to the project details displayed at the site, work commenced on November 15, 2026, and is scheduled to be completed within two years.

The project is expected to improve not only the road infrastructure but also the overall appearance and accessibility of one of the historic city's important marketplaces.



> **The junction** will also receive a facelift with the installation of streetlights, decorative illuminated signage, road safety fixtures, bollards and a digital display board. Road markings, reflective studs and improved traffic signage are also part of the plan.

Srinagar Observes International Day For Elimination Of Violence Against Women

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Social Welfare Department (SWD), Srinagar, through SANKALP – Hub for Empowerment of Women (HEW), in collaboration with Mission POSHAN, Zone Nowpora, organized a Community Awareness Programme to observe the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

On the occasion, a resource person from the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, sensitized the participants about various forms of violence against women, their legal rights and the mechanisms available for seeking justice and support.

The speaker highlighted the importance of creating awareness about domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, harassment and other forms of violence faced by women. Detailed information was also shared regarding the legal safeguards available to women, free legal aid services, the role of DLSA and the support mechanisms accessible to women facing violence or abuse.

The participants, particularly women beneficiaries of Mission POSHAN, were encouraged to speak up against violence, seek timely assistance and create awareness within their families and communities about women's rights, dignity and safety.

The programme aimed at empowering women through legal awareness, promoting gender equality and fostering a safe, supportive and violence-free environment for women in society.

Man Killed After Being Hit By Scooty

Agencies

Srinagar: A 60-year-old man died after being hit by a scooty near Nigeen area of Srinagar on Wednesday evening, while the driver has been arrested, officials said.

An official said that the man was injured after being struck by a scooty in the Nigeen area.

He was initially shifted to JLNM Hospital, Rainawari, and later referred to SMHS Hospital, Srinagar, where doctors declared him brought dead on arrival. The deceased was identified as Mohd Akram Dar (60), a resident of Bandipora.

Meanwhile, police have arrested the accused driver and further investigation into the incident is underway—(KNO)

انتقال پُرملال



انتہائی رنج وغم کے ساتھ اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ مہرہ زوجہ علی محمد تیلی، ساکنہ میرک شاہ کالونی، حبک کراسنگ، مورخہ 24 نومبر 2026ء بروز منگل انتقال کر گئیں۔ مرحومہ ایک نیک سیرت، شریف النفس، دیندار اور محبِ اہلِ بیتؑ خاتون تھیں۔ اللہ تبارک وتعالیٰ بحقِ محمد وآلِ محمدؐ، مرحومہ کی مغفرت فرمائے، انہیں جوارِ رحمت میں جگہ عطا فرمائے۔

مرحومہ کے ایصالِ ثواب کے لیے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی (چہارم) مورخہ 27 نومبر 2026ء، بروز جمعہ، مسجد امام علیؑ، میرک شاہ کالونی، حبک کراسنگ میں انجام دی جائے گی۔

سوگواران

اہلِ خانہ، عزیز واقارب

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"Indeed, to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return."

REMEMBRANCE ON THE FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY



In Loving Memory of

Late Zamrroda Begum

D/O Hakim Qasim Ali
W/O Haji Hassan Ali Chalak
R/O Baghwanpora Lal Bazar Srinagar

On this day, the 1st Death Anniversary of our beloved Zamroda Begum, who departed from this world on 26 November 2025, we lovingly remember her noble life, kindness, and the cherished memories she left behind.

Though a year has passed since her departure, her memory continues to live in our hearts and prayers. Her love, compassion, and devotion to her family remain an enduring source of inspiration for all who knew her.

We humbly pray to Almighty Allah to forgive her shortcomings, shower His infinite mercy upon her, and grant her the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous. May her grave be filled with light, peace, and blessings, and may Allah grant strength and patience to all family members and loved ones.

"Indeed, to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return."

May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Fondly remembered and deeply missed by:

Haji Hassan Ali Chalak
(Ex-Director Accounts & Treasuries
Government of the Erstwhile Jammu & Kashmir State)
and the entire family.

Email ID: gmdic-srinagar@jk.gov.in
Website: industrieskashmir.nic.in
Phone: 0194-2427478

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE, SRINAGAR
IE BAMK, Mill Stop, Nowshera, Srinagar, Pincode-190011
(Development Section)

PUBLIC NOTICE

M/s Reliable Enterprises, I/E Khunmoh, Srinagar stands formally registered with this office under No.01/003/09441/PMT/MSME dated 28.06.2022 for the activity "Manufacturing of Tissue paper and paper Napkins" as partnership concern of 1). Mr. Ghulam Hassan Kinah S/o Gul Mohammad Kinah R/o House No. 14 Shehjar Rose Avenue Opposite PHQ Peer Bagh Srinagar and 2). Mr. Waseem-ul-Hassan Kinah S/o Mr. Ghulam Hassan Kinah R/o House No. 14 Shehjar Rose Avenue Opposite PHQ Peer Bagh Srinagar.
Now the partners has submitted an application for change of constitution by way of retirement of one partner namely Mr. Ghulam Hassan Kinah S/o Gul Mohammad Kinah R/o House No. 14 Shehjar Rose Avenue Opposite PHQ Peer Bagh Srinagar
Any person having any objection with regard to the above mentioned change shall report to the Office of General Manager, District Industries Centre, Srinagar within a period of 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

DIPK-7944/26
DATED: 25-11-2026

General Manager
District Industries Centre
Srinagar

FATEH KHAWANI



With profound grief and sorrow, we inform you that Saleema, wife of Ghulam Ahmad Bhat, resident of Mian Shah Sahib, Rainawari, Srinagar, Kashmir, passed away on 24th November 2026.
Her Fateh Khawani will be held on 27th November 2026 (Friday), after Jumma Namaz.
The bereaved family requests everyone to pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

BEREAVED FAMILY

ird

- 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: Kashmer EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BIJBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR

15 Jumada al-Sani
1448

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 45
ZUHR	12:16
ASR	3: 46
Magrib	5: 26
ISHA	6: 50

This Day In History

- 43 BC- Second Triumvirate alliance of Roman leader Octavian (later Caesar Augustus), Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, and Mark Antony formed 1580- French Huguenots & Roman Catholics sign peace treaty
- 1688- French King Louis XIV declares war on Netherlands
- 1688- King James II escapes back to London
- 1741- French & Beiers army occupies Prague
- 1778- British explorer Captain James Cook is the first European to visit Maui in the Sandwich Islands (now Hawaii)
- 1791- 1st US cabinet meeting, held at George Washington's home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of War Henry Knox, and Attorney General Edmund Randolph attend.
- 1842- The University of Notre Dame is founded
- 1865 - "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll is published in America
- 1865 - Battle of Papudo: The Spanish navy engages a combined Peruvian-Chilean fleet north of Valparaiso, Chile
- 1901 - Italy and Britain sign an agreement fixing the frontier between their colonies of Eritrea and Sudan in East Africa
- 1924 -- Mongolian People's Republic proclaimed
- 1925 - Netherlands & Germany sign trade agreement
- 1940 - Nazi Germany began walling off the Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw
- 1941 - Japanese naval carrier force left its base & moves east toward Pearl Harbor
- 1942 - Anti-fascist Council for National Liberation (AVNOJ) forms
- 1948 - 1st polaroid camera sold for $89.75 in Boston at the Jordan Marsh department store. The Land Camera model 95 becomes prototype for all Polaroid Land cameras for next 15 years
- 1949 - The Constituent Assembly of India formally adopts a new constitution
- 1956 - USSR single sculls winner Vyacheslav Ivanov wins Olympic gold medal in his excitement he jumps for joy, & loses his medal, it sinks
- 1963 - Explorer 18 spacecraft launched by NASA
- 1965 - France launches 1st satellite, 92 lb (42 kg) A1-capsule (Astérix), named after the popular French comic character
- 1984 - US & Iraq re-establish diplomatic relations
- 1985 - 23rd Space Shuttle Mission (61-B)-Atlantis 2-is launched
- 1985 - France performs nuclear test at Mururoa atoll
- 1989 - India's Congress Party led by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi loses the general election to an opposition front led by V. P. Singh
- 1990 - Mikhail Gorbachev tells Iraq to get out of Kuwait
- 1998 - Tony Blair becomes the first Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to address the Republic of Ireland's parliament.
- 2003 - India accepts Pakistan's offer of a ceasefire in Kashmir
- 2003 - Supersonic airplane the Concorde makes its last ever flight, returning to Bristol, England.
- 2011 - NATO forces in Afghanistan attack a Pakistani checkpoint in a friendly fire incident, killing 24 soldiers and wounding 13 others
- 2017 - British Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton finishes 2nd in season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at Yas Marina Circuit to claim his 4th F1 World Drivers Championship; wins title by 46 points from Sebastian Vettel
- 2018 - NASA's InSight mission lands on Mars after a 7 month voyage
- 2018 - Ukraine declares martial law in areas bordering Russia after Russia seizes three of its naval vessels
- 2018 - Chinese scientist He Jiankui claims to have made the first genetically edited baby
- 2018 - General Motors announces it will close five factories in North America, cutting 14,000 jobs

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex, Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
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RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
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KO VIEW

A Test for Private Universities

The government's decision to notify the Private Universities Rules, 2026, creates an opportunity to widen access to higher education. It also places a responsibility on the government to prevent private institutions from turning education into an expensive business with little academic value.

The rules provide for at least 25 per cent reservation for local students and employees.

This is a welcome provision in a region where educated young people face limited opportunities and many families send their children outside Jammu and Kashmir for higher studies.

Private universities could help retain students, attract academic talent and create employment. Their contribution, however, will depend on the quality of education they provide.

A university cannot be judged by its name, campus or admission numbers. Its academic standing depends on qualified teachers, functioning laboratories, well-equipped libraries, recognised programmes and serious research.

Without these foundations, an institution risks becoming a commercial enterprise selling expensive degrees to families who associate higher education with better career prospects.

The financial burden on students makes government oversight particularly important.

Families often spend years saving money or borrow funds to finance their children's education. High fees combined with poor teaching and inadequate facilities can leave students with financial liabilities and qualifications that fail to improve their employment prospects.

Such an outcome would defeat the purpose of expanding higher education.

The government must therefore establish clear standards before allowing private universities to operate.

Fee structures should be transparent, academic programmes should face regular scrutiny and inspections should examine actual teaching facilities, faculty strength and infrastructure.

Students also need an effective grievance mechanism to challenge arbitrary fee increases, misleading admission claims and inadequate academic services.

The proposed 25 per cent reservation for local students and employees will also need strict enforcement. A provision in government rules carries little value without public monitoring. The administration should publish information on admissions and local recruitment so that students and families can assess whether institutions are meeting their commitments.

Private universities should also contribute to Jammu and Kashmir's economic development.

Hiring qualified local graduates, supporting research and building links with industries and public institutions can help create opportunities beyond university campuses. Graduate employment and academic performance should form part of the government's assessment of these institutions.

The expansion of higher education should be measured by what students gain, rather than by how many universities receive permission to operate.

ammu and Kashmir needs institutions that build knowledge, skills and professional opportunities. The government must ensure that private investment strengthens public educational goals.

A university's first responsibility is to educate, profit must remain secondary.

A Lake Beyond Politics

Questions over construction near Sheshnag Lake have renewed calls for scientific assessments, public disclosure and stricter monitoring of development work.



Vivek Bali



The mountains along the Amarnath Yatra route welcome thousands of pilgrims each year.

People travel long distances, often through difficult terrain, to reach the holy cave.

They need safe paths, better facilities and help along the way. The government has a responsibility to make their journey safer.

It also has a responsibility to protect the lakes, forests and wildlife that make this part of Kashmir so special.

The reported widening of the track near Sheshnag Lake brings these two responsibilities into focus.

There is nothing wrong with improving a pilgrimage route. Better roads and facilities can make travel easier and reduce difficulties for pilgrims. But construction in a sensitive mountain area needs careful planning.

A project meant to improve access should never leave behind damaged slopes, construction waste or harm to a lake.

Sheshnag Lake is among the well-known natural landmarks along the Amarnath route. Its surroundings are part of a mountain landscape that attracts pilgrims and visitors alike. Any work in this area must take account of the natural conditions and the possible effects of excavation, waste disposal and changes to the surrounding land.

These are basic concerns that should guide public works in ecologically sensitive areas.

Reports of possible damage linked to excavation and the dumping of construction debris therefore need a proper investigation.

The authorities should establish what work has taken place, which agencies and contractors are involved, what permissions were granted and whether the conditions attached to those permissions were followed.

If environmental rules have been broken, action should follow. If the work has been carried out within the approved limits, the government should make the evidence public.

People should not have to depend on scattered videos and social media posts to understand what is happening near an important lake.

Such videos can bring a problem to public attention, but they cannot establish the full extent of damage or explain the technical details of a project.

The same applies to political statements.

Strong claims from any side cannot take the place of an independent assessment.

The Jammu and Kashmir Administration and the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) should publish the relevant project documents, construction plans, permissions and environmental safeguards.

> **The government** now has an opportunity to address public concerns through facts, transparency and action. It should make the project details public, seek expert assessments and investigate any reported violations. The findings should be shared openly, and any necessary corrective steps should follow.

They should also explain how the work is being monitored and what steps are being taken to prevent damage.

When public agencies share information openly, people can judge the work on facts rather than rumours.

There is a larger issue here that goes beyond the Amarnath Yatra.

Kashmir has many lakes, forests, streams and mountain landscapes that face pressure from development and human activity. Protecting these resources should be a common public concern.

The same environmental standards must apply to all projects, whether they are linked to tourism, pilgrimage, roads or other public infrastructure.

No project should receive special treatment, and no environmental concern should be dismissed because of the identity or purpose of the people involved.

The debate around Sheshnag Lake should also stay away from communal politics.

Pilgrims have a right to safe facilities and a comfortable journey. Local communities have a stake in the health of their natural surroundings. Environmental groups and concerned citizens have a right to ask whether public projects are following the law.

These interests do not conflict with one another. But treating them as competing positions only makes it harder to find practical answers.

Faith and environmental protection can go together. Indeed, a pilgrimage through the mountains should also encourage respect for the natural surroundings.

People come to this region because of its religious importance and its remarkable landscape. Protecting one while damaging the other would defeat the purpose of responsible development.

The government now has an opportunity to address public concerns through facts, transparency and action.

It should make the project details public, seek expert assessments and investigate any reported violations.

The findings should be shared openly, and any necessary corrective steps should follow.

The Amarnath pilgrimage season comes and goes, but Sheshnag Lake remains part of Kashmir's natural heritage. Pilgrims return to their homes after completing their journey. The mountains, water and wildlife remain for the generations that follow.

We should be able to make the pilgrimage safer without leaving the next generation with a damaged landscape.

That is the responsibility development must answer to.

The author is the Jammu and Kashmir State President of the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP).

Before Kashmir Labels a Child Lazy

Many children struggle with poor eyesight, anaemia and developmental difficulties that go unnoticed at home and in school. Annual health checks could help identify these problems early.



Dr Satish Prasad Rath

A child who cannot read the blackboard clearly may spend years being called a slow learner. Another who struggles to stay awake through morning classes may be told to pay attention. A child who falls behind classmates may hear that he needs to work harder.

Such judgments often come before anyone thinks of checking the child's health in Kashmir classrooms. And that is a costly mistake.

Many childhood health problems remain hidden because children have no way of knowing that something is wrong. They grow accustomed to blurred vision, tired mornings and difficulty concentrating. Adults see the behaviour, attach a label to it and move on.

By the time someone looks for a medical explanation, valuable years may have passed.

The numbers from Jammu and Kashmir's National Family Health Survey, conducted between 2019 and 2021, show how much can remain unseen.

Nearly three out of four children aged six months to five years, or 73 per cent, were anaemic. Five years earlier, the figure was 54 per cent. The share of young children who were too thin for their height rose from 12 to 19 per cent, while the proportion who were overweight increased from 6 to 10 per cent.

More than one child in four was shorter than expected for their age.

These figures describe children growing up with nutritional problems that may go unnoticed at home and in school. They also challenge the common assumption that a child who looks healthy is necessarily well.

A classroom can appear perfectly ordinary while several children struggle with conditions that affect their learning and development.

Screens have made the problem worse.

Children today spend long hours with smartphones and computers, often with little supervision. Kashmir's long winters, when families spend more time indoors, can make screen habits harder to control.

A 2021 review of research published in The Lancet Digital Health linked heavy smart-device use with higher odds of short-sightedness, particularly when combined with computer use. Paediatricians are also seeing concerns involving poor sleep, irritability, aggression, anxiety and difficulty paying attention.

A child who becomes upset when a phone is taken away may be treated as stubborn or badly behaved. The possibility that excessive screen use has become part of a larger health problem rarely drives the discussion.

Other countries, meanwhile, have started addressing the elephant in the room.

Australia's ban on social media for children under 16 took effect in December 2025. Britain announced a similar measure in June 2026, expected to begin in spring 2027. Seattle's public school system sued major social media companies in 2023 over the effects of their platforms on students' mental health.

The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages families to develop media plans, while the Indian Academy of Pediatrics advises parents to avoid screens before age two and limit use to an hour a day for children up to five.

Rules can help, but parents and teachers need practical guidance too.

Many adults raising children today never grew up with smartphones, and medical training has often left doctors unprepared to advise families on digital habits. Digital parenting needs to become part of ordinary child healthcare, alongside nutrition, eyesight and hearing.

Some countries have already made school health checks a routine part of childhood.

Japan has required annual examinations under its School Health and Safety Act since 1958. The checks cover growth, nutrition, eyesight, hearing, teeth, heart health and other conditions. Families receive results within 21 days, and schools must respond, whether by advising treatment or moving a child closer to the blackboard.

New Zealand provides free health checks for four-year-olds before they begin school, covering vision, hearing, growth and development, with teachers also contributing their observations.

In 2021, the World Health Organization and UNESCO called on countries to make schools health-promoting institutions.

India has its own guidelines. The Central Board of Secondary Education's School Health Manual, issued in 2008, calls for annual medical examinations, individual health cards and school health clubs.

Jammu and Kashmir introduced Student Health Cards in government schools in 2021, with two annual check-ups planned through the Mid-Day Meal mission and National Health Mission.

Medical blocks have two Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram teams to screen children for birth defects, diseases, deficiencies and developmental delays. Government schools are also expected to have two teachers trained as health and wellness ambassadors.

The difficulty lies in implementation. A health department review in November 2022 found that screening teams had covered about two-thirds of government schools and fewer than half of anganwadi centres during the year. Private schools remain outside much of this arrangement.

The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education oversees examinations and syllabuses, while government screening programmes largely serve government institutions. Children in private schools depend on their managements to arrange medical checks.

Even where screenings take place, the next step is often uncertain. A medical report has little value if a family cannot find the right specialist or act on the advice.

My team and I saw this during a screening of 600 children at Green Valley School in Srinagar. Most looked healthy, and their parents would probably have said the same.

But the examinations found children with anaemia, untreated eyesight problems, ear, nose and throat conditions, and concerns about weight and growth.

A smaller group was screened for early signs of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and speech delay, conditions that can easily be mistaken for poor behaviour or slow learning.

The findings came from an ordinary school, where children attended classes and went about their day without raising health complaints.

Parents were invited to take children needing further attention to specialists in Srinagar. That follow-up will tell us far more about the value of the exercise than the number of children screened.

The experience also points to an idea Kashmir should take seriously: turning schools into children's primary health screening centres.

Building a clinic in every village or sending mobile hospitals to remote settlements cannot solve the problem alone, particularly when winter closes roads and many paediatric specialists work in Srinagar. Schools already exist in almost every village, remain open six days a week and bring children together in one place.

Portable technology can now screen eyesight, hearing, heart function and growth within minutes. Newer tools can identify early signs of autism, ADHD and speech delays in five to ten minutes, helping doctors decide which children need a specialist assessment.

These tools do not replace a medical diagnosis. They only help identify children who might otherwise wait years before receiving one.

The model would bring teachers and parents into the first line of child healthcare, supported by doctors and hospitals responsible for follow-up. Government could set standards and fund basic checks, while private providers bring specialist services and technology. Government and private schools would follow the same system.

Kashmir should aim to screen every child annually from birth to 18 by 2035, either at school or at a health centre. A simple health record should follow the child, with a clear referral route whenever a problem is found.

Parents must receive reports in plain language, and children identified during screening must have a named place for treatment.

Parents can begin by watching for signs such as squinting, sitting too close to the television, constant tiredness, difficulty hearing instructions or sudden changes in attention.

Teachers can treat falling marks as a reason to investigate rather than a verdict on a child's ability. Schools can set aside a health day in their academic calendar, while the government can connect screening teams with hospitals and specialists.

The children who will be adults in 2035 are already sitting in Kashmir classrooms. Some are struggling with blurred vision, poor nutrition or developmental difficulties that nobody has recognised.

A child should not have to explain an illness he does not know he has.

The responsibility belongs to the adults who see him each morning, and to the institutions that have the means to look a little closer.

The author is a paediatrician-scientist and founder of SKIDS, a child health screening platform. He writes the weekly column Kashmir 2035 for Kashmir Observer.

SKUAST-K's Journey Towards Global Excellence

With better facilities, stronger research and an ambitious Vision 2030, the university has a strong foundation to become a centre of academic excellence and agricultural innovation.



Mohammad Ilyas Bhat

My recent visit to Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) took me back to a very different time in the university's history.

The campuses have changed, laboratories are better equipped and research facilities have improved considerably.

Having spent more than 37 years of my professional life associated with the university, I felt proud to see how far it has come.

At the same time, I found myself thinking about how the university can build on this progress and turn its physical growth into lasting academic excellence.

I remember when even basic research was difficult.

During my postgraduate studies, I worked on molecular markers for hybrid purity testing. Since SKUAST-K did not have the required laboratory facilities, I had to visit the University of Agricultural Sciences in Bengaluru to begin my work.

Several months passed before the necessary facilities became available at Shalimar, allowing me to complete my research.

Young researchers often had to find their own ways around these shortages.

I remember arranging liquid nitrogen for DNA extraction through my guide's brother. I also bought laboratory markers with my own money. Trying new research methods often meant finding the required materials and resources wherever possible.

But the university I visited recently is very different from the one I knew during those years.

Under the leadership of Prof. Nazir A. Ganai, SKUAST-K has made considerable progress in campus development, infrastructure and research facilities.

The growing interest among foreign students is encouraging, while its improved rank among national agricultural universities is another welcome achievement.

Scientists, teachers, researchers and other staff members have all contributed to this progress.

But good laboratories are only the beginning. The real test is the quality of research that comes out of them and how much it helps solve problems on the ground.

The university's progress should be visible in quality research papers, new technologies and practical solutions for farmers. Its research should reach fields and orchards, helping farmers improve their practices, increase production and earn better incomes.

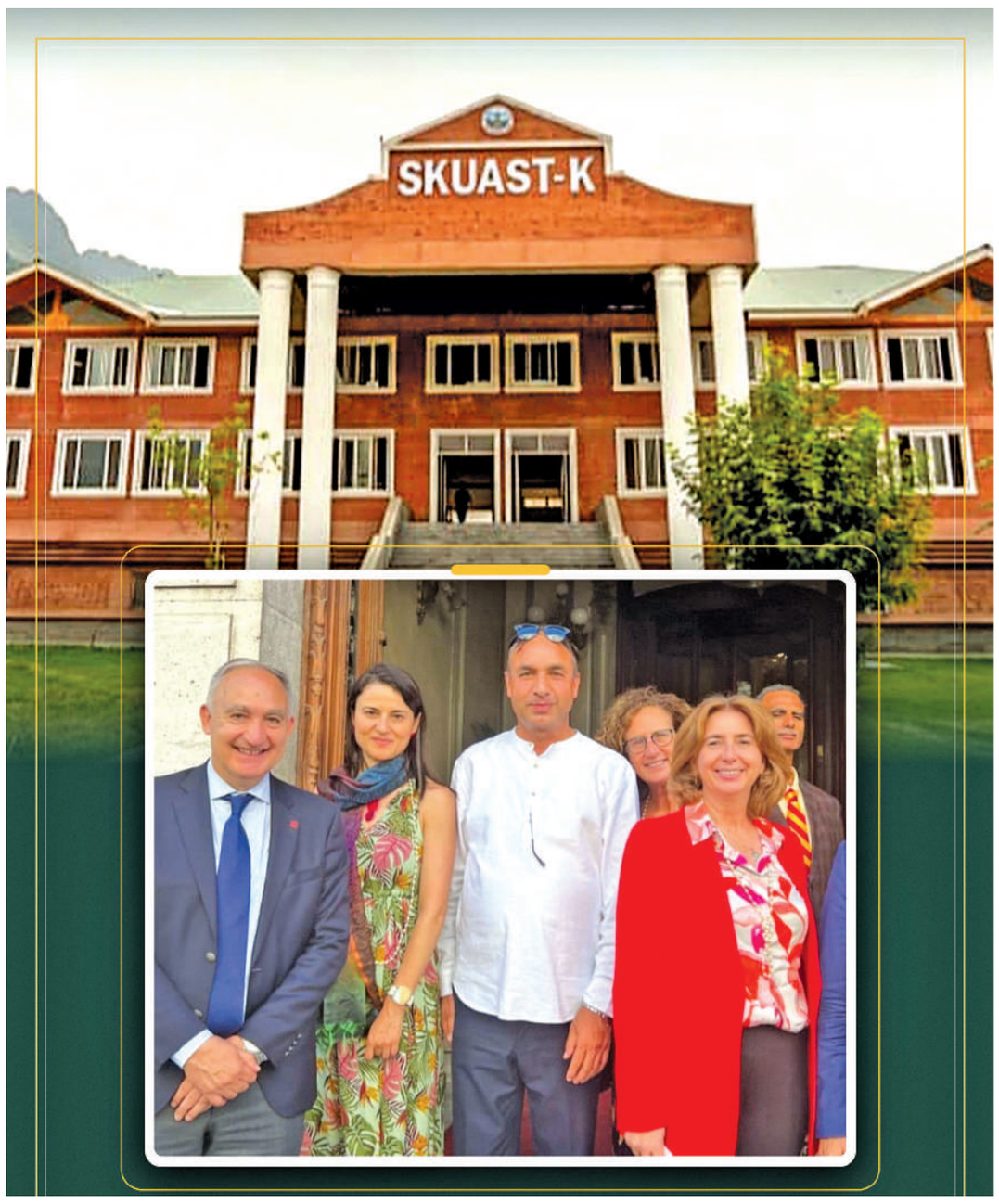
This is where SKUAST-K's Vision 2030 can play an important role.

The university aims to strengthen interdisciplinary learning, advanced research, innovation and international partnerships. It also wants to make a greater contribution to the economy, environment and society.

Achieving these goals will depend on good academic leadership, fair decision-making and a strong commitment to merit. The university also needs to give greater importance to recognising the people who have genuinely contributed to its growth.

If SKUAST-K wants to build a strong reputation beyond the country, it must create an ecosystem where talent is valued, good work is recognised and young researchers get the support they need.

There is much to build on. Over the past five years, the number of academic programmes has grown from six to 14, after remaining unchanged for nearly four decades. Student enrollment has crossed 6,000, including around 1,500 students from outside Jammu and Kashmir and nearly 50 from other countries.



The university has also secured more than 100 patents, pointing to growing work in research and innovation.

The launch of a B.Tech programme in Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture, in collaboration with IIT Mandi, is another important step. The programme aims to bring modern technology into farming and train students to use artificial intelligence to address problems faced by farmers.

THE UNIVERSITY'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WILL BE SEEN IN THE KNOWLEDGE IT CREATES, the scientists it trains and the difference its research makes to the lives of ordinary people.

SKUAST-K has also improved its position in national rankings, placing third among universities in the country and seventh in agriculture and allied sectors. It has received Grade A accreditation from the National Agricultural Education Accreditation Board.

Efforts to support student start-ups in food processing, horticulture, biotechnology and agribusiness have added to this progress.

I remain proud of what SKUAST-K has achieved. The difference between the limited facilities I had during my postgraduate years and the laboratories I saw on my recent visit is remarkable.

After more than three decades at this institution, I want to see young researchers work with better facilities and greater opportunities than we had.

I want their research to gain recognition beyond Kashmir and, more importantly, reach the farmers who can benefit from it.

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

A Little Town With a Lot to Give

Gool may be away from the popular tourist circuit, but its forests, mountain landscapes and natural springs make it a memorable destination.



Syed Aijaz Shah

The road to Gool winds through the hills of Ramban like a forgotten thread, stitching together forests, small homes, and the hush of mountains that seem to listen more than speak.

In this corner of Jammu and Kashmir, where the air grows sweeter and the summers softer, Gool sits, not in a hurry, not trying to be seen, just there, as it has always been.

When I first heard about the town, it was a passing mention, the kind of place people recommend with a wave of the hand, half expecting you won't go.

But something about it called me. Maybe I was looking for air that didn't burn in June. Maybe I was just tired.

The valley had been wilting under a hard sun. Srinagar was gasping at thirty-five degrees, the streets thick with dust and restlessness.

In Gool, I was told, the breeze still ran cool across the meadows, and the forests still smelled of pine.

I packed light and left for a place I had only heard in stories. What I found was something I had not known I was missing.

The days in Gool do not follow the same rhythm as the cities. They stretch and soften.

The mornings arrive with a thin gold light that falls over the hills and slips into the streams. The evenings walk in slowly, the air growing tender, the sky folding itself in a soft blue-grey.

The pine trees lean over the paths, the leaves whisper under your feet, and the meadows seem to hold their breath as you pass.

One afternoon I wandered toward Ghora Gali, where the grass opened up in wide, gentle patches between thick forests. I sat there for hours, listening to the birds and the faint rustle of wind moving through the trees. There was no rush to leave. The place seemed to know that.

Further along, about ten kilometers from Gool, the road led me to Dagantop, a place that knows how to fill your eyes.

It was like standing on the edge of a green sea, the meadows rolling out in soft waves, stitched with wildflowers and brushed by air that carried the sharp, clean scent of the mountains.

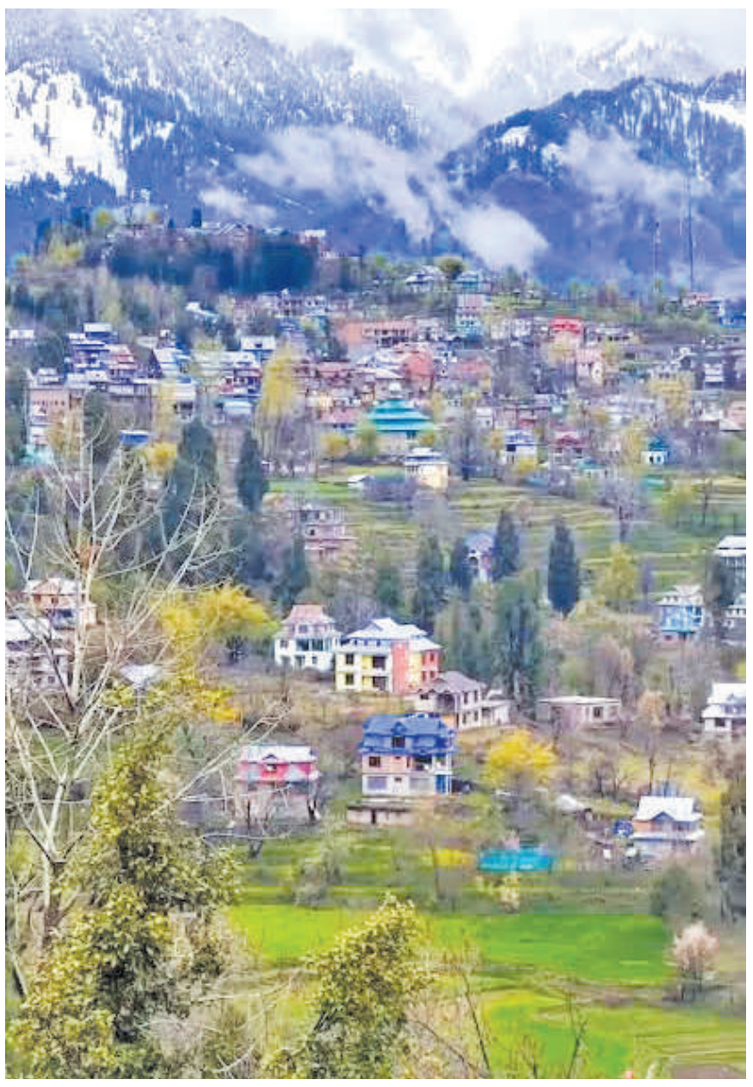
In the distance, the folds of hills rose and fell like the slow breathing of the earth. They say in winter, the place transforms, thick with snow, alive with sledges and skiers.

But in June, it felt like standing inside a story where the pages turned with the wind.

Some places in Gool are not known for grand views, but for the way they let you be still. Rama Kunda is like that, a small space tucked into the lap of the hills, where the trees stand tall and close.

There, you can sit with your thoughts and let them settle, like dust in a glass of water. You don't need to speak. The place understands.

On the last day, I found myself at Tatta Pani, where warm sulphur springs bubble up from the earth, known to soothe aching joints and tired muscles.



People come here from nearby villages, from towns further away, to feel the water on their skin, to lean into its slow medicine. I let my feet sink into the warmth and watched the way the steam curled up into the air, soft and steady, as if the ground itself was breathing.

The places we stayed became part of the memory. In Gool, we spent our nights at a small Forest Hut, where the scent of pine slipped in through the windows, and the air was fresh enough to wake you before dawn.

In Sangaldan, the Farooq Naik Guest House welcomed us with simple comfort: a room that felt like it belonged to the hills, not borrowed from somewhere else.

But places, no matter how beautiful, become something more because of people. My brother-in-law, Syed Abid, made sure of that. His warmth, his careful planning, his small kindnesses stitched the trip together in a way that no guidebook could.

His team, Bashir Sahib, Amir, moved like old friends, making sure every path we took, every meal we had, felt like it had been waiting for us. In their company, I was not a visitor. I belonged.

Gool is not a place that calls attention to itself. It is not loud. It does not clamor for tourists. But it holds something rare: the ability to make you slow down, to feel the air, to see the way light falls on grass, to hear the story of a stream as it moves over stone.

When I left, I carried more than just pictures. I carried the shape of mornings spent in meadows, the sound of crickets in the dark, the touch of warm springs on tired feet, and the memory of a place that does not ask you to be more, only to be present.

Some places you visit. Some places stay with you. Gool, for me, is the latter.

— The author is a teacher at the GMS, Hardushiva. He can be reached at syedaijazshah601@gmail.com.

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KASHMIR OBSERVER®
SRINAGAR | THURSDAY | 26.11.2026

Bajaj General Insurance Partners with Lawyered to Bring 24x7 Legal Assistance to Motor Policyholders Across India

Observer News Service

Srinagar, Nov, 25: Bajaj General Insurance Limited (formerly known as Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited), one of India's leading private general insurers, today announced its partnership with 'Lawyered' to introduce LOTS (Lawyer On The Spot), a 24x7 roadside legal assistance add-on for its motor policyholders. The initiative is aimed at addressing an important gap in the motor insurance experience by providing customers access to legal guidance and on-ground assistance when they encounter legal or procedural challenges following a road accident or other roadside incidents.

Through LOTS, policyholders can access round-the-clock legal guidance on police procedures, FIRs, vehicle detention, traffic challans and related documentation. Where physical intervention is required, customers can also access support from a lawyer through Lawyered's nationwide network.

The service is supported by Lawyered's nationwide network of over 80,000 empanelled lawyers, with coverage across 98% of India's PIN codes. A round-the-clock response desk and case tracking mechanism further support customers through the assistance process.

Speaking on the announcement, Mr. Amarnath Saxena, Chief Technical Officer – Commercial, Bajaj General Insurance, said, "The value of an insurance proposition should be measured not only by the protection it offers against financial loss, but also by how effectively it supports customers when they encounter unexpected challenges. For a motorist facing a legal situation on the road, the absence of timely and credible guidance can turn an already difficult situation into a far more complex one. Through our partnership with Lawyered, we are extending access to qualified legal assistance to our motor policyholders, wherever they are in the country.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

65 Foreign Terrorists

foreign terrorists are operating in the Jammu region, particularly in the remote and mountainous areas of Poonch, Rajouri, Kishtwar and Doda, where dense forests and difficult terrain provide cover and make tracking operations challenging.

The latest assessment suggests that Jammu and Kashmir has no listed active local terrorists following the killing of Lateef Bhat, a Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist, in an encounter in Kulgam district on November 18. He was killed after an eight-day search operation by security forces.

Officials said the estimated number of terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir has declined from 91 in 2024, which included both foreign and local terrorists, to around 65 at present, comprising only Pakistani terrorists.

The sources, however, clarified that the figure is based on assessments by multiple intelligence and security agencies and may vary as terrorists frequently change their locations to evade surveillance and security operations.

The decline in local militancy has marked a shift in the security situation in Kashmir, although the presence of foreign terrorists continues to remain a concern, particularly in the forested belts of the Jammu region.

Pakistan-based terror outfits, primarily LeT and JeM, have been responsible for several major attacks in India, including the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2016 Uri attack and the 2019 Pulwama bombing. Security agencies have repeatedly flagged cross-border infiltration and logistical support networks as key factors sustaining terrorist activity in Jammu and Kashmir.

The issue of the remaining foreign terrorist presence also figured in the recent remarks of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who expressed confidence that Jammu and Kashmir would soon become terror-free.

Addressing the passing-out parade of probationary deputy superintendents of police, sub-inspectors and assistant directors of the Forest Protection Force at the Sher-i-Kashmir Police Academy in Udhampur on November 18, Sinha said only a handful of foreign terrorists remained in the Union Territory.

Officials indicated that multi-agency operations based on intelligence inputs would continue to target the remaining foreign terrorists. They cited the neutralisation of seven Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists, including a group led by Saifullah, in Kishtwar as an example of coordinated counter-terrorism efforts.

The group had reportedly infiltrated in April 2024 and was neutralised in a series of operations culminating on February 22 in the Chatroo area under Operation Trashi-I.

Despite the decline in the number of active terrorists, security agencies continue to focus on preventing infiltration, identifying support networks and tracking foreign terrorists operating in remote and difficult terrain.

According to available data, 135 terrorists were active in Jammu and Kashmir in 2022, including 85 foreign terrorists and 50 local terrorists. The number of active terrorists subsequently declined in 2023, reflecting a reduction in the overall terrorist presence in the region.

Security agencies have maintained that counter-terrorism operations, intelligence coordination and efforts to dismantle support networks remain central to preventing attempts to revive militancy in Jammu and Kashmir. (inputs from agencies)

Air Raid Mock

functional throughout the exercise.

The notice was issued by District Magistrate Anantnag Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, who appealed to residents to cooperate in making the exercise successful.

Land of Five Reasi

collected during the investigation indicated that the five individuals were attempting to sell their land, with the proceeds allegedly intended to finance terrorist activities in the area.

"The evidence collected during investigation reveals that these terrorists are attempting to sell their land (tabulated hereunder) and proceeds of such sale are intended to be used for furtherance of terrorist activities in the area," the DGP said in the order.

The individuals whose properties have been attached were identified as Mohd Qayoom, alias Abdul Qayoom, of Shadole in Mahore tehsil; Bashir Ahmad, alias Masoom, of Bidder; Shokat Ali of Hunder in Arnas tehsil; Manzoor Ahmad, alias Manzoor Hussain, of Khanti in Thuroo tehsil; and Imtyaz Ahmad of Thuroo.

Police said an investigation into a case registered in 2024 at Mahore Police Station revealed that the five alleged terrorists had crossed over to Pakistan to receive weapons training and were involved in attempts to disturb peace in the region.

On November 29, 2024, police received information about 30 alleged terrorists from the jurisdictions of Mahore and Chassana police stations who had reportedly gone missing between 1991 and 2003 and exfiltrated to Pakistan.

Following the information, a case was registered under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Explosive Substances Act and the UAPA.

According to the property details included in the DGP's order, the five individuals collectively own 27 kanals and 36 marlas of land.

The DGP accorded prior approval for attachment of the properties, treating them as proceeds of terrorism under Section 2(1)(g)(ii) of the UAPA.: Jammu and Kashmir Police has attached over 27 kanals of land belonging to five Reasi residents suspected of having exfiltrated to Pakistan for arms and ammunition training and allegedly attempting to revive terrorist activities in the region.

Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat approved the attachment of the properties under Section 25 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, through an order issued on November 19.

According to the order, evidence collected during the investigation indicated that the five individuals were attempting to sell their land, with the proceeds allegedly intended to finance terrorist activities in the area.

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Kashmir Shivers As

Budgam and Awantipora recorded minus 2.4 degrees each, while Gulmarg settled at 0.0 degrees and Sonamarg at 0.3 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu division, Bhaderwah was the coldest at 3.2 degrees Celsius. Udhampur recorded 6.0 degrees, Poonch 6.1 degrees, Samba 7.4 degrees, Reasi 7.5 degrees and Ramban 7.7 degrees. Kishtwar settled at 8.5 degrees, Banihal at 8.9 degrees, Jammu city at 9.8 degrees, Katra at 10.2 degrees, Kathua at 10.4 degrees and Batote at 10.6 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif Keng said dry weather conditions were likely to prevail across the region for about a week, with skies remaining mostly sunny to partly cloudy.

The Meteorological Department has also forecast generally dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir until November 30 and December 1, with shallow to moderate fog likely in several areas.

Daytime temperatures are expected to gradually decline from around 15-16 degrees Celsius to nearly 12 degrees Celsius by early next week. Night temperatures are likely to remain low, with minimum temperatures dropping below freezing at several colder locations and higher reaches.

The department reported no rainfall or snowfall at any weather station across Jammu and Kashmir during the past 24 hours.

Sheshnag Project

allow anyone to compromise the environment," he said.

The PDP, meanwhile, questioned the restrictions on Mehbooba Mufti's visit to the site. Party leader Iltija Mufti asked why her mother was not being allowed to visit the area if everything was in order. The party also raised concerns over the presence of heavy machinery in the ecologically sensitive region.

PDP MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi said human intervention in Sheshnag's fragile terrain was alarming and could adversely affect its ecosystem.

Peoples Conference president and MLA Sajad Lone cautioned that the political confrontation between the NC and PDP could overshadow the actual environmental concerns.

Describing Sheshnag as an "ecological disaster", Lone called for a scientific assessment of the situation, arguing that the issue should be examined on the basis of environmental evidence rather than political rhetoric.

Congress leader Tariq Hameed Karra also sought clarity on the nature of work being undertaken at the site. He warned that construction activity and vehicular movement could cause damage to the fragile ecosystem.

CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami expressed concern over the alleged environmental damage and called for transparency and adequate safeguards to protect the ecologically sensitive area.

Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, meanwhile, said conclusions should not be drawn until a proper inquiry establishes the facts.

The controversy has brought the environmental sensitivity of the Sheshnag region into focus, with political parties seeking clarity over the nature of work, the approvals granted and its possible ecological consequences.

While the NC has said the government would take action if violations were established, other parties have stressed the need for transparency and an independent, scientific assessment of the alleged environmental impact.

Sports Build

with year-round training opportunities and help them pursue excellence in disciplines such as badminton, basketball and table tennis, irrespective of weather conditions.

He expressed confidence that the facility would nurture future Olympic aspirants, military leaders and nation-builders, and called upon the school administration and coaching staff to ensure its optimum utilisation.

The Lieutenant Governor said India's future was in safe hands, expressing confidence in the younger generation and observing that the country looked towards its youth as future soldiers, civil servants, scientists, sportspersons, healthcare professionals and nation-builders.

He emphasised that success in any field depended on character, discipline, hard work and commitment to national service. He also paid tribute to Armed Forces personnel who laid down their lives for the unity, sovereignty and integrity of the country.

Congratulating ICICI Foundation for establishing the arena through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support, Sinha said nation-building was a collective responsibility involving the government, educational institutions, industry, society and citizens. He expressed hope that similar partnerships would benefit educational institutions, particularly in remote areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Recalling the vision behind the establishment of Sainik Schools, he said these institutions had played an important role in nurturing leadership, discipline, national unity and commitment to the Armed Forces. He urged cadets to uphold this legacy through their conduct, hard work and achievements.

Referring to India's growing achievements in international sports and initiatives such as Khelo India, the Lieutenant Governor expressed confidence that some of the cadets present could one day represent the country at the Olympic Games.

He called upon the cadets to follow five guiding principles: dream big, work hard with honesty, embrace teamwork and sportsmanship, maintain physical and mental well-being, and regard the military uniform as a symbol of service and sacrifice.

"The uniform is not merely a symbol of authority and honour; it is a symbol of service, responsibility and sacrifice," he said, adding that cadets should always remember that their success lay in the success of the nation.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor laid a wreath at the Shaurya Samarak and paid homage to soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice for the country.

Among those present were Nagrota MLA Devyani Rana, Lt Gen Mohit Seth, General Officer Commanding, White Knight Corps, Capt (IN) Shibu Devasia, Principal, Sainik School Nagrota, ICICI Bank Zonal Head for Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Sandeep Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department Ram Niwas Sharma, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Vikas Kundal, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Minga Sherpa, representatives of ICICI Foundation, senior Army and police officers, faculty members and students.

Address Gap

delays are held accountable.

He observed that despite provisions for imposing penalties on designated officers for delays and deficiencies in service delivery, the gap between applications disposed of beyond prescribed timelines and the number of penalties imposed remained a matter of concern.

He directed the departments to examine the issue, including the number of applications reverted by them, and take corrective measures to strengthen enforcement of the Act.

Reviewing the appeal mechanism, Omar Abdullah called for greater utilisation of the Auto Appeal System and effective examination of appeals at the level of First Appellate Authorities.

He observed that several cases were being automatically escalated to the Second Appellate Authority without adequate examination at the first level, indicating that the concerned appellate authorities might not be aware of appeals pending before them.

The Chief Minister directed the General Administration Department to coordinate with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and introduce an alert mechanism to promptly notify First Appellate Authorities about pending cases, enabling their examination within the prescribed timelines.

Observing that the PSGA was among the pioneering initiatives in the country when introduced in 2011, he said several states and Union Territories had subsequently adopted similar frameworks, with some introducing further improvements.

He called for an independent assessment of Jammu and Kashmir's experience under the Act to identify gaps and areas requiring reform.

The Chief Minister also stressed the need to review and revise the existing penalty provisions, observing that 15 years was a sufficiently long period to reassess the framework and make it more effective in ensuring accountability.

Emphasising public awareness, he said that despite the legislation being in force for 15 years, awareness among citizens about their rights and the mechanisms available for securing time-bound public services remained inadequate.

He called upon the government to take ownership of the legislation and undertake sustained awareness campaigns to ensure that people understand its provisions and benefit from the services guaranteed under it.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister was informed that 517 services across various departments had been notified under the PSGA. Of these, 114 services had been integrated with the Auto Appeal System, while another 163 had been identified for integration.

The meeting was informed that, according to data available as of November 24, 2026, a total of 18.80 lakh applications had been received across districts under the Act, of which around 16.97 lakh had been disposed of.

The review also highlighted the need to integrate all notified services with the Unified PSGA Portal and reconcile departmental data across the PSGA and Auto Appeal portals in coordination with NIC to ensure consistency and real-time updates.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Ministers Ali Mohammad Sagar, Sakina Itoo and Javed Ahmad Rana, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Dr Sajjan Singh Yadav, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Finance Shailendra Kumar, Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu, Deputy Commissioners, Heads of Departments and other concerned officers.

Officers stationed outside Jammu participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

CM Pushes Wind,

Department to ensure time-bound completion of key projects.

Chairing a review meeting of the Science and Technology Department at the Civil Secretariat here, Omar Abdullah, who also holds the portfolio, reviewed the progress of major initiatives, ongoing projects and institutional activities, and stressed the need to remove implementation bottlenecks and ensure better utilisation of renewable energy infrastructure.

The Chief Minister was informed that 9,025 government buildings had been solarised under the CAPEX mode of the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, with a cumulative capacity of 96.10 MW.

He directed the department to expedite the solarisation of the remaining government buildings and resolve inter-departmental issues concerning unified billing, adoption of Virtual Net Metering benefits by DISCOMs and conversion of single-phase connections into three-phase connections for solar installations of 10 kW and above.

Reviewing the department's renewable energy roadmap for 2030, the Chief Minister was informed that it envisages 500 MW of Solar PV capacity, 100 MW of Small Hydro capacity and 5 MW across wind, hydrogen, biomass and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

He also called for exploring the potential of solar energy in water bodies under the PM Surya Sarovar Yojana and directed the department to expedite the implementation of the Model Solar Village initiative across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was informed that 62 Small Hydro Power projects, with a cumulative capacity of 135.15 MW, were currently in the development pipeline. The Chief Minister stressed coordinated efforts to secure the requisite forest clearances and No Objection Certificates (NOCs) within stipulated timelines to avoid delays in execution.

Omar Abdullah also reviewed the progress of key infrastructure projects, including the Industrial Biotechnology Park at Handwara, the Sub-Regional Science Centre and Science Innovation Dissemination Centre at Rajbagh, Srinagar, and the 240 kW Solar Agro-Photovoltaic pressure irrigation project at Patyari Cluster in Samba. He directed the department to expedite their completion.

Reviewing the Industrial Biotechnology Parks at Ghatti in Kathua and Handwara, along with the proposed Centre of Innovation and Excellence, he emphasised their timely operationalisation to promote research, innovation, entrepreneurship and employment generation. He specifically called for optimum commercial and research utilisation of the completed biotechnology park at Ghatti.

The Chief Minister also stressed the need to make the Sub-Regional Science Centre at Srinagar fully operational by attracting visitors through interactive scientific exhibitions. He called for strengthening science outreach programmes and developing facilities such as planetariums to promote scientific temper among young people.

Reviewing the proposed Bio-Farms for medicinal and aromatic plants, he emphasised ensuring their commercial viability and establishing stronger market linkages to create sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The presentation highlighted progress under the PM-KUSUM scheme, with the Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) having installed 4,891 solar agricultural pumps against an allocated target of 5,000, achieving 97.8 per cent of the target.

A 30 kW solar-powered electric vehicle charging station has also been commissioned at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora.

The meeting was further informed that the Jammu and Kashmir Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) Policy 2026 had been notified to promote circular energy initiatives under the GOBARdhan programme.

Under the RESCO mode, solarisation of 8,000 government buildings through JAKEDA, with a targeted capacity of 152 MW, and another 1,500 buildings through NHPC, with a target of 23 MW, has been proposed. A Power Purchase Agreement for 8 MW has already been signed for the Health and Medical Education Department in Jammu.

NLU, Skill Varsity

yet to become operational.

The government is yet to issue the requisite notification under Section 3 of the Jammu and Kashmir National Law University Act, 2018. The provision states: "The Government may, from time to time, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish one or more Universities under this Act, at such place and with effect from such date as may be specified in such notification."

In the same Budget speech, the Chief Minister also announced the establishment of the Jammu & Kashmir Skill and Entrepreneurship University (J&K SEU) to provide youth with skill-based education.

However, no visible progress has been made towards setting up the university so far.(KNO)

J&K Revises Monthly

The CTMFP was originally established in 2010 to provide financial assistance to cancer patients belonging to economically weaker sections of society.

The Finance Department had subsequently issued several circulars directing Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) to facilitate voluntary monthly salary deductions from Gazetted and Non-Gazetted employees for the fund.

According to the circular, although the expansion of the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY SEHAT scheme has covered a substantial portion of inpatient cancer treatment, patients continue to face financial difficulties in meeting expenses related to outpatient treatment, diagnostic tests and medicines.

The revision has been made to align the fund's assistance with the present requirements of cancer patients and strengthen financial support for economically weaker sections.

The Finance Department has directed that the deducted amounts be deposited into Account No. 0110010200000810 (CD 810), maintained at the J&K Bank's Civil Secretariat Branch.

All Administrative Secretaries have been requested to ensure that Drawing and Disbursing Officers make regular monthly deductions of Rs 40 and Rs 20 from the salaries of Gazetted and Non-Gazetted employees, respectively, with immediate effect.

Chain Of Custody

discrepancies in the seizure and handling of the alleged contraband, raising doubts about whether the substance examined by the laboratory was the same as that recovered from the accused.

The court observed that the recovery and seizure memos, according to the testimony of three members of the five-member naka party, had been prepared or signed at the police post one or two days after the alleged recovery. One of the witnesses had described the documents as pre-written.

It further noted inconsistencies in the dates recorded in the recovery memo, absence of a recorded seal impression at the spot and non-production of a specimen seal. The witnesses also gave contradictory accounts regarding whether the bag had been sealed at the spot, who had sealed it and in whose custody it remained.

The court also took note of the non-production of malkhana registers and the deposit receipt, besides the failure to examine the Judicial Magistrate who conducted the proceedings under Section 52-A of the NDPS Act.

It observed that the prosecution had also failed to establish the condition of the seals on the parcel when it was opened before the Magistrate and had produced no contemporaneous record containing distinguishing particulars of the bottles to match them with those examined by the laboratory.

Holding that these deficiencies directly affected the integrity of the seizure and the chain of custody, the court observed that they were not merely technical objections but created genuine doubt about the identity of the substance analysed by the laboratory.

"The gravity of the offence cannot be a substitute for proof," the court observed, adding that the stringent punishments under the NDPS Act and the reversal of the burden of proof in certain circumstances make strict establishment of foundational facts imperative.

Holding that the prosecution had failed to prove the charge beyond reasonable doubt, the court extended the benefit of doubt to the accused and acquitted him of the charge under Section 8(c) read with Section 21 of the NDPS Act.

The court directed that the accused be released forthwith if not required in any other case and discharged his bail and surety bonds. However, he was directed to furnish a personal bond of Rs 50,000 with one surety of an equal amount under Section 437-A CrPC, to remain in force for six months.

NLU, Skill Varsity

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Private Hospitals Flag ₹601 Crore Pending Dues Under Health Schemes

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and SEHAT scheme in Jammu and Kashmir is facing a prolonged financial crisis, with pending payments to empanelled private hospitals and dialysis centres reaching Rs 601 crore, raising concerns over the sustainability of healthcare services being provided to thousands of beneficiaries.

The scheme, which was introduced as a major healthcare support mechanism for economically weaker sections, has been facing persistent payment-related disruptions since March 2024, following the withdrawal of private insurance company IFFCO Tokio from its implementation process.

Before its withdrawal, IFFCO Tokio was responsible for scrutinising treatment claims and releasing payments to empanelled healthcare institutions under a three-year agreement with the State Health Agency (SHA). However, after reportedly incurring substantial losses, the company exited the arrangement in March 2024, following which hospitals and dialysis centres have been facing prolonged delays in the settlement of their claims.

Since then, healthcare providers have repeatedly flagged the mounting dues, alleging that irregular and inadequate fund releases have made it increasingly difficult for them to maintain uninterrupted services under the government-sponsored health insurance scheme.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Masood-ul-Hassan, General Secretary of the J&K Private Hospitals and Dialysis Centres Association, said the prolonged withholding of payments had pushed several healthcare institutions towards a serious financial crisis.



"Hospitals and dialysis centres are suffering because of delayed and pending payments, causing enormous financial strain. We are now on the verge of bankruptcy. Despite these difficulties, we are continuing to provide treatment under the scheme and making every possible effort to ensure that beneficiaries are not deprived of healthcare services. However, this situation cannot continue indefinitely, as we have already crossed our financial threshold," he said.

He alleged that the pattern of releasing funds intermittently, followed by another prolonged pause, had become a recurring feature since March 2024.

"Whenever hospitals raise their concerns and the issue gains attention, the government releases some amount for a few days, after which payments are stopped again. Following another month or so, a small amount is released and the process is repeated. This stop-and-go pattern has continued since March 2024," he said.

Dr Masood-ul-Hassan expressed hope that the newly appointed Health Secretary and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the State Health Agency would take the matter seriously and work towards resolving the crisis.

"We have high expectations from the new Health Secretary and the new CEO. We hope they will understand the gravity of the situation and take effective measures to ensure that the pending payments are cleared," he added.

The Association has appealed to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to personally intervene in the matter, direct the concerned authorities to clear the outstanding payments and ensure that the scheme is streamlined through a sustainable financial mechanism.

It has stressed that timely reimbursement to empanelled healthcare institutions is essential not only for their survival but also for protecting the interests of beneficiaries who rely on the scheme for access to affordable and quality healthcare.

The Association said the government must act urgently to prevent the financial crisis from escalating into a disruption of healthcare services, warning that continued uncertainty could undermine the very purpose for which the scheme was introduced—(KNO)

PG Doctors Meet Sakina Itoo Over Stipend, Pay Parity

Agencies



JAMMU: A delegation of postgraduate (PG) resident doctors, accompanied by members of Resident Doctors' Associations (RDAs), on Wednesday met Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo at the Civil Secretariat here to discuss their long-pending demands, particularly enhancement of stipends and revision of the existing remuneration structure.

Sources told KNO that during the meeting, the minister asked the delegation to meet her again around December 15 to review the progress made on their demands.

The meeting comes amid an ongoing strike by PG doctors and senior residents across Jammu and Kashmir, which began on November 19. The doctors are seeking a substantial hike in stipends, pay parity with counterparts in other states and premier medical institutions, and revision of the existing payment structure.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted the financial challenges and disparity in remuneration faced by resident doctors, urging the government to bring their stipends in line with the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission.

The doctors are also demanding enhanced remuneration for senior residents, a 20 per cent Non-Practising Allowance (NPA), and a uniform pay structure across all Government Medical Colleges and their associated hospitals in J&K.

Resident doctors said their demands have remained unresolved despite repeated representations to the authorities. They argued that their demanding clinical responsibilities, long working hours and round-the-clock patient care warrant a revision of the existing remuneration structure and correction of disparities with other states.

The delegation sought the minister's intervention for an early resolution of the issues. The follow-up meeting on December 15 is expected to provide an update on the government's response to their demands.

Meanwhile, resident doctors continue to await concrete assurance from the government, with the future course of their agitation likely to depend on the outcome of further discussions—(KNO)

MHA Examining Fresh Proposal For More Border Bunkers: Chief Secy

Observer News Service



RAJOURI: Chief Secretary Dr Sajjan Singh Yadav said on Wednesday said the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is examining a fresh proposal for additional border bunkers in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary while taking stock of security and developmental requirements of border residents at 'Vibrant Village' Bhawani in Rajouri district informed them that fresh proposal for additional border bunkers stands submitted to the MHA and it is at an "advanced stage of consideration."

Chairing a Block Diwas-cum-Public Grievances Redressal Camp in Nowshera block, the Chief Secretary also directed the Deputy Commissioner Rajouri to prepare a comprehensive development plan for the revered Maa Mangla Mata Shrine, recognising its religious significance and potential to promote religious tourism and ecotourism in the border region.

During the programme, residents and public representatives raised a range of demands concerning border infrastructure, tourism, road connectivity, healthcare, education, sports facilities, agriculture and livelihood opportunities.

On the development of Maa Mangla Mata Shrine, the Chief Secretary directed the Deputy Commissioner to prepare a comprehensive and detailed development blueprint, keeping in view the shrine's religious importance and tourism potential.

Among the prominent demands raised by residents were granting shrine status to Maa Mangla Mata Temple, organising a Border Tourism Mela, promoting agriculture-linked ecotourism, double-laning of the Nowshera-Jhangar road, filling staff vacancies in educational institutions, constructing a sports stadium at Kalsian and establishing a dispensary and ambulance facility at Bhawani.

Residents also sought fixation of rates for maize and wheat seeds and adequate storage facilities for agricultural produce, besides other infrastructure and public service-related interventions in border villages.

Taking up the demand for sports infrastructure, Yadav directed the Deputy Commissioner to identify suitable land for the proposed stadium at Kalsian. He also observed that indoor sports facilities could be developed in schools with higher student enrolment and directed the administration to work out school-wise priorities.

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Dr Devansh Yadav, DIG Rajouri-Poonch Range Sandeep Wazir, SSP Naresh Singh, ADDC Malik Zada Sheraz Ul Haq, ADC Rajouri Ravi Sihag, ADC Nowshera Pritam Lal Thapa, district and sectoral officers, public representatives and a large number of local residents attended the programme.

South Kashmir Chemists Call For Leadership Reforms

Concerned members say the leadership selection lacked a wider mandate and have called for democratic elections to restore confidence in the association.

KO Web Desk



Srinagar: A growing dispute over the leadership of the Anantnag Chemists & Druggists Association (ACDA) has prompted members of the pharmaceutical trading community to demand transparent elections and a greater say in how the organisation is run.

The disagreement centres on the formation of the association's core committee and executive body, as well as the distribution of portfolios. Several members say decisions about the new leadership have moved ahead without consulting the wider membership, raising concerns about representation and the legitimacy of the process.

Two communications from the Jammu and Kashmir Chemists and Druggists Association have added to the confusion.

The first, dated July 6, 2026, and bearing reference number JKCDA/KP/024, outlined the selection process. A subsequent memorandum of understanding, dated September 17 and referenced JKCDA/KP/028, was circulated after a considerable delay.

Members say the documents have raised questions about who authorised the process and how the decisions were made.

They argue that the two factions brought together to form the MEMO had no clear mandate from the wider ACDA membership to select office bearers, executive members or assign portfolios. Several members of the respective executive bodies, they say, were neither involved nor consulted.

The arrangement has faced further opposition following the withdrawal of support by a substantial number of members and executive members. Their objections were made public through a notification circulated on September 30, 2026.

The dispute has renewed calls for the association to follow a clear constitutional framework. ACDA has existed for several decades, and members say its leadership should follow established rules rather than temporary arrangements made between groups.

They want a written constitution that defines membership, eligibility, representation at tehsil and district levels, election procedures and the tenure and responsibilities of office bearers. "It should also explain how the executive committee functions, how portfolios are assigned, how finances are managed and how internal disputes are resolved," said a member of the association. "Clear rules should govern resignation, removal, suspension and replacement of office bearers."

Members see transparent elections as the best way forward. They have called for a verified membership and voter list, advance notice, clear nomination rules and an impartial election committee. They also want secret ballots, proper counting of votes, public declaration of results and a process to address election-related complaints.

Their concern goes beyond who gets elected. They want an institutional system that continues to work regardless of changes in leadership or disagreements between factions.

The members have also called for greater consultation before the association takes decisions affecting pharmaceutical businesses. They say meetings should allow traders to express their views and influence decisions, rather than simply inform them about arrangements already made.

MMU Objects to Vande Mataram At J&K Waqf Day Event

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulama (MMU), an amalgam of religious organisations and institutions representing various schools of Islamic thought, has objected to the playing of Vande Mataram at the Waqf Day ceremony organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board here.

In a statement, the MMU said the fundamental and non-negotiable principle of Tawheed in Islam was the absolute Oneness of Allah, which prohibits associating any partner with Allah or attributing divinity to any person, object, land or creation. It said Islam encourages love for one's homeland but draws a clear distinction between loving one's country and worshipping or deifying it.

"Any expression or practice that attributes divinity to the motherland is contrary to the fundamental Islamic belief of Tawheed and is, therefore, un-Islamic and impermissible for Muslims," it said.

The MMU said the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has also clarified the Islamic position on Vande Mataram and strongly opposed its compulsory rendition on both religious and constitutional grounds. "It is highly regrettable and unacceptable that Vande Mataram was played at a function organised by the Waqf Board itself, an institution entrusted with safeguarding Muslim religious endowments and their sanctity," the MMU said.

"There was no legal obligation to play Vande Mataram simply because it was an official function, and playing it was optional. Yet the waqf board went ahead with it with utter disregard for the fundamental religious beliefs and sensitivities of Kashmiri Muslims, which has caused deep hurt and anguish among people," it added.

The MMU also expressed "grave concern" over the "increasingly routine inclusion of Vande Mataram" at official governments functions across Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir, "despite the well-known religious reservations of Muslims".

Such imposition disregards their religious convictions and constitutional rights and deepens distrust and alienation, it added.

It said it was deliberating on seeking legal opinion on the issue and would submit a formal representation to the concerned authorities, seeking an end to what it termed the forcible imposition of Vande Mataram at government functions, educational institutions and other public events in Jammu and Kashmir.

Muhammad Shahraan Wins Int'l Gold In Taekwondo

Agencies

SRINAGAR: At just eight years of age, Muhammad Shahraan from Srinagar has brought sporting glory to Jammu and Kashmir, clinching a gold medal at the 1st India International Open Taekwondo Championship 2026 in Pune, Maharashtra.

Competing in the under-24 kg category, the young martial artist defeated two opponents in successive bouts to claim the top spot at the championship, being held from November 20 to 25 at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune.

Shahraan first defeated Aariz Saud Ahmad of India SKYE before overcoming Kabir Thakur of Maharashtra in his second bout to secure the gold medal.

Speaking after his victory, Shahraan said that his daily practice and hard work finally paid off. "I am very happy that I could win this gold medal. I practise for at least four hours every day, and today all that hard work has brought me this moment. I am thankful to my coaches, the association and my parents, who have always stood by me and encouraged me," he said.

Union Home Secretary, Director IB To Visit J&K Today

JAMMU: Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and Director Intelligence Bureau Mahesh Dixit are scheduled to visit Jammu today to attend a high-level security review meeting, sources said.

Sources said that the meeting will be attended by chiefs of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), senior officers of J&K Police, intelligence agencies and other security officials.

The meeting is expected to review the overall security situation in the Union Territory, including counter-terrorism strategies and measures to further strengthen the security grid.

"The measures to eliminate the remaining foreign militants, and the preparedness of security forces for the coming months are also expected to come up for discussion," the sources said.

The meeting assumes significance as it comes days after the killing of two Special Police Officer (SPO) by terrorists in Kishtwar.

It also comes against the backdrop of a claim by the Home Ministry that the last local terrorist operating in Jammu & Kashmir has been neutralised—(KNO)

HC To Celebrate Constitution Day Today

SRINAGAR: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh will celebrate Constitution Day Thursday by organising a collective reading of the Preamble to the Constitution across its Jammu, Srinagar and Leh wings, besides all district and taluka court complexes in the twin Union Territories. The Preamble reading ceremony will be held at 10:15 AM sharp on November 26, according to an order issued by Registrar General M.K. Sharma.

The Chief Justice or the senior-most Judge will lead the ceremony at the High Court wings in Jammu and Srinagar, respectively. The Principal District Judges will lead the proceedings at their respective district headquarters, while the senior-most Judicial Officers will lead the ceremony at taluka courts.

At the Leh Bench, the Judicial Officer overseeing its day-to-day functioning will make the necessary arrangements and lead the reading of the Preamble, the order says. The Registrars Judicial of the Jammu and Srinagar wings have been directed to make necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the ceremony.

The order further directs that photographs and details of the Preamble reading ceremony and other events organised to mark Constitution Day be shared on the respective offices' social media handles to ensure wider publicity. (KO Correspondent)

MC Baramulla Holds Zero-Waste Session On Solid Waste Management Rule

BARAMULLA: Municipal Council (MC) Baramulla, in collaboration with Saint Joseph Higher Secondary School, organised a capacity-building session on solid waste management, focusing on awareness and compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0.

According to a handout, the session aimed to sensitise stakeholders about waste segregation, scientific disposal practices and their responsibilities in ensuring effective solid waste management across the town. A key highlight of the programme was its zero-waste approach. MC Baramulla introduced edible cups for refreshments to eliminate single-use plastic and disposable paper waste.

The technical session was conducted by Swaaha Capacity Building Expert Tabraiz Hussain Madani, who spoke on modern waste segregation techniques, scientific waste disposal, and the roles and responsibilities of Urban Local Bodies and other stakeholders under the updated regulatory framework.

The programme was attended by the MLA, Chief Executive Officer of MC Baramulla, Swachhata Ambassadors, representatives of the Traders Federation, local hoteliers, sanitation workers and members of the educational community.

Students and faculty members from Government Degree College Boys Baramulla, Government Girls Higher Secondary School Baramulla, Saint Joseph Higher Secondary School and other educational institutions also participated.

During the event, Swachhata Ambassadors were felicitated for their contributions to sanitation awareness, while Green Campus Certificates were awarded to participating educational institutions in recognition of their efforts to promote environmentally responsible practices on their campuses. (Observer News Service)

Admin, Police, Media Come Together at 'BWJA Conclave'

BARAMULLA: The Baramulla Working Journalists Association (BWJA) on Wednesday organised a Coordination Conclave here in North Kashmir bringing together the district administration, police, media fraternity, civil society and representatives of various sectors.

In a statement issued, a BWJA spokesman said that around 180 participants attended the conclave. "Aim of the event was to strengthen coordination and promote constructive engagement on public issues," he added.

The spokesman said that the conclave was attended by Deputy Commissioner Baramulla S.F. Hamid, Additional Deputy Commissioner Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, SSP Sopore Neha Jain, Additional SP Baramulla Fahad Tak, DySP Headquarters Shahjahan Choudhary and District Information Officer Baramulla.

Prominent media representatives, included KPS Editor-in-Chief Raja Mohi-ud-Din, KNO's Nasir Azam Khan, Zeeshan Mohi-ud-Din of JK Revolution and Wajahat Farooq, Chairman Save Youth Save Future, were also present.

Representatives from civil society, trade and industrial associations, religious scholars, the Bar Association and senior citizens also participated in the event.

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla S.F. Hamid appreciated BWJA for organising the conclave and stressed the importance of strengthening coordination between the administration and media fraternity.

He highlighted the media's role in creating public awareness, disseminating information and highlighting people's grievances before the authorities, emphasising the need for constructive dialogue and cooperation for effective governance and timely redressal of public issues.

SSP Sopore Neha Jain underscored the importance of a healthy working relationship between police and media, stressing responsible journalism, factual reporting and dissemination of verified information. She said better coordination and mutual understanding could help counter misinformation, strengthen public trust and contribute towards maintaining peace and public order. (Observer News Service)

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my wards name from old name: Syeda Zujaj Fatima New name Syed Zujaj Fatima in future. She will be known as New Name Syed Zujaj Fatima.
If anybody is having any objection he/she my contact passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be entertained.

US Proposes 17% Tariffs on Goods from India

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON: The US on Wednesday proposed 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods in the absence of a trade deal, citing excess industrial capacity, sustained market access barriers and inadequate labour protection that harm American companies.

The US Trade Representative (USTR) said the tariffs on India would amount to 17 per cent if it agrees to a trade deal with America. The fresh tariff proposal follows Section 301 investigations launched by the USTR in March targeting 16 economic jurisdictions.

The USTR proposed tariffs of up to 20 per cent to 35 per cent on other targeted economies, though lower rates apply to trading partners with deals in place.

The EU, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Switzerland face 15 per cent tariff rates, inclusive of standard import duties. Vietnam would face tariffs of 20 per cent if the trade deal is finalised.

"For decades, many of our trading partners have adopted industrial strategies built on targeting manufacturing, wage and labour suppression, financial and other support, non-market economy inputs, and other market-distorting practices that tilt the trade balance in their favour while eroding America's manufacturing base," said USTR Jamieson Greer.

"India generates trade surpluses in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, steel, and ICT goods, revealing dependencies on Indian manufacturing in certain key sectors," the USTR said in its report on 'India's Acts, Policies, and Practices Relating to Structural Excess Capacity and Production in Manufacturing Sectors'.

These new tariffs would not be added to existing ones aimed at combating forced labour or certain sector-specific tariffs, a senior US official said.

The USTR has decided to schedule public hearings on its proposals on January 25 and sought written comments from interested persons by January 5.

The Office of the USTR has been analysing for several months whether 16 jurisdictions have policies that favour surplus production, a practice that drives down prices and harms US industry.

The investigation began last March, after the Supreme Court overturned the indiscriminate trade levies imposed by the Trump administration invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

After that reversal, the USTR opened two investigations based on Article 301: one directed at 60 jurisdictions (about a hundred countries) for violating export regulations on forced labour; and the other against 16 jurisdictions for promoting surplus production.

India and the US are negotiating an interim bilateral trade agreement after the framework they had finalised in February went back to the discussion board with the Supreme Court striking down the IEEPA tariffs imposed last year.

Pharmacy Council Warns Against AI-Driven Prescriptions

Press Trust Of India

INDORE: Cautioning against the trend of prescribing medicines based on artificial intelligence suggestions, the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) on Wednesday said the government should bring strict regulatory provisions to prevent the uncontrolled use of AI in this area.

Jashubhai H Chaudhari, Vice-President of the PCI, also called for stringent regulations governing online pharmacies.

"AI is very helpful in education and many other fields, but it cannot be blindly trusted in diagnosing diseases and selecting medicines without the advice of a qualified doctor or a pharmacist. The government should enact strict regulatory provisions to control the use of AI in this area," Chaudhari told PTI in Indore.

Responding to a question, he said the PCI does not support the concept of online pharmacies because it is not possible to physically verify whether or not a registered pharmacist is dispensing medicines to customers.

Chaudhari stressed that there should be strict regulations for online pharmacies, and the PCI has periodically submitted its suggestions to the government in this regard. The PCI is a statutory body under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The council, constituted in 1949, regulates pharmacy education and the profession.

The PCI Vice-President said antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is an emerging threat to the entire healthcare system and acts as an "invisible enemy" for patients.

Antimicrobial resistance is a condition in which bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites become less effective or no longer respond to drugs. This makes infections difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, serious illness, disability, and death.

Chaudhari said the PCI is raising awareness about the threat of AMR through various campaigns. He explained that students participating in these campaigns are being trained as "AMR Warriors" who will go among people and raise awareness about this threat.

Chaudhary said, "People should not take antimicrobial drugs, especially antibiotics, without consulting a doctor or pharmacist. If needed, the full dosage of these medications should be taken."

He informed that the PCI is planning at least eight state-level job fairs for pharmacy students across the country between January and March.

Chaudhari was in Indore to participate in an event organised by the PCI in collaboration with local organisations on the theme of 'Swastha Bharat: Combating Antimicrobial Resistance.'

SC Issues Notice to Delhi Police on Bail Pleas of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused, as of now, interim bail to activists Sharjeel Imam and Umar Khalid, who had challenged a Delhi High Court order denying them bail in a UAPA case related to the alleged "larger conspiracy" behind the February 2020 northeast Delhi riots.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notice to the Delhi Police and sought its response.

During the hearing, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Khalid, sought interim bail in the meantime.

Senior Advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for Imam, also sought similar relief on grounds of long incarceration. However, the bench said, "Not today".

It said it will hear the police before considering the prayer for interim bail.

The top court also directed that the matter be placed before the CJI on the administrative side for constitution of a three-judge bench for consideration.

In their pleas before the top court, the activists have sought bail, contending that the prosecution has failed to examine protected witnesses and that the one-year embargo imposed by the Supreme Court is nearing its expiry.

Violence erupted in northeast Delhi during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Imam was arrested in the case on August 25, 2020, while Khalid was arrested on September 13, 2020.

Netflix Pakistan Show Sparks Row, Ban Calls Grow in India

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD: Netflix's first Pakistani show "Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo" was at the centre of a snowballing row on Wednesday with cine bodies in India writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a ban and Pakistan minister Ahsan Iqbal using the hashtag #GrowUpIndia to push back and say this amounted to weaponising art and culture.

The trailer of the show, which reunites popular stars Fawad Khan, Mahira Khan and Sanam Saeed, dropped on Tuesday, but there is no clarity yet on whether the show's December 4 release also includes India or only Pakistan and other countries.

As voices joined in the debate from Pakistan and India, Netflix maintained silence.

"First weaponising sports, then water, and now art and culture. The All Indian Cine Workers Association is urging New Delhi to permanently ban Pakistani content. How insecure do you have to be to see a cricket match as a political threat and a television drama as a national security concern? India, grow up," Iqbal, the minister of planning in Pakistan, said on X.

"Let athletes play, let waters flow, let artists create, and let audiences decide what they watch," he added.

His message found resonance in Pakistan with several social media users speaking up. Actor Ayesha Omer wrote, "Let athletes play, let waters flow, let artists create."

In India, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) and Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) said the show's release in the country would be a violation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting advisory following last year's Pahalgam terror attack when it asked OTT platforms, streaming services and intermediaries to discontinue Pakistani-origin content.

While the FWICE, which says it has up to five lakh members, took up the issue on Wednesday, AICWA sent its letter on Tuesday.



In its letter, also marked to Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Netflix India, the AICWA termed Pakistan a "terrorist country" that will never wish well for India.

"After the Pulwama attack, AICWA banned Pakistani artists from working in the Indian film industry. After the Pahalgam attack, the Government of India also imposed restrictions on Pakistani artists and content.

"On 8 May 2025, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued an advisory asking all OTT platforms, streaming services and intermediaries in India to stop streaming Pakistan-origin content, including web series, films, songs, podcasts and other streaming media," it stated.

The AICWA, which states on its website that it is affiliated with the Maharashtra government and works for the rights of the people related to the film industry, went on to say that the release of the series would go directly against the spirit of that advisory and against the sentiments of the nation.

The FWICE, an umbrella body of 32 associations, asked PM Modi to intervene in the matter and direct the ministry and other concerned authorities to urgently examine the proposed release of the Pakistani series and take appropriate measures.

"We further request that the Government of India ensure that its existing directions and advisories concerning Pakistani-origin entertainment content are appropriately implemented and that all concerned digital streaming platforms and stakeholders adhere to the applicable governmental instructions," the organisation said in the letter.

Earlier, the FWICE had warned that it would "ensure the shoot of all the Netflix projects comes to a halt" if the series is released in India.

"We want to express that we have an objection to the Pakistani show. For us, the country comes first, and Pakistani artists are not welcome," its president B N Tiwari told PTI.

