

# Kashmir Convener



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**CBI nabs senior GM of Power  
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Attempt to malign my i  
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## Terrorism down by 70% in J&K, stone-pelting, shutdown calls now history: Amit Shah

● Says post-Pulwama attack, India among strongest defenders

After 34 years cinema halls reopened, Muharram processions were allowed in Kashmir

KC News Network

**NEWDELHI:** Reiterating that stone-pelting and shutdown calls by separatists in Kashmir are now a thing of past Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, terrorism-related incidents in J&K have reduced by 70%, and the region has witnessed a new wave of development and investment.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha during a discussion on the working of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) highlighted how the

abrogation of Article 370 has brought stability, economic progress, and security to the Union Territories of Jammu &

framers of the Constitution by removing a temporary provision (Article 370) Taking a dig at people who ask what



Kashmir and Ladakh.

He said that after the scrapping of Article 370 in 2019, the government led by PM Modi fulfilled the vision of the

has changed after the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K, the Union Home Minister said, "For 34 years, cinema halls remained closed in Kashmir, no

Muharram processions were allowed. Now, cinema halls are also open, Muharram processions are also taken out and people are living peacefully."

Referring to the successful conduct of the G-20 summit in Kashmir, the Home Minister said, "Kashmir hosting G-20 summit put it on the global tourism map." The Union Home Minister said that the zero-tolerance policy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government has yielded significant results. "Prior to 2014, terrorists used to enter Kashmir from the neighbouring country, they used to execute bomb blasts and murders there. There was not one festival which used to be celebrated without any worry. Central Governments had a flexible attitude. They used to be quiet and were scared of speaking... They were worried about their vote bank."

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## Misguided youths with change of heart will be given concessions: DGP Prabhat

● "Don't turn Qazigund issue into tribal versus non-tribal"

Jahangeer Ganaie

**PULWAMA/ SHOPIAN:** Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat on Friday said that youth who were misguided or had gone astray will be given concessions if they show genuine change of heart.

Addressing public darbars in South Kashmir, DGP Prabhat, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reiterated the commitment of the J&K Police to guide misguided youth back to the right path. "Youth who were on the wrong track, who were misguided are obviously facing problems... if they have changed, we will definitely give them concessions," he said.

Encouraging people to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, the DGP emphasized the importance of witness protection and intelligence sharing. "Provide us with information, and we will keep it confidential. There is no such village or mohalla where a person doesn't know what his neighbor is growing in his field or whether he is involved in drug peddling. We must control drug abuse by 100%. Providing information is a social responsibility," he said, as per KNO.

DGP Prabhat also stressed the role of parents in shaping their children's future, cautioning against excessive exposure to mobile phones.

"Parents should provide proper education and guidance to their children. When children don't spend time with their parents, they are more susceptible to negative societal influences. Mobile phones are powerful tools, but they can also lead to negative consequences," he warned.

Reaffirming the police's commitment to fighting drug abuse and crime, the DGP called for public support. "The police will continue its battle against

drugs and crime, and we hope people will stand with us in this fight," he said.

Highlighting the concerns of fruit growers, the DGP assured that steps will be taken to ensure that apple-laden trucks reach Azadpur Mandi in Delhi on time. "We will find a way out to address this



issue effectively," he added, acknowledging the significance of the horticulture sector in the region.

Referring to allegations of a police officer ill-treating a woman relative of a deceased (Gujjar) youth in Qazigund, the DGP informed that an inquiry committee has been constituted and asked to submit its report within ten days.

Urging the public to refrain from communalizing the issue, he said, "I request people not to turn this into a tribal versus non-tribal matter."

During his visit to Rajpora, DGP Prabhat assured the locals that their concerns would be addressed. He also announced that books would be distributed in the next civic

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## GoI Approves Three New Medical Colleges For J&K, Ladakh

KC News Network

**JAMMU:** The Union Government has approved three new medical colleges for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for expanding medical education in underserved regions.

According to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Jammu & Kashmir will get new medical colleges in



Udhampur and Handwara (Kupwara district), while Ladakh will have its first-ever medical college in Leh.

The initiative, is part of the government's broader plan to strengthen healthcare education by establishing 157 new medical colleges across India, with a focus on aspirational districts and border regions, the ministry said.

It said these new institutions aim to improve access to medical education and address the shortage of healthcare professionals in remote areas.

In addition to the newly approved colleges, Jammu & Kashmir already has five medical colleges in Anantnag, Baramulla, Rajouri, Doda and Kathua, established under earlier phases of the scheme.

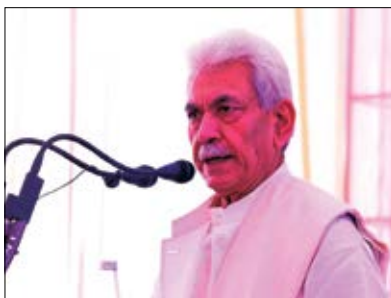
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## We must ensure equal opportunity for Divyangjan: LG Manoj Sinha

KC News Network

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today attended the Purple Fest 2025, at Raj Bhawan. The event was aimed at fostering awareness,

I am fully committed about their integration in every aspect of social, economic and cultural life," the Lieutenant Governor said.



The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the key initiatives taken by the government to create a supportive environment for the Divyangjan, fostering their innate potential and enabling them to lead a dignified life. "We must ensure equal opportunity for Divyangjan. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra

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## Delhi Court Junks Engineer Rashid's Bail Plea

KC NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Friday

dismissed the bail application of Lok Sabha MP from Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla, Engineer Rashid, in a terror funding case.

Additional sessions judge Chander Jit Singh said, "The bail plea dismissed."

Rashid has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after he was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

in the 2017 terror funding case.

The trial court had on September 10 granted interim bail to Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popular as Engineer Rashid, to enable him to campaign for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The judge also previously extended Rashid's interim bail till October 28 on the ground of his father's health, after the NIA said it had verified the documents

and it was not opposing the plea.

Elections to the 90-member J&K Assembly were held in three phases from September 18 to October 1.

The results were declared on October 8 in which the National Conference-Congress alliance attained a clear majority with 48 seats.

The Delhi High Court is also likely to consider on March 25 Rashid's plea to

attend the ongoing Parliament session. Rashid has challenged a March 10 order of the trial court, refusing him custody parole or interim bail to attend Lok Sabha proceedings till April 4. In the reply filed to the appeal on March 17, the NIA said Rashid couldn't be allowed to use his status as an MP to "get away from rigours of imprisonment".

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## Asia's largest Tulip garden set to open on March 26



KC News Network

**SRINAGAR:** With 1.7 million bulbs, Asia's largest Tulip Garden, located at the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains here, is all set to be thrown open for the general public on March 26.

However, as per the sources, there will be no grand event like previous year on the opening of the garden in the wake of the holy month of Ramadan.

Javid Masood, In-charge Tulip Garden, speaking to the news

agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will throw open the garden for visitors on March 26 after a ribbon-cutting function.

Pertinently, the garden witnessed a record-breaking footfall last year. The authorities have now increased the parking capacity to accommodate more rush of visitors.

"We are expecting a huge footfall of visitors this year also," Masood said, adding that 4.5 lakh visitors visited the garden last

year in just 30 days. "We are prepared to accommodate the record number of visitors this year as well."

He said 100 gardeners and casual labourers have made hectic efforts to complete all the processes and make the garden ready for the public.

With 1.7 million bulbs, the famous Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden will have two more varieties imported from the Netherlands this year.

The visitors can avail the benefits of e-tickets, the garden In-charge said.

Tulip Garden earned a spot in the World Book of Records (London) as Asia's largest in 2023.

In 2024, Asia's largest Tulip Garden experienced an extraordinary surge in tourism, with a staggering 4.45 lakh visitors flocking to witness its vibrant blooms, including approximately 2,000 from foreign shores

## Pvt universities for JK on cards

Higher Edu Deptt awaits official nod

Riyaz Bhat

**SRINAGAR:** The Higher Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir has framed a draft policy concerning setting up of Private Universities in the region.

The department says that following the approval from the concerned authorities, the policy will give an official nod for the establishment of private universities in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Education Minister Sakina Itoo in a reply to the questions in Legislative Assembly on Thursday said, "Higher Education Department has framed a draft policy concerning setting up of Private Universities in Jammu & Kashmir."

The minister further said that following approval from the competent authority, the policy will pave the way for the establishment of

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## CM laid roadmap for 24x7 electricity, but public support pivotal: Div Com Kashmir



KC News Network

**SRINAGAR :** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir VK Bidhuri on Friday said that the Chief Minister has laid the roadmap for 24x7 electricity, stating that public support is must to make it happen.

Speaking with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Bidhuri said that

help in reducing the damage to the transformers as well as fire incidents.

He also said that all arrangements are being made to ensure smooth celebrations of festivals.

On being asked about liquor ban, he said the issue doesn't fall under his jurisdiction but any government decision in this regard will be followed

## Centre has initiated implementation of unified pension scheme

KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI:** The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has notified regulations for operationalisation of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).

This follows the UPS notification in January this year by the Government of India for Central Government Employees covered under NPS. The regulations will come into effect from 1st of next month. "These Regulations enable enrolment of three categories of central government employees. The first category includes an existing central government employee in service as on 1st April 2025, who is covered under NPS while the second category includes new recruit in the central government services, who joins service on or after the 1st day of April 2025.

The third category includes a central government employee who were part

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# Seven aides of jailed Amritpal Singh remanded to 4-day police custody by Punjab court

AMRITSAR: Radical preacher Amritpal Singh's seven associates

weapons, and to conduct further investigations.

The seven brought back are Basant Singh of Daulatpura Ucha in Moga, Bhagwant Singh alias Pradhan Mantri Bajeki of village Bajeki in Moga, Gurmeet Singh Gill alias Gurmeet Bukkanwala of village Bukkanwala in Moga, Sarabjeet Singh Kalsi alias Daljeet Singh Kalsi of West Punjabi Bagh in New Delhi, Gurinderpal Singh Aujla alias Guri Aujla of Phagwara, Harjeet Singh alias Chacha of village Jallupur Khara in Amritsar and Kulwant Singh Dhalial alias Kulwant Singh of Rauke Kalan in Moga.

All of them were released from Dibrugarh Central Jail in batches during the last few days as their detention period in the National Security Act (NSA) expired.

Amritpal Singh and his associates have been in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the NSA for the past two years. He had fought the 2024 Lok Sabha polls as an independent and won from the Khadoor Sahib seat.

The radical preacher, who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was arrested in Moga's Rode village on April 23, 2023 following an over a month-long manhunt.

## Deeply shameful: Maliwal on Allahabad HC ruling in assault case



NEW DELHI: Rajiya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Friday slammed as "shameful" and "absolutely wrong" the Allahabad High Court ruling that actions like grabbing of breasts and breaking of string of a 'pyjama' do not amount to offence of rape.

Maliwal questioned the message such a ruling sends to society, particularly regarding crimes against children. "This is "deeply shameful and absolutely wrong. What message do they want to give to society? That a young girl can be subjected to such horrific acts, and it still won't be considered rape?" she told reporters outside Parliament.

Maliwal urged the Supreme Court to intervene immediately and take strict action against such judicial interpretations. "The Supreme Court should intervene in this matter without delay, and strict action must be taken," she said. The case involved an 11-year-old girl in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj who was attacked in 2021 by two men. The Allahabad High Court ruled that mere grabbing of breasts and breaking of the string of a 'pyjama' do not amount to offence of rape but such offence falls under the ambit of assault or use of criminal force against any woman with the intent to disrobe or compel her to be naked.

## CBI nabs senior GM of Power Grid Corp, KEC executive during bribe exchange; company V-P named in FIR

NEW DELHI: The CBI has arrested Uday Kumar, senior GM of Power Grid Corporation of India, for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 2.4 lakh from an executive of Mumbai-based KEC International to extend favours to the company, officials said on Friday.

Kumar, posted in Rajasthan's Ajmer, was nabbed late on Wednesday along with Suman Singh of KEC International in Sikar where both had agreed to meet for alleged exchange of the bribe amount, they said.

"The bribe was allegedly paid for extending undue favours in processing and passing of bills related to contracts of the PSU (public sector undertaking) awarded to the private company," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

The agency raided the premises where Kumar and Singh were caught red-handed during the bribe exchange. They were arrested in the early hours of Thursday after the completion of formalities, he said.

The officials said the FIR named KEC International and five individuals, including senior



executives of the company, as accused.

In addition to Kumar and Singh, the CBI has also named Jabraj Singh, KEC International's vice-president and head of transmission and distribution in North India, as an accused in the FIR.

The FIR also names Atul Agrawal, senior manager of finance and accounts at KEC International in Jaipur, and company employee Ashutosh Kumar as accused.

No immediate comments were available from the company.

The CBI spokesperson said in the statement, "It was alleged

that the accused public servant of Power Grid Corporation of India, while acting in connivance with accused representatives of the private company, was facilitating and extending undue favours in processing and passing of bills related to contracts of Power Grid Corporation of India awarded to the accused private company in lieu of illegal gratification.

"The agency conducted searches at the residential and the official premises of the accused in Sikar, Jaipur and Mohali, leading to the recovery of several incriminating documents and digital devices, according to the statement.

## ‘Attempt to malign my image, will reply legally’, says Aaditya Thackeray

(Disha Salian case)



NEW DELHI :Saurabh Rajput, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray refuted allegations levelled against him in connection with the death of Disha Salian and said he would respond to the charges legally. Thackeray said he would present his side in court as Salian's father has sought a fresh probe against the Shiv Sena leader in the case.

"Attempts are being made for the last five years

to malign my image. We will put forth our side in the court. We will give our replies (to the allegations) in the court," Thackeray told reporters in Mumbai, PTI reported. Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena also charged the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was behind the allegations and they were targeting the young politician.

Disha Salian, the former manager of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, died in 2020,

after falling off the 14th floor of a residential building in Malad. The Mumbai police had registered an Accidental Death Report (ADR) case. Six days later, Bollywood star Rajput allegedly committed suicide in his apartment in Bandra.

Satish Salian, father of Disha on Wednesday moved the Bombay High Court seeking a fresh probe into circumstances that led to his daughter's death. Salian sought registration of a fresh case against Aaditya Thackeray and a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the matter. In his plea, Salian charged, "The Mumbai police hastily closed the death as a case of suicide or accidental death without taking into account forensic evidence, circumstantial proof and eyewitness testimonies."

## Nadda Asks MPs To Ensure Health Check-Up For All Citizens In Their Constituencies Every Year



NEW DELHI: Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Friday appealed to all Members of Parliament to ensure a thorough health check-up of citizens in their respective constituencies every year for early detection of health issues.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Nadda said the government has started a campaign to conduct health check-up for all citizens aged 30 at the Ayushman Arogya Mandir. The free check-up is to detect high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer.

The minister said that ever since the campaign started, 35 crore people were screened, of whom 4.2 crore were detected with hypertension and 2.6 crore were found to be diabetic. Of the 29.35 crore people screened for oral cancer, 1.18 crore were detected with cancer, he said.

"Appeal to all of you, honourable members, to conduct a thorough health check-up for all every year," Nadda said, adding he was confident that the MPs will do their best.

The minister said that at present 372 day care cancer centres, 19 state cancer centres and 22 tertiary cancer centres are operating in the country.

He said all the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) have full-fledged cancer care centres with modern equipment, and that a super speciality hospital in Haryana's Jhajhar, with 1,400 beds, is one of the best cancer hospitals in the world.

Nadda said that as per the budget announcement, the government is going to set up one cancer day care centre in every district, where chemotherapy can be administered.

"This year, we are going to open 200 such centres across the country. The rest will be opened in the coming years," he said.

Replying to another question, Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said the government has disbursed Rs 3,635 crore through direct benefit transfer to tuberculosis patients.

She said each patient is given Rs 1,000 to buy nutrients.

## SC collegium gives nod for appointing 8 judicial officers as Gujarat HC judges

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna has approved the proposal to appoint eight judicial officers as judges of the Gujarat High Court.

The collegium, also comprising Justices B R Gavai and Surya



Kant, held its meeting on March 19. "The Supreme Court collegium... has approved the proposal for appointment of the following judicial officers as judges of the High Court of Gujarat – Liyakat Hussain Shamsuddin Pirzada, Ramchandra Thakurdas Vachhani, Jayesh Lakhanshibhai Odreda, Pranav Maheshbhai Raval, Mool Chand Tyagi, Dipak Mansukhlal Vyas, Utkarsh Thakorbbhai Desai and Rohenkumar Kundanlal Chudawal," said a statement uploaded on the apex court website. A separate statement said the collegium has approved the proposal for appointment of additional judges – Justice Sumeet Goel, Justice Sudeepti Sharma and Justice Kirti Singh – as permanent judges in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Saurabh Rajput murder

## Meerut Police reveal how school alumni group led to Muskaan Rastogi-Suhail affair

NEW DELHI: Saurabh Rajput, a Meerut-based former Merchant Navy officer was murdered on March 4 by his wife Muskaan Rastogi and her lover Suhail Shukla. Saurabh Rajput had quit his job and returned to India to spend some quality time with his wife and daughter. He wanted to resolve marital issues with Muskaan and start afresh. Sadly, his wife had other plans.

It is suspected that both Suhail and Muskaan used drugs. It was the 27-year-old woman who plotted to kill Rajput on his return to ensure that she will get to live her life with Suhail. Meanwhile, her lover reportedly hated that Rajput could stop them from using drugs together. The Meerut Police believe that Suhail had no role in planning the murder and was lured by his



lover to join the crime. Using a fake Snapchat profile, Muskaan convinced Suhail that his late mother wanted him to kill Rajput. Substance use had made Suhail the owner of a vulnerable mind and he fell for it, the cops believe. After successive failed attempts, Suhail and Muskaan finally managed to drug Saurabh Rajput and stab him to death. They reportedly cut his body into 15 parts and sealed it in a

drum using cement. Although she tried to mislead the victim's kin by sending messages from his phone, it didn't workout as the family grew suspicious of him not answering the calls.

When the UP Police brought in the lovers for interrogation over suspicion of foul play in Rajput's missing, the horrible crime was finally revealed.

How did Muskaan and Suhail meet? According to the probe

team, Suhail and Muskaan were schoolmates. They reconnected via WhatsApp in 2019 when an alumni group was formed, Times Of India (TOI) said in a report. After she fell in love with the man who was two years younger than her, Muskaan considered Saurabh Rajput a hurdle that needed to be eliminated. Muskaan and Saurabh tied the knot in 2016.

The love marriage was against the wish of his family and the scars never fully healed even years after the union. Thus, they lived in a rented accommodation ever since marriage. However, cracks began to develop between them over the years and this led to Muskaan starting her affair with Suhail. Muskaan believed she could exploit this gap between her husband and his family to believe the latter that he left for

## India fifth in Asia to experience temperature anomalies; Maharashtra, Mizoram worst hit

India ranked fifth in the top 10 countries in Asia with the highest average temperature anomalies, with Maharashtra and Mizoram being the worst hit according to new analysis by Climate Central - a non-advocacy, non-profit science and news organisation.

Indonesia was the worst hit in Asia. From December 2024 to February 2025, over 358 million people across 12 states in India experienced daily average temperatures that were strongly influenced by climate change for at least one-third of the season (that is, 30 or more days).

More than 150 million people in Maharashtra and Mizoram experienced average temperatures that were 1.6°C above their 1991-2020 normals, the highest across India.

These two states are followed by Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Goa,



Sikkim, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Increase in temperatures have ranged from 1.1°C to 1.6°C. Ladakh saw the lowest temperature anomaly at 0.1°C followed by Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi. This anomaly is calculated by taking into account a 30 year per capita average temperature.

Kerala experienced the most number of risky heat days - eight caused by climate change and

this was followed by Goa where five days were thus influenced.

In Maharashtra, Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Aurangabad, Nashik, Kalyan, Nagpur and Thane were the worst hit. Shimla and Raipur also fall in the list of top 10 Indian cities with the highest temperature anomalies.

The world over there is an increasing frequency and severity of heat events leading to dangerous heat exposure,

and this will only worsen if the burning of fossil fuels continues, the report cautions.

At least one in five people globally felt a strong climate change influence every day from December 2024 to February 2025. Nearly 394 million people were exposed to 30 or more days of risky heat added by climate change, 74 per cent of whom live in Africa.

Risky heat days are defined as days with temperatures hotter than 90 per cent of local temperatures recorded from 1991 to 2020. Of the 220 countries analysed in the report, in half the nations the average person experienced temperatures strongly influenced by climate change for at least a month. In 287 cities worldwide (of the 940 analysed), residents felt the influence of climate change on temperatures for 30 days or more.

## Have very good ties with India, but they are one of the highest tariffing nations: US President Trump

NEW DELHI: US President Donald Trump has said that while he has a "very good relationship" with India, New Delhi is "one of the highest tariffing nations of the world" and he is going ahead with his reciprocal tariffs on India from April 2.

In an interview to Breitbart News, when asked about his February 13 bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the White House, President Trump said:

"I have a very good relationship with India, but the only problem I have with India is they're one of the highest tariffing nations in the world."

"I believe they're going to probably going to be lowering those tariffs substantially, but on April 2, we will be charging them the same tariffs they charge us."

Asked about the India-Middle East-Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEC), a deal the US is keen to take forward, Trump said it was

a "group of wonderful nations" banding together "countering other countries that look to hurt us on trade", in an oblique reference to China.

"We have a powerful group of partners in trade," Trump said. "Again, we can't let those partners treat us badly, however. We do better in many ways frankly with our foes than we do with our friends."

"The ones that wouldn't be as friendly to us in some cases treat us better than the ones that are supposed to be friendly, like the European Union, which treats us terribly on trade."

"India and everybody would think of them as an ally. I can say the same for others. But this is a group of wonderful nations that is countering other countries that look to hurt us on trade."

Earlier this month, in an address to the US Congress President Trump had said that "India charges US auto tariffs higher than



100 percent", which he termed as "not fair".

President Trump, who had raised the issue of high Indian tariffs during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the White House last month and even during their phone call after his swearing-in, clubbed India along with China, and the European Union as among countries that charge "tremendously higher tariffs" on US products.

Trump said: "Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades, and now it's our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the European Union,

China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Canada, have you heard of them And countless other nations charge us tremendously higher tariffs than we charge them. "It's very unfair. India charges US auto tariffs higher than 100%." He announced the slapping of reciprocal tariffs from April 2.



# Govt Orders Probe into “21-Year Absence” of Bandipora Teacher

■ Monitoring Officers Also Under Scrutiny For Failing to Report

**SRINAGAR:** The Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) has ordered an in-depth inquiry into the 'unauthorized absence' of Arsulah Habib, a Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teacher from Primary School Aragam in Bandipora, who has reportedly not attended his primary duties of teaching for the past 21 years and instead managed to stay away for non-teaching purposes at CEO Office or DC Office Bandipora.

The department has also sought an explanation from the concerned monitoring and controlling officers who failed to report the prolonged non-teaching postings and subsequent absence from duties.

The issue came to light after Kashmir Convener reported about the teacher's absence prompting the Directorate to take immediate action.

"Whereas a preliminary joint report regarding the matter has been received from the District Vigilance Officer, Bandipora and Deputy Chief Education Officer Bandipora, perusal of which reveals that matter needs an in-depth inquiry, so that all relevant facts can be uncovered," reads the order issued by Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK).

Following the report, the DSEK appointed Hakeem Tanveer (JKAS), Joint Director (North) School Education Kashmir, as the Inquiry Officer. He has been tasked with conducting a detailed probe into the matter and submitting his findings within 10 days along with recommendations for further action.

"The matter requires an in-depth inquiry to uncover all relevant facts," the official order stated. The Director of School Education Kashmir has emphasized the need for accountability and has signalled possible action against those re-

sponsible for overlooking the teacher's absence for such an extended period.



In order to improve the monitoring mechanism of the schools, the zonal, District and divisional level committees have already been constituted by DSEK who were supposed to submit monthly reports about performance of schools including the attendance of teachers and the remarks of the team. "All the reports of these committees

are to be submitted to the IMW section of the Directorate (DSEK) for further course of action."

However, according to official sources, the said teams have not reported about the prolonged non-teaching assignments of the teacher in past.

Earlier Kashmir Convener had reported that the Deputy Chief Education Officer Bandipora, the District Vigilance Officer, and the concerned Cluster Head, visited Primary School Aragam on 17th March but found the teacher absent from his duties.

At Zonal level, Zonal Education Officer and Senior Most Head master of the Zone are supposed to visit the schools on every Monday and Wednesday while Senior Principal of the zone (Cluster Head) and Zonal Educational Planning Officer are assigned to inspect Schools on Thursday and Saturday.

According to the fresh Order, Joint Director (North) SED has been asked to also inquire why controlling/monitoring committees failed to report about his prolonged non-teaching postings and subsequent absence.

The inquiry report is expected to not only determine the reasons behind the teacher's prolonged absence but also establish lapses on the

part of officials responsible for monitoring school staff.

On Thursday, after Kashmir Convener reported about the issue, Joint Director (North) SED Tanveer and Cluster Head Aragam inspected PS Aragam separately and both found the teacher again absent from duties thus endorsing the claims made in the news report.

The case has drawn public attention, with many questioning how such a lapse could go unnoticed for over two decades. The findings of the inquiry will likely set a precedent for dealing with similar cases in the future.

Recently, the Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) issued an order canceling the deputation of teachers assigned to non-teaching roles. However, Kashmir Convener reported that, in Arsulah Bhat's case, the order was blatantly disregarded. He allegedly maneuvered his way back into the Deputy Commissioner's Office, defying the government's directive.

District Administration Bandipora and Chief Education Officer (CEO) Bandipora reportedly undermined government efforts to streamline the system and made all efforts to trash the directions of the government by providing cover to the teachers who have not attended a single class in the past two decades.

Following alleged pressure from DSEK, DC Bandipora modified the order on March 11, stating that the tasks assigned to Arsulah shall be in addition to his teaching duties.

However, despite the modification, Arsulah has not attended a single class. Students at PS Aragam told Kashmir Convener that they saw him once before the morning assembly, after which he left the school.

## Kashmir Timber Association Organizes Plantation Drive in Sumbal

**Bandipora:-** On the eve of the International Day of Forests, Kashmir Timber Association President Jameel Ahmed Dar organized a plantation drive at Irrigation Colony in Sumbal, Bandipora district, on Friday afternoon.

Spokesperson of the association said the initiative aimed to raise awareness about the importance of afforestation and environmental conservation. Several local residents, environmental enthusiasts, and members of the Kashmir Timber Association participated in the drive, planting saplings to promote greenery in the area.

Speaking to the media, Jameel Ahmed Dar said, "As you know, today, March 21, marks the International Day of Forests. On behalf of our association, I want to convey a message to our members: we should plant trees every year to help keep our environment clean. This will benefit future generations and contribute to a healthier society."

He emphasized the urgent need for collective efforts to combat deforestation and climate change. Highlighting the significance of trees in maintaining ecological balance, he urged the community to take proactive steps toward environmental preservation.

The plantation drive was widely appreciated by locals, who expressed their support for such initiatives to enhance the Kashmir's green cover.



## Airtel Launches Most Affordable International Roaming Packs for Seamless Global Connectivity

**SRINAGAR:** With the travel season in full swing, Airtel has introduced its most affordable international roaming packs, offering seamless connectivity across 180+ countries. With plans starting at just 133 per day, Airtel ensures that travelers can stay connected worldwide without worrying about multiple country-specific packs or connectivity disruptions.

Airtel's new international roaming plans provide enhanced data benefits, in-flight connectivity, and 24x7 customer support. The packs are designed for simplicity, allowing users to select a single plan based on their travel duration instead of purchasing multiple packs for different destinations and layovers.

Customers can activate the international roaming service through the Airtel Thanks app, the official website (<https://www.airtel.in/ir-packs/>), by visiting local Airtel stores, or at airport kiosks.

Key features of the new Airtel International Roaming Pack include One-pack solution for multiple countries, eliminating the hassle of buying separate plans, Auto-renewal feature for frequent travelers, Complimentary in-flight connectivity for packs with more than 30 days of validity, Full control via the Airtel Thanks app, allowing customers to manage usage, switch plans, and receive billing updates and Free 24x7 customer support at 9910099100, accessible from anywhere in the world.

Airtel has partnered with top telecom providers in key destinations, including the USA, UAE, UK, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Singapore, Canada, and Australia, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity for making calls, browsing, streaming, and sharing content.

With these new international roaming packs, Airtel aims to be the ultimate travel companion, enabling customers to explore the world while staying connected affordably and effortlessly.



## Hajj 2025: Kashmiri Women Face Official Neglect Amid Lack of Female SHIs

Saima Shafi Shares Last Years' Experience in an Open Letter to Hajj Committee; Demands Immediate Action

**SRINAGAR:** Kashmiri women embarking on Hajj this year are facing a major setback as not a single female State Hajj Inspector (SHI) or trainer has been appointed to assist them, raising concerns over gender discrimination and negligence by the authorities.

In an open letter to the CEO of the Hajj Committee of India, Saima Shafi, a Kashmiri female who performed Haj last year, popularly known as "Kralkoor" wrote an open letter to CEO Hajj Committee of India highlighting the repeated exclusion of female SHIs for Kashmiri women.

She said this oversight creates significant hardships for female Hajjis, particularly elderly and illiterate women who struggle with communication barriers.

"Many aspects of Hajj require gender-specific guidance, and male SHIs are not the right choice to assist female Hajjis, especially from Kashmir, where cultural sensitivities restrict open discussions on women's issues," Saima said in the letter to the CEO.

She emphasized that the absence of female SHIs during crucial moments, such as visits to Riyaz-ul-Jannah and stays in Mina and Arafat, leads to unnecessary confusion and distress among Kashmiri women pilgrims.

Recalling her experience she said, Last year Kashmiri women faced similar challenges due to the lack of female assistance, and with no correc-

tive measures taken, history is set to repeat itself.

Shafi urged the authorities to adopt a fair and structured approach, ensuring that at least one female SHI is assigned for every 150 female Hajjis, facilitating their journey and upholding their right to proper guidance.

The issue has sparked widespread disappointment among the Hajj aspirants and their families, who are now calling on the Hajj Committee of India to take immediate corrective action to address this long-standing concern.



ment among the Hajj aspirants and their families, who are now calling on the Hajj Committee of India to take immediate corrective action to address this long-standing concern.

## Geology and Mining Department Observes World Plantation Day with Afforestation Drive

BILAL HABIB

**PAMPORE:** The Geology and Mining Department of Kashmir marked World Plantation Day by launching an afforestation drive to promote environmental conservation and sustainability. The event, held at the department's office in Panderthan, Srinagar, saw active participation from officials, students, and employees.

Director of Geology and Mining J&K, Suraj Parkash Rukwal, graced the occasion as the chief guest, alongside Senior Drilling Engineer Kashmir Er Abdul Hamid Wani, Dr. Amarjeet Singh Sodhi (Ex-Deputy Director), and other dignitaries. The drive aimed to restore areas affected by mining activities and prevent soil erosion through large-scale tree plantations.

Students from Government Girls Secondary School Panderthan and Delhi Public School Athawajan delivered speeches highlighting the role of trees in combating climate change, conserving water, and maintaining biodiversity. The students, along with department employees, planted saplings at designated locations as a pledge to environmental protection.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Drilling Engineer Kashmir emphasized the urgency of addressing deforestation, climate change, and land degradation caused by mining. He noted that the department has planted 1,000 trees on 10 kanals of land within its premises and plans to expand the initiative to other districts.

Highlighting the economic significance of mining, he acknowledged its environmental impact and

stressed the department's commitment to sustainable mining practices. A 1% royalty collected from mining activities is now being allocated for reforestation and soil conservation efforts. District Mineral Offices (DMOs) have been directed to collaborate with local communities, schools, and government agencies to ensure broader participation.

The Director of Geology and Mining, Suraj Parkash



Rukwal, commended the efforts of employees and reiterated the department's commitment to balancing economic development with environmental conservation. The initiative reflects the growing recognition of the need for sustainable practices to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.

## Chinar Eco Warriors Celebrate International Day of Forests in Jammu

**JAMMU:** The Chinar Eco Warriors marked the International Day of Forests with a vibrant event organized by the State Forest Department in Jammu.

The celebration, held in the form of a mela, highlighted the unit's dedicated efforts in afforestation and ecological conservation across Jammu & Kashmir.

The event was inaugurated by Javed Ahmed Rana, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, who commended the Eco Warriors for their commitment to enhancing forest cover and promoting sustainability in the region.

During the event, the Chinar Eco Warriors showcased their ongoing projects and achievements, emphasizing the importance of forests and encouraging community participation in conservation efforts. The initiative aligned with the global theme of the International Day of Forests 2025, reaffirming the J&K Forest Department's commitment to biodiversity preservation and environmental sustainability.

## Indian Army Organizes Stitching and Tailoring Course for Women in Marha, Poonch

**POONCH:** The Indian Army, under Operation Sadbhavana, successfully conducted a Stitching and Tailoring Course in Marha, Poonch, from February 17 to March 20, 2025, aimed at empowering local women with essential skills for self-reliance. Twenty women from Marha and nearby areas participated in the program, learning stitching and tailoring under the guidance of expert instructors. To support their entrepreneurial journey, the Army distributed sewing machines to all participants along with certificates of completion.

The initiative, widely appreciated by the locals, reinforced the Army's commitment to community development



and women's empowerment. Residents lauded the Army's efforts in reaching out to remote areas where access to government schemes remains limited.

Through Operation Sadbhavana, the

Indian Army continues to foster goodwill, skill development, and socio-economic upliftment, ensuring a brighter and more self-sufficient future for women in the region.

## Several Political Workers Join JD(U) in Sumbal

**Sumbal:** Several workers from various parties joined the Janata Dal United (JD-U) at its Sumbal office on Friday.



The induction ceremony took place in the presence of JD(U) State Secretary and District General Secretary Bandipora, GM Dar, along with Women's District President ST Jameela Javid and Block President Nowgam Mohd Afzal Pathan.

Welcoming the new members, GM Dar emphasized that their decision to join JD(U) would further strengthen the party at the grassroots level. He reiterated the party's commitment to contesting the upcoming Panchayat and Urban Local Body (ULB) elections, expressing confidence that JD(U) would emerge victorious.

Dar also extended his gratitude to JD(U) UT President GM Shaheen for his continuous support in expanding the party's influence in Jammu & Kashmir. The move marks another step in JD(U)'s efforts to broaden its base in the region as it prepares for the upcoming electoral battles.



Editorial

YUVA 3.0

The Prime Minister’s Young Authors Mentorship Scheme (YUVA) has entered its third edition, aiming to nurture young literary voices and document India’s diverse heritage. While the initiative is commendable for fostering creative writing, providing financial support, and amplifying young voices, it also raises critical questions about its inclusivity, long-term impact, and accessibility. At its core, YUVA 3.0 is an ambitious effort, offering mentorship, financial assistance of ₹50,000 per month, and opportunities for selected authors to publish and present their works globally. The focus on themes such as Indian Knowledge Systems and the Contribution of the Indian Diaspora aligns with the government’s vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. However, the selection process remains a concern, as it may favor those with access to better education and resources, limiting opportunities for aspiring writers from marginalized backgrounds and regional language communities. A key challenge for YUVA’s sustainability is the post-publication trajectory of these young authors. While their books are published and translated into multiple languages, their market reach remains uncertain. Unlike mainstream publications, these works often lack commercial promotion and widespread availability. Without robust distribution channels, these books risk becoming government-endorsed literary projects rather than widely-read works. Additionally, the absence of continued support raises concerns about whether YUVA is creating lasting careers in literature or just offering a short-term boost. The government must consider expanding the program beyond a one-time mentorship, integrating it with mainstream publishing, digital platforms, and literary networks to ensure sustained growth for these young authors. While YUVA has successfully ignited enthusiasm for literary expression, it must address gaps in inclusivity, accessibility, and long-term literary engagement. If refined and expanded, it has the potential to transform India’s publishing landscape, ensuring that young voices from all backgrounds find their rightful place in global literature. However, if it remains limited to select participants with constrained outreach, it risks becoming yet another symbolic initiative rather than a true literary movement.

Embracing Imperfection: The Beauty of Being Human



DR MEHJABEEN

In a world obsessed with perfection, ageing is often seen as an enemy, something to be resisted, concealed, or even reversed. We are bombarded with advertisements for anti-ageing creams, fitness routines that promise eternal youth, and social media influencers who appear flawless. The pressure to maintain a youthful, picture-perfect appearance is relentless. However, the truth is, resisting ageing or striving for perfection is an exhausting pursuit that ultimately leads to dissatisfaction and stress. Instead of fighting against the natural course of life, we should learn to embrace our imperfections, accept ourselves as we are, and stop trying to curate an idealized version of our lives. Life is not about looking perfect—it is about being real, being present, and finding joy in the imperfections that make us human.

The Futility of Resisting Ageing

One of the most significant pressures in modern society is the fear of growing older. People spend vast amounts of money and time trying to slow down the ageing process—whether through beauty treatments, surgeries, or extreme fitness regimens. The media glorifies youth and often equates beauty with being young, making people feel inadequate as they grow older. However, resisting ageing is not only futile but also counter productive .

Ageing is a natural process that brings with it wisdom, experiences, and personal growth. It is not a curse but a privilege denied to many. Rather than fearing wrinkles or grey hair, we should appreciate the stories they tell. Each line on our face reflects years of laughter, struggles, and lessons learned. Instead of dreading the ageing process, we should celebrate it, recognising that every year we live is a gift. After all, the real beauty of a person lies in their experiences, kindness, and wisdom—not in the smoothness of their skin or the colour of their hair.

The Burden of Trying to Look Good All the Time

The obsession with looking good is another unnecessary burden that society places upon us. We are constantly told to dress a certain way, maintain a particular body type, and adhere to ever-changing beauty standards. This relentless pursuit of aesthetic

perfection often leads to stress, self-doubt, and insecurity. People feel pressured to present an idealised version of themselves, often going to great lengths to hide perceived flaws.

But why should we be so concerned about looking good all the time? Why do we feel the need to impress others with our appearance? The reality is, nobody is paying as much attention to our looks as we think they are. People are too absorbed in their own insecurities to scrutinise every detail of

Overstressing the Unlived Experiences

Another common struggle in today’s world is the pressure to be experienced in everything. People feel that they must have traveled extensively, mastered multiple skills, and achieved great success by a certain age. The fear of missing out (FOMO) fuels this anxiety, making individuals feel as though they are falling behind in life. However, this need to “overachieve” in every aspect of life only leads to stress and burnout.



someone else’s appearance. Instead of constantly trying to look good, we should focus on feeling good—both physically and mentally. Confidence, kindness, and authenticity are far more attractive than any superficial beauty standard.

The Illusion of Perfection

Perfection is an illusion, yet many of us spend our lives chasing it. We want to have the perfect job, the perfect home, the perfect relationships, and the perfect body. We compare ourselves to curated social media images and feel inadequate when our lives do not measure up. But perfection is a moving target—it is an unattainable ideal that keeps us dissatisfied and always striving for more.

In reality, perfection does not exist. Even celebrities, who appear flawless in magazines and social media, struggle with their own insecurities, pressures, and personal battles. Their job requires them to look perfect, but behind the scenes, they too face challenges, failures, and doubts. If even those who are professionally styled and edited struggle with self-doubt, how can ordinary people expect to attain perfection? Instead of seeking flawlessness, we should embrace our imperfections, recognising that they make us unique and authentic.

Life is not a competition. It is not necessary to have seen every country, read every book, or mastered every hobby. Experiences should be enjoyed for their own sake, not accumulated as trophies. Instead of worrying about what we have not done, we should focus on being present in what we are doing. Happiness does not come from ticking off a checklist of experiences but from truly engaging with life in meaningful ways.

The Power of Saying No

In a world that constantly demands more from us, learning to say no is an essential skill. Many people feel pressured to meet every expectation, fulfill every request, and please everyone around them. They overextend themselves, sacrificing their own well-being in the process. However, constantly saying yes to everything leads to exhaustion and resentment.

Saying no is not selfish—it is necessary for self-care. It allows us to set boundaries, prioritize our mental health, and focus on what truly matters. We do not have to be available to everyone all the time, nor do we have to agree to things that do not align with our values or well-being. By saying no when needed, we create space for the things that

genuinely bring us joy and fulfillment.

The Beauty of Being Normal

We are not celebrities, nor do we need to be. Celebrities live in a world where looking perfect is part of their job, but even they struggle with the pressures that come with it. For most of us, life is not about constant perfection—it is about authenticity, love, and meaningful connections.

Being normal is not a flaw. It is a gift. A normal life, filled with ordinary moments, is often where true happiness resides. The joy of sharing a meal with loved ones, laughing at an inside joke, or simply sitting in peace—these are the moments that truly matter. We do not need extravagant lifestyles or constant validation to feel worthy. Our value lies in who we are, not in how we look or what we achieve.

Extraordinary Commitments Over Superficial Perfection

What truly defines us is not our appearance but our commitments—our dedication to our families, our work, our passions, and our values. We may be ordinary individuals, but we are capable of extraordinary acts of kindness, wil power and love. Instead of wasting energy on looking good or appearing perfect, we should channel it into meaningful actions that enrich our lives and the lives of those around us.

True greatness comes from living with purpose and passion. It comes from being kind to ourselves and others, from making a difference in our own small ways. It comes from embracing life as it is, rather than constantly trying to mold it into something idealized.

At the end of the day, resisting ageing, obsessing over our looks, striving for perfection, or overstressing about experiences does not bring happiness. What brings happiness is self-acceptance, authenticity, and meaningful connections. We do not need to be perfect to be valued. We do not need to look flawless to be loved. We do not need to chase experiences to prove our worth.

Life is short, and it is meant to be lived, not perfected. The sooner we let go of unrealistic expectations and embrace our imperfect selves, the sooner we can find true peace and fulfillment. We are not defined by how we look or what we have achieved, but by how we live and love. And that is what truly matters.

“YOU ARE NOT DEFINED BY HOW YOU LOOK AND BY HOW YOU LOVE, LIVE, EMBRACE YOUR LIFE,”

Author is Founder vision high mental health wellness and can be reached at [www.drmehjabeenvisionhigh.com](http://www.drmehjabeenvisionhigh.com)

A Century of Conflict: Why Peace Remains Elusive in Israel-Palestine?



FIRDOUS AHMAD MALIK

The region known today as Israel and Palestine has a long and complex history that begins with the ancient land of Canaan. Situated at the crossroads of major civilizations, Canaan was home to various peoples, including the Canaanites, Philistines, and early Hebrews. By the 12th century BCE, the Israelites emerged as a distinct group, establishing a loose confederation of tribes that eventually united under a monarchy. The reigns of King David and King Solomon marked the peak of ancient Israel’s power, with Jerusalem becoming the political and religious center. Solomon’s construction of the First Temple in Jerusalem solidified the city’s role as a sacred site, but internal divisions and external pressures weakened the kingdom. After Solomon’s death, the kingdom split into Israel in the north and Judah in the south, leaving both vulnerable to invasion.

In 722 BCE, the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, while Judah managed to survive for another century. However, in 586 BCE, the Babylonian Empire, under King Nebuchadnezzar, captured Jerusalem, destroyed the First Temple, and exiled much of the Jewish population to Babylon. This period of exile, known as the Babylonian Captivity, profoundly shaped Jewish identity and religious practices. When the Persian Empire, led by Cyrus the Great, conquered Babylon in 539 BCE, he allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the Temple, ushering in the Second Temple period.

The region eventually fell under Roman control in 63 BCE, with increasing unrest culminating in a series of Jewish revolts. The most significant, the Great Jewish Revolt of 66–70 CE, led to the destruction of the Second Temple and the dispersal of Jews across the Roman Empire. This dispersion, known as the Jewish Diaspora, scattered Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, profoundly shaping Jewish life and identity for centuries to come.

The arrival of Islam in the 7th century marked a transformative era for the region. In 638 CE, Muslim armies, led by Caliph Umar, captured Jerusalem

from the Byzantine Empire. The city became a significant site in Islam, with the construction of the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, solidifying its status as the third holiest site in Islam. Under Islamic rule, Jews and Christians were granted protected status as “People of the Book,” allowing them to practice their faiths while paying a special tax. This period brought relative stability and flourishing trade, with Jerusalem becoming a vibrant cultural and religious center.

The Crusades, beginning in 1096, brought a violent clash between Christian and Muslim forces over control of the Holy Land. In 1099, Crusaders captured Jerusalem, massacring much of the local population. The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted for nearly a century before Saladin, the Muslim leader, recaptured the city in 1187. The struggle between Crusaders and Muslim forces continued for two centuries, with Jerusalem changing hands multiple times.

Following the Crusades, the Mamluks gained control of the region, followed by the Ottomans in 1517. Ottoman rule lasted for four centuries, during which the region experienced relative stability, with diverse communities coexisting under a system of local governance and religious autonomy.

By the 19th century, European powers had expanded their influence across the Ottoman Empire, which was in a state of decline. The Ottoman Empire, once a dominant force in the region, struggled with internal corruption, economic stagnation, and rising nationalist movements. European powers, particularly Britain and France, began exerting political and economic control, often exploiting the empire’s weaknesses for their own strategic interests. As European ideas of nationalism spread, they inspired movements among both Arabs and Jews, laying the groundwork for future conflict in Palestine.

In the late 19th century, Zionism emerged as a political movement advocating for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Founded by Theodor Herzl, Zionism was a response to rising antisemitism in Europe and the desire for Jewish self-determination. Jewish immigration to Palestine increased significantly, particularly after waves of pogroms in Eastern Europe. By the early 20th century, Zionist settlers had begun purchasing land and establishing agricultural communities, often displacing local Arab farmers. At the same time, Arab nationalism was also on the rise, driven by opposition to European colonialism and a growing

desire for Arab independence. Palestinian Arabs, who had lived in the region for generations, began to view Jewish immigration as a threat to their land and way of life.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I left Palestine under British control as part of



the League of Nations Mandate system. The British Mandate of Palestine (1920–1948) was marked by conflicting promises and growing tensions. During the war, Britain had made contradictory commitments to both Jews and Arabs. The 1917 Balfour Declaration expressed British support for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, while the earlier McMahon-Hussein Correspondence had promised Arab independence in exchange for their support against the Ottomans. These conflicting promises sowed distrust and animosity between the two communities.

Under British rule, Jewish immigration increased, leading to further land purchases and displacement of Palestinian peasants. The Arab population, feeling increasingly marginalized, organized revolts and protests, including the Arab Revolt of 1936–1939. British attempts to mediate the conflict failed, and by the end of the mandate period, tensions between Jews and Arabs had reached a breaking point. The British withdrawal in 1948 left the region on the brink of full-scale war, setting the stage for the partition of Palestine and the ensuing conflict.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 marked a

pivotal moment in the history of Palestine, as Britain publicly expressed support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. Issued during World War I, the declaration aimed to secure Jewish support for the Allied war effort, but it neglected to address the rights and

communities. When the British mandate ended in May 1948, David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel. This declaration triggered a full-scale war between the newly established Israeli state and neighboring Arab nations. During the war, over 700,000 Palestinians

were forcibly displaced or fled from their homes, an event Palestinians refer to as the Nakba, meaning “catastrophe.” Many of these refugees were never allowed to return, leading to a lasting legacy of displacement, loss, and unresolved grievances.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War, also known as the War of Independence to Israelis and the Nakba (“catastrophe”) to Palestinians, erupted after the declaration of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. Arab nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, invaded Palestine to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state and support Palestinian Arabs. Despite being outnumbered, Israeli forces, bolstered by better organization and arms supplies, emerged victorious. By the end of the war, Israel controlled 78% of historic Palestine, far beyond the boundaries allocated in the 1947 UN Partition Plan. Jordan took control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, while Egypt administered the Gaza Strip. For Palestinians, the war resulted in the displacement of over 700,000 people, many of whom fled to refugee camps in neighboring countries, where they and their descendants remain to this day.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Part I



# Sakeena Itoo visits fire-affected families in Kadipora, Anantnag

Takes stock of relief measures, assures full support from Govt.

**ANANTNAG:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo visited Kadipora, Anantnag, to express solidarity with the families affected by devastating fire incident yesterday.

MLAs Peerzada Mohd Sayeed, Abdul Majeed Larmi and Altaf Ahmad Wani, DC Anantnag Syed Fakhruddin Hamid and other senior officers of district administration also accompanied the Minister.

During the visit, Sakeena personally interacted with the victims, assessed their grievances and took stock of the ongoing relief measures.

While interacting with the affected families on the occasion, the Minister assured them all possible assistance from the government. "On the directions of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, my team of MLAs are here to stand in solidarity with you. Our government will provide you all possible support and assistance to overcome this tragic loss", Sakeena stated.

She added that the Chief Minister is personally monitoring the relief measures and was in constant contact with the district administration from last night to gather on ground details of this devastating fire incident. "The tragic loss suffered by fire affected families is heart-wrenching and cannot be compensated in words. But our government is shoulder to shoulder with you in this hour of distress and will ensure that all necessary aid and support reaches

you without delay", she said.

The Minister also urged the Deputy Commissioner to expedite the rehabilitation process. She emphasized on the need for immediate relief, including temporary shelter, food supplies and financial aid

to help the victims rebuild their lives.

She also called upon the district administration to conduct a thorough assessment of damages and provide swift compensation to the affected households.

While addressing the concerns of local residents and fire victims regarding need for preventive measures to avert such incidents in

future, Sakeena Itoo assured them that the government will look out the possibility for decongesting this locality besides fire safety infrastructure in the locality will also be enhanced.

Later, the Minister also chaired a meeting with the senior officers of district administration and took detailed assessment of relief as well as immediate rehabilitation measures.

During the meeting, the Minister impressed upon the Deputy Commissioner to ensure temporary shelter facilities for these fire affected families. She asked the district administration to arrange suitable bedding and other essential things for these victims.

The Minister also gave directions for providing timber to affected families on immediate basis in order to make them sustainable.

Sakeena called upon the officers to keep a medical team available to deal with any kind of exigency . She also asked the officers of health department to keep sufficient stock of medicines and other essential equipments available.

The Minister further called upon the district administration for immediate assessment of the losses and make swift arrangement for due assistance to affected families.

Pertinently, in a devastating fire incident, more than 30 houses affecting around 45 families were gutted in congested old town Kadipora of South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

## Satish Sharma holds public outreach camps at Selyote, Rah Selyote

Inaugurates BT work on Hardumalwara road, 100 KV transformer



**JAMMU:** Minister for FCS & CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, today held two public outreach camps at Selyote and Rah-Selyote Panchayat, far flung areas of Chamb Constituency.

The Minister assessed the issues and concerns of the people of these remote areas besides launching blacktopping, drainage and protection wall work on 800 m long link road to Hardumalwara. This development work is being executed by the Public Works Department (PWD), at an estimated cost of Rs 46 lakh. The Minister also inaugurated augmented 100 KV transformer in the area. The outreach camps witnessed a significant turnout of people from all walks of life, highlighting numerous issues ranging from infrastructural development to basic amenities. The people apprised the Minister of various issues pertaining to road connectivity, water supply, unscheduled power cuts, updation of ration cards, shortage of staff in health centres and schools and other development matters.

The Minister patiently heard the concerns of the attendees and assured them of swift redressal. He emphasised the unwavering commitment of the government towards addressing the pressing issues facing the common people.

Satish Sharma also highlighted several key initiatives undertaken by the government, including measures to improve road connectivity, strengthen the healthcare system, promote educational opportunities, 200 free unit and 10kg ration to AAY beneficiaries, free ride to women, increase in pensions and many more. The Minister stated, "the government is making every effort to resolve public issues and fulfil its commitment towards betterment of Jammu and Kashmir." He reaffirmed the government's commitment, under the leadership of Chief Minister, to deliver governance at the people's doorsteps.

Satish Sharma directed the officers to conduct frequent visits to rural areas to ensure effective implementation of government schemes. He issued strict instructions to the officers to resolve the genuine concerns of people promptly and implement all directives in letter and spirit for welfare of the public.

The Minister also distributed sport kits and other item among the children which included football, volleyball, badminton rackets, tennis balls, cricket kits etc.

## KVK Reasi hosts 5 Day training programme on Natural Farming

**REASI:** Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Reasi, under the aegis of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technologies Jammu (SKUAST-J), organised a five day training programme on natural farming here today at its campus.

A number of Krishi Sakhis of the district participated in the programme organized under the dynamic stewardship of Vice Chancellor Prof. B.N. Tripathi and able guidance of Director Extension, Prof. Amrishi Vaid of SKUAST-J.

The objective of the programme was to train and educate the Krishi Sakhis about various practices of natural farming.

Chief Agriculture Officer Harbans Singh inaugurated the programme. He said that natural farming is the need of the hour as it maintains soil health, human health and biodiversity.

Earlier, Chief Scientist and Head of KVK Dr. Banarsi Lal welcomed participants and briefed the advantages and prospects of natural farming. He explained the concept of natural farming and guided participants on the preparation and uses of Jeevamrit, Beejamrit, Neemastra, Agniastara, Brahmastara etc. He highlighted the seed treatment using Beejamrit. He added that natural farming is based on the principles of biodiversity, soil regeneration and water conservation.

District Agriculture Officer Naresh Kumar Sharma explained the four pillars of natural farming and demonstrated the preparation of Jeevamrit and Beejamrit. He explained the practices of mulching, Achhadana (moisture) and various other biocontrol agents required for natural farming. Agriculture Extension Officer Thuroo Pankaj Kumar Sharma said that natural farming is agro-ecology based farming which integrates crops, trees, livestock and functional biodiversity. Agriculture Extension Officer, Bhabber Sunil Kumar discussed the importance of farm fields as a source of organic matter and the usage of indigenous seed and bioinoculants as the catalyst required for natural farming. Nodal Officer JKRLM Jugal Kishore Sharma discussed the market linkage of natural farming products and stressed on adopting cluster based approach for natural farming. An exhibition was also organised for the participants to showcase their products.



## Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal finalizes arrangements for Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Eid-ul-Fitr, Navratra

**Ganderbal:** Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, chaired a meeting to finalize arrangements for upcoming religious occasions including Shab-e-Qadr, Jumat-ul-Vida, Eid-ul-Fitr, and Navratra.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from the district administration, police, health, PDD, Jal Shakti, FCS&CA, and other concerned departments.

During the meeting, the DC directed officials to ensure adequate availability of essential services, including power and water supply,

sanitation, transport and traffic management, to facilitate smooth observance of these significant

occasions. Special emphasis was placed on market regulation, ensuring the availability of essential

commodities, and preventing overpricing and hoarding.

The Health Department was instructed to keep emergency medical services on high alert, with special arrangements at major

religious and congregation sites.

The Traffic and Police Departments were directed to implement effective traffic management plans, particularly around mosques and shrines. Additionally, the Municipal Council Ganderbal was asked to ensure cleanliness and sanitation in all public places. The DC emphasized interdepartmental coordination to address any emergent issues promptly. He also urged the public to cooperate with the administration and celebrate these occasions in a spirit of harmony and brotherhood.



## J&K Forest Department Observes International Day of Forests



**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department, in collaboration with Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Bemina, organized a plantation programme at JVC campus, Bemina, Srinagar to commemorate the International Day of Forests.

The International Day of Forests is observed annually on March 21st to raise awareness about the importance of forests and their vital role in sustaining life on Earth. This

year's theme, 'Forests and Food,' highlights the intricate relationship between forests and the food we eat.

The plantation programme featured the planting of various species of plants, emphasizing the Forest Department's commitment to promoting sustainable forest management and environmental conservation. The event was attended by officials from the Forest Department, SKIMS Bemina, NGOs and local community members.

Irfan Rasool Wani, Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir emphasized the essential role of forests in medical science and their contribution to providing a healthy atmosphere. "Forests not only support biodiversity but also play a crucial role in public health by improving air quality and preventing transmission of diseases," Wani said.

Dr Fazlul Qadir Parray, Principal of SKIMS Medical College and Hospitals, also spoke at the event, highlighting the importance of maintaining green cover inside the Medical institutes as it enhances patient recovery and well being by reducing stress, anxiety and depression.

Among others the event was attended by Tawheed Ahmad Deva, Conservator of Forests, Srinagar Circle and Regional Wildlife Warden, Kashmir, Mehraj Din Malik, Joint Director Forest Protection Force, Kashmir, DFO Urban Forestry Division, Srinagar Dr. Shiekh Mehraj, DFO Planning and Publicity Division, Danish Khan, DFO Agrostology, Kashmir, Syed Himayun Qadri and other senior officers of SKIMS and Forest Department.

## Javed Rana calls for collective action on conservation, protection of forests

**JAMMU:** Minister for Forests, Ecology, & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, emphasized the critical need for collective efforts to conserve Jammu and Kashmir's vast forest cover.

He was speaking on the occasion of International Day of Forests organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department at Convention Centre, Jammu.

The Minister highlighted the vital role forests play in regulating the climate, providing clean air and water, supporting biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance, which ultimately ensures the well-being of both local communities and the environment.

He said that this year's theme for the day is "Forests and Food" which reminds us of saying of famous saint Sheikh Noor-ud-din Noorani, popularly known as Nund Rishi: "Ann Poshli Teli Yeli Van Poshli" which means Food will thrive only when Forests thrive. "So, protection and conservation of forest resources is inevitable for our food security," maintained the Minister.

Addressing the participants, the Minister asked them to think innovatively for protection and conservation of our forest resources ensuring involvement of local communities and improving their livelihood.

Talking about the flora of Jammu & Kashmir, he said that it is home to an awe-inspiring range of eco-systems ranging from lush sub-tropical forests to pristine alpine meadows. Recognizing this, Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department has proved to be steadfast in its commitment

towards afforestation, reforestation and eco-system restoration that not only enhance tree cover but also

that Jammu & Kashmir is going to achieve plantation target of 1.5 crore under the campaign "Ek



promote biodiversity, strengthen local food chain systems and ensure long term sustainability of the forests, he added. Rana said that the forest department is working tirelessly to reverse forest degradation, integrate agro-forestry practices and align conservation with community well-being. He praised the J&K Forest Department's tireless efforts to bolster forest conservation, promote sustainable livelihoods and support forest-dependent communities. He also highlighted various livelihood generation initiatives undertaken by the forest department by promoting fodder development in plantation units, promoting eco-tourism through trek routes and eco-parks/nagar vans, liberalization of NTFP collection and sale, constitution of Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at Panchayat level, etc. He further emphasized the need to plant more trees wherever and whenever opportunities come and advocated people to be stewards of their forests. Rana said that he is delighted to know

Ped Maa Ke Naam" during the current year.

On the occasion, Rana presented certificates and awards to successful Forester and Forest Guard Trainees of Soil Conservation Training School Miran Sahib and Forest Guard Training School, Doomi, Akhnoor. He also informed that the department is in the process of upgrading training infrastructure in the training institutes besides increasing the capacity of training institutes.

He also called for making focused attention towards water stress areas like kandi belts by undertaking concerted soil and water conservation activities.

The Minister said that we have to come up to the expectations of the people and ensure the redressal of their grievances. He called upon all stakeholders to join hands with government in its efforts for protection and conservation of forests for the posterity.

Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Sheetal Nanda, PCCE&HOF, Suresh Kumar Gupta and CCF Jammu, M.K. Kumar also spoke on the occasion.

## Senior BJP Leader Mohd Lateef Bhat Reviews Development Projects in Patal Bagh, Pampore

**Pampore:** Senior BJP leader Mohd Lateef Bhat visited Patal Bagh in the Pampore constituency to assess the progress of key developmental projects.

He was accompanied by DDC member Pampore, Advocate Meena Lateef, as they reviewed the ongoing work on solar lights and an irrigation pump in the area.

During the visit, the leaders interacted with local residents and public delegations, addressing their concerns and ensuring that essential infrastructure projects are completed on time.

Bhat emphasized the need for timely execution



of development works to improve the quality of life

for residents.

The review focused on the installation of solar lights, aimed at enhancing public safety and energy efficiency, as well as the irrigation pump, which is expected to boost the agricultural sector in the region.

Bhat and Advocate Meena Lateef assured the public that their concerns would be taken into account and that the government remains committed to the development of Pampore.

## Plantation drive held at AHWC Reshinagri, Shopian

**Shopian:** A plantation drive was conducted today at the AHWC Reshinagri under the directions of the District Development Commissioner, Shopian.

The initiative, held in the presence of the District Nodal Officer Ayush Shopian and the Medical Officer AHWC Reshinagri, aimed to enhance green cover and promote environmental

sustainability.

The DFO Shopian provided various medicinal and native tree saplings during the drive,



reinforcing the significance of afforestation in maintaining ecological balance.

The plantation drive also sought to encourage public participation in environmental conservation efforts. Residents and staff members actively took part in the initiative, demonstrating a collective commitment to fostering a healthier and greener future.

**Baramulla:** The District Office of the Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) Baramulla has been honoured with an award for successfully achieving the PMEGP (Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme) and JKREGP (Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme) targets across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

The award was conferred by the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir during the Divisional Level Bankers Committee Meeting held at Sanat Ghar Bemina,

Srinagar, on March 17, 2025. The team at KVIB Baramulla extends heartfelt gratitude to the District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, for his unwavering support and exemplary guidance, which have been instrumental in this achievement. His commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and driving economic growth in the district has provided the necessary direction and motivation for the team to excel. This recognition is not just a milestone for KVIB Baramulla but a testament to the visionary leadership and steadfast encouragement

of DDC Minga Sherpa. His guidance has empowered the team to meet ambitious targets and set a high standard of excellence in implementing government schemes aimed at promoting self-employment and rural development.

KVIB Baramulla remains committed to building upon this success and contributing even more significantly to the district's development goals under the esteemed leadership of DDC Minga Sherpa. The team looks forward to continuing this momentum and striving for greater achievements in the future.

## KVIB Baramulla honoured for outstanding achievement in PMEGP, JKREGP



Friday Thoughts

...Duty to Modesty

Evolving a Consensus on the Issue of Women in Public Spaces



DR MAROOF SHAH

Fitnah Thesis

In view of diverse juristic positions and modern debates consequent let us examine the case argued by ultraorthodox or conservative Ulama for face veil or linking burqa-hijab question to the notion of fitnah in the court of reason as embodied in the work of brilliant modern scholar of Islamic jurisprudence Khalid Abou El-Fadl, well known for such works as Speaking in the Name of God. Fadl engages both traditional and modern scholarship on this issue and has something significant to say.

Khalid Abou El Fadl first notes lack of support for fitnah thesis in the canon:

Significantly, early Islamic reports do not tie the issue of what eventually becomes known as the ij bto the problem of fitnah. In other words, the technical issue of the proper form of ij bis not directly related to the possibilities of fitnah, but to social status and physical safety. Interestingly, what becomes known in modern discourses as the ij bis discussed in classical juristic sources in the chapter on prayer. In that chapter, among other things, the jurists discuss what needs to covered by men and women in prayer, and from that, the issue of ‘awrah (private parts that ought to be covered by clothing) is discussed as well (Fadl, 2014:469).

He then raises certain issues problematizing argument from fitnah:

Assume that in order to put an end to all sources of fitnah, we lock up all women in society in fortified homes, has fitnah come to an end? There is also homo-sexual fitnah that presumably could result from the interaction of men with men and women with women. There is also the fitnah that comes through television stations, computer images, publications, poetry, and a vivid imagination. Do we prohibit these as well? But if we do, this assumes that eradicating the sources of fitnah is the only relevant interest under Shar ‘ah. So, assume that human beings need to be exposed to some degree of fitnah in order to receive an education, medical attention, engage in trade and politics, and in order not to be painfully dull and boring. Why should fitnah take precedence over any other Shar ‘ahvalue – what is the evidence that fitnah is the core value in Islam, and not knowledge, justice, utility or beauty? (Fadl, 2014:471).

Fitnah thesis brings with it the indefensible assumption that “beauty or justice or pursuit of knowledge are not to be privileged and may even be sacrificed at the altar of sexual ethic.”He notes that emphasizing maintenance of certain sexual order may mean legitimizing what Taliban did by closing co-ed schools – “other things can wait but women must go home.”

Fadl seeks to show that there are moral and conceptual difficulties as well with the idea of fitna. “The principle that no one can be called to answer for the sins of another is a core Shar ‘ahvalue.” (Fadl, 2014:471). The jurisprudence of fitnah, Fadl notes, runs the risk of violating this principle. He also reminds us of the distinction between awrah and fitnah and states that a person covers the ‘awrah not because of fitnah, but because the covering of ‘awrah is a separate imperative based on a set of specific instructions. Whether revealing the ‘awrah leads or does not lead to fitnah is irrelevant. But from that perspective, the whole logic of fitna has seduction becomes quite suspect. Most fitnah determinations rely on the dubious logic that women should pay the price for the impious failures of men. Furthermore, in these determinations, as far as women are concerned, fitnah emerges as the core value of Islam. Therefore, women’s education, mobility, safety, and even religious liberty should be restricted in order to avoid fitnah. Hence, we observe that women can be banned from driving, working, serving in the military, or appearing in public life under the guise of fitnah (Fadl, 2014:472).

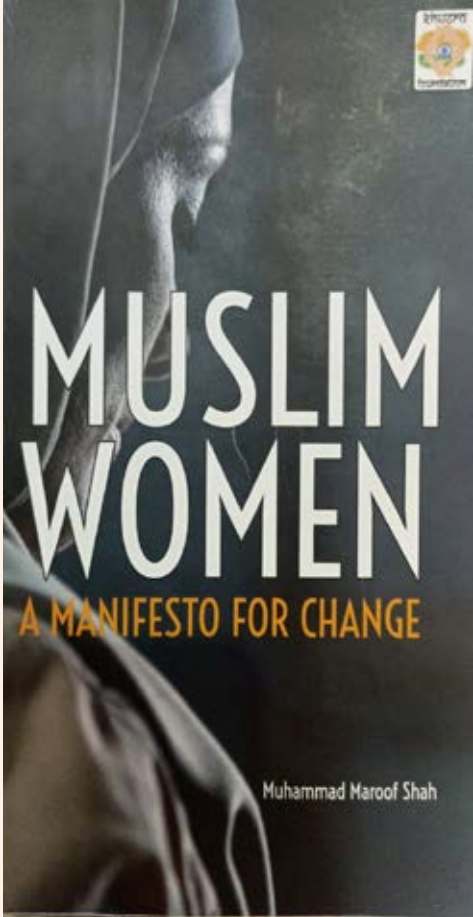
Fadl indicts the jurists who thus artificially construct womanhood into the embodiment of seductions, for promoting a norm of immodesty in the name of modesty. “In essence, these jurists objectify women into items for male consumption, and in that, is the height of immodesty” (Fadl, 2014:474).

Fadl also notes that uncritical ideology of fitnah for which certain prophetic traditions are also appropriated renders a good part of the Islamic historical experience in Medina a corruption. It is difficult to reconcile the

traditions of fitnah and exclusion with the numerous reports about the active participation of women in public life during the life of the Prophet and after his death as well the jurists often argued that what could be lawfully exposed in a woman’s body was what would ordinarily appear according to custom (‘ dah), nature (jibillah), and necessity (‘ ar rah). Relying on this, they argued that slave-girls do not have to cover their hair, face, or arms because they live an active economic life that requires mobility, and because by nature and custom slave-girls do not ordinarily cover these parts of their bodies. This makes the focal point of the law custom and functionality. Arguably, however, women in the modern age live an economically active life that requires mobility and, arguably, custom varies with time and place. In other words, if the rules prescribing veiling were mandated to deal with a specific type of harm, and slave-girls were exempted because of the nature of their social role and function, arguably, this means that the rules of veiling are contingent and contextual in nature (Fadl, 2014:483).

The argument for veiling to prevent seduction runs into many difficulties including the following:

Seduction could be caused by slave-girls, or could be between woman and man, woman and woman, or man and man. A man could be seduced by a slave-girl,



and a woman could be seduced by a good looking man, yet neither slave-girls nor men are required to cover their hair or faces. Does the fact that a particular man might be sexually enticing to women affect the obligations of concealment as to this man? (Fadl, 2014:484).

It is instructive to point out that Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri despite granting that face is excluded from veiling himself used to partly cover his rather attractive face while travelling citing possibility of seduction of women seeing him. On the contrary, we find Murad Hoffman arguing against the need of covering hair for Western women as hair is not considered seductive. The same argument may be extended – and has been extended by some modern scholars – to Eastern lands now given hair is often exposed and has lost much of seductive power once supposed for it.

Another classic work is from Urdu literature Laila kae Khutoot that among other points makes a strong case against the argument commonly rehearsed that women need to be veiled because man can’t control desire. The Quran demanded modesty and lowering of gaze from both men and women. Veiling as done in the subcontinent can’t be elevated as a norm. The point has been well made by many traditional Muslim scholars including Albani, not to mention modernists such as Amir Ali and Fazlur Rahman. Many writers/poets, rights activists, scholars of diverse backgrounds and many women besides Muslim (as distinguished from Islamist) feminists of criticize the fitnah thesis on various grounds. Given in the Muslim world itself, traditionally, there are large regions where face veil was not practiced and strict separation has not been maintained even in the Prophet’s Medina, not to speak of major agricultural and trading spaces in the Muslim world. The argument of fitnah loses its cutting edge when we note that God ensures it doesn’t count in such key spaces as mosques and Kaaba during hajj. It needn’t be reminded that exceptions on large scales – and on almost routine basis – thanks to such contingencies as medical check-up, many professions in which women

take part on priority including education, wars, are granted by traditional scholarship.

Against the fitnah thesis there is a counter thesis defended by various modern scholars including Merenessi on the negative framing of veil. Merenessi also highlights the essentially negative connotation of veil in the civilization of Islam especially in the context of Islamic mysticism. Discussing the different meaning spaces or contexts of term hijab in the Quran and Sufism, she concludes:

So it is strange indeed to observe the modern course of this concept, which from the beginning had such a strongly negative connotations in the Koran. The very sign of the person who is damned, excluded from the privileges and spiritual grace to which the Muslim has access, is claimed in our day as a symbol of Muslim identity, manna for the Muslim women (Merenessi, 1991:107).

She deplores the perverse evolution/appropriation of the idea of veil in the history of Islam. “The veil that descended from Heaven was going to cover up women, separate them from men, from the Prophet, and so from God” (Merenessi, 1991:111). She argues that the verse of hijab was revealed to demarcate space between men, between the Prophet and the vulgar public. She discusses in detail its asbab-i-nuzul and concludes:

The hijab – literally “curtain” – “descended”, not to put a barrier between a man and a woman, but between two men ..... The verse of the hijab “descended” in the bedroom of the wedded pair to protect their intimacy and excluded third person—in this case, Anas Ibn Malik, one of the Prophet’s companions. Anas was excluded by the hijab as a witness and the symbol of a community that had become too invasive and it was this witness himself who reported the event.” She reads much subtler nuances of the hijab: “Protecting women from change by veiling them and shutting them out of the world has echoes of closing the community to protect it from the West. Only by keeping in mind this double perspective—women’s body as symbolic representation of community—can we understand what the hijab signified in year 5 of the Hejira (the year when hijab descended on Medina) what stakes it represented, and what stakes it brings into play in today’s explosive, passionate and sometimes violent debates (Merenessi, 1991:110).

The great significance of the concept or institution of hijab is recognized by feminists as well as traditional ulama, although it is being appropriated for very different ends by them. It isn’t just a scrap of cloth but signifies much more than that and permeates almost every aspect of Islamic civilization. Merenessi says:

So we see that the concept of the hijab is a key concept in Muslim civilization, just a sin is in the Christian context, or credit is in American capitalist society. Reducing or assimilating this concept to a scrap of cloth that men have imposed on women to veil them when they go into the street is truly to impoverish this term, not to say to drain it of its meaning, especially when one knows that the hijab, according to the Koranic verse and al-Tabari’s explanation, “descended” from Heaven to separate the space between two men (Merenessi, 1991:105).

Having said all this, it needs to be noted that Islam does recognize the problem of seduction and accordingly requires lowering the gaze, respect for privacy and modesty which taken together may require for many in many situations resorting to face cover and in a particular situation it may be hard to judge regarding the best course of action. As such it is concluded that we refrain from judging various modes or practices informed by the idea of fitnah while conceding that obligation to observe face veil on account of it isn’t proved from the canon. Muslim practice has been both observing and not observing face veil and cultural and other factors have evidently played their role. Fitnah or no fitnah, other factors such as association of veil symbolism with mysteries and ambivalent message of veiled beauty, make the issue more complex. For centuries a great culture has been nurtured around treasuring the women’s right/privilege to veil herself. God has obligated observing modesty which is something universally recognized value across cultures and religions. Modesty is compatible with various traditional dress forms and can’t be codified. What appears as fitnah (for instance, hair) in certain cultures or situations mayn’t appear so in others. Murad Hoffman in Islam in the Twenty First Century has also explicated this point. We would be judged by God and are ordinarily judged by normal fellow humans not by the attire but by the values that attire embodies and the best of garments is piety or awe (to be distinguished from fear) of God.

More Reflections on Face Veil/Hijab

Muslim women negotiate between several lives or identities; they may have to adjust themselves to various familial, societal or personal pressures and often one can see her struggling, in conflict with herself, her family, her friends, her employer. She can’t, generally speaking, intelligently or coherently defend her choice

either in religious or other terms. She doesn’t know there are various possible understandings or equally legitimate interpretations. She chooses to veil or unveil against her deeper self and invents some explanations for either choice though they are mostly regurgitated from some sermons or books or feminists. And she is severely judged by some in every case – whatever her choice, she has her critics. And given her vulnerability to half baked, semicritical ideas picked from here and there, she lives a divided life. She keeps adjusting a scarf that anyway doesn’t cover all the hair properly or she accuses herself for the choice she makes whether a conformist one or a rebellious one.

For the Quran although the best of garments is piety

“

The great significance of the concept or institution of hijab is recognized by feminists as well as traditional ulama, although it is being appropriated for very different ends by them. It isn’t just a scrap of cloth but signifies much more than that and permeates almost every aspect of Islamic civilization. Merenessi says:

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(a subtle way of relativizing all dress codes) but clothes embody a metaphysic that jurists often miss resulting in heated debates. Dress descends from Heaven. All traditional cultures emphasize both modesty and dignity of dress and it is God’s /non-self’s glory that should be advertised through it. And of course beauty we seek through dress is also glorifying God. While burqa conceals physical beauty, it might for the wearer and some onlookers symbolize certain moral and spiritual beauty. One might choose a burqa, a hijab or a dupatta or as highest common factor loose airy flowing robes that we find in Christians, Muslims and Buddhist women, for instance. One might choose a Kashmiri pharan that Kashmiri women traditionally wear and only change thickness according to season, and for some, outcompetes even Abaya in grace and modesty. Within traditions there are countless permutations and combinations that are equally legitimate from religious point of view. Anyone obsessed with violent defense or rejection of veil – having time to break one’s head on it – has not appreciated the God who doesn’t seem to be in any urgency to clearly state His will on this issue. Anyone with a sense of humour or irony intact finds it ludicrous to link hell to a possible interpretation of verse or understanding of a symbol. A few important and urgent questions (FAQs) one has to face on the Last Day don’t include FAQs on dress code (though it remains a grey area as it may be asserted it is implied in commandment to follow the Prophet and it is our pious ancestors who best interpreted or lived the Prophetic wont). How come one can imagine God having an interest in punishing women who don’t find any support for universalizing and eternalizing the face veil/hijab injunction in His revelation? How come God wouldn’t punish vanity of those who love their own beauty outside God and put the sacred treasure in service of ignoble passions? God would mind if one is not ennobled and humbled by beauty and becomes heedless of the God whose splendour is beauty.

TO BE CONCLUDED...

Part-II



Continued From P1...

Terrorism down

“After PM Narendra Modi came to power, we displayed a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism. There were attacks even after we came to power - on Uri and Pulwama...Within 10 days, we entered Pakistan and gave them a reply through airstrike and surgical strike...The zero-tolerance policy against terrorism started there.”

Terming Article 370 as the root cause of all the problems in J&K, Shah said, “Article 370 was the base for separatism in Kashmir. But Article 370 was removed on 5th August 2019. Since then J&K has witnessed a massive change. The law and order situation in J&K has improved significantly and the region has seen massive development.”

Crediting security forces for their role in curbing terrorism Shah said, “I express my gratitude to thousands of State Police and central paramilitary force jawans who made the supreme sacrifice to strengthen the country’s internal security as well as its borders,” he said. “Compared to the past, terror incidents have gone down, and people feel safer in the region.”

Shah, according to KNO, also spoke about the broader security challenges that India faces, stating that crime is no longer limited to state boundaries and that the MHA is actively tackling inter-state and multi-state crimes like narcotics, cybercrime, organized crime gangs, and hawala operations.

He said that India has now joined the ranks of Israel and the United States as a country that is always prepared to protect its borders and defense forces. “PM Modi has ensured that India’s security forces act decisively and with strength,” he added.

Speaking on employment and economic development in J&K, the Union Home Minister revealed that 40,000 government jobs were provided in the Union Territory between 2019 and 2024, along with 1.51 lakh self-employment opportunities.

He said that skilling clubs are now operational, helping youth build careers. “Due to our attractive industrial policy, Rs 12,000 crore investment has already been implemented on the ground, and MoUs worth rupees 1.1 lakh crore have been signed,” he said, indicating strong investor confidence in the region.

Speaking about the responsibilities of the Union Home Ministry, Shah said, “In a way, the Home Ministry works under very difficult situation. The Constitution has given the responsibility of law and order to states. Border security and internal security come under MHA. This is a correct decision. And there is no need to make any changes to this. But when law and order is taken care of by states, after 76 years, there is now a situation when several kinds of crime do not remain limited to state borders, they are both inter-state as well as multi-state -- like narcotics, cybercrime, organised crime gangs, hawala. All these crimes do not take place just within a state. Several crimes are committed in the country even from outside the country. So, keeping all this in view it becomes essential to

make changes in MHA.”

“I say this with pride that in 10 years, PM Narendra Modi made long overdue changes to the MHA at once to ensure national security,” he said, as per KNO.

The Home Minister said, “When Narendra Modi Government was elected to power in 2014, we received several legacy issues from prior to 2014. The security and development of this country were always challenged due to three main issues. These three issues caused obstruction to the peace of the country, raised questions on the security of the country and obstructed the development pace of the country for almost 4 decades; they also made the country’s entire system even laughable many a time.”

Elaborating further, he said, “These three issues were terrorism in J&K, Leftist insurgency which dreamt of Tirupati to Pashupatinath and the Northeast insurgency. If you club all these three issues together, around 92,000 citizens of this country were killed in four decades. For the elimination of these three issues, never was a well-planned effort made. PM Narendra Modi made those efforts after coming to power.”

Misguided youths

action programme to help youth prepare for competitive exams.

The DGP was accompanied by VK Birdi, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Javid Iqbal Matoo, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) South Kashmir Range (SKR), and Anayat Ali Chowdhary, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shopian.

He visited the remote village of Keller as part of the ongoing Thana Diwas Programme organized by Police Station Keller.

Keller, located in a remote area of Shopian, is primarily inhabited by the Gujjar, Bakarwal, and Chohan communities. The event witnessed overwhelming participation from the locals.

During the interaction, community members raised several important concerns, including the demand for the engagement of Special Police Officers (SPOs) from their area, along with various civil administration issues affecting their daily lives.

The DGP assured the community that their grievances would be addressed without delay

**LoP Sharma**

J&K’s developmental & security issues. Raised key concerns for Kishtwar, including Road completion, Land ownership, Airstrip Construction & Establishment of Army Cantonment. Sh. Rajnath Singh Ji assured of every assistance needed for the developmental works,” Sunil Sharma wrote

**We must**

Modi Ji through reforms made sure that every public or private establishment should follow the equal opportunity policy and systematically address the challenges faced by Divyangjan”, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said, “Divyangjan have immense potential to achieve extraordinary

success in life. They are gifted and dedicated to bring positive change in the society. They are not seeking welfare but their rights provided by the constitution.

I have always focussed on policies and decisions which prepare them in a manner that they integrated into the mainstream”.

The Lieutenant Governor sought the support of all the stakeholders, civil society organisations to complete the education of Divyangjan in an inclusive environment.

“Education is crucial for Divyangjan because it is the powerful medium which will provide them opportunities for employment and advancement”, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that, today skilling is equally important for Divyangjan for their empowerment and to achieve their goals. He said, a multi-faceted approach for skilling and a multiple collaborative effort to make them self-reliant will help the Divyangjan to realise their full individual potential.

The Lieutenant Governor also made a special mention of Para-Archers, Ms Sheetal Devi and Sh Rakesh Kumar. He said their incredible journeys, and sheer determination and unshakable willpower have become inspiration for all.

The Lieutenant Governor impressed upon the officials of Social Welfare Department and other stakeholders for making dedicated efforts for identification of beneficiaries and ensuring 100% saturation of Unique ID Cards for Divyangjan.

He said, the J&K Government has already requested the Government of India for organizing Two Mega Camps for Divyangjans one each in Jammu and Kashmir Division.

The event featured cultural performances and martial art demonstration by the children from Composite Regional Centre Jammu, Directorate of Social Welfare and various organizations. They also presented the Lieutenant Governor with the Mata ki Chunni of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi and handmade flower pots and bouquets.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated officials and members of various organizations including Composite Regional Centre Jammu, Jigar foundation, Muskan Charitable Trust,

Muskan Foundation Vijaypur, Swami Vivekanand Educational trust, Directorate of Social Welfare, Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (PWD), J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra Jammu, Voluntary Medicare Society Srinagar and Residential School for the Blinds Roopnagar Jammu.

A Pledge to safeguard the rights and interests of the Divyangjan was also administered.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Rupesh Kumar, Director, Social Welfare, Jammu; Iqbal Lone, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities; senior officials, Divyangjan, representatives of various NGOs and civil society members were present.

Gol Approves

The government has also approved 196 PG seats and 60 MBBS seats for various medical institutions in the region to enhance medical education opportunities.

The AIIMS project in Awantipora, Kashmir, and AIIMS Vijaypur, Jammu, are progressing steadily, with the government allocating 2,326.23 crore for their construction, the government said.

These two AIIMS facilities are expected to become the primary tertiary healthcare centres for the region, reducing the need for patients to travel outside J&K for specialized medical treatment

Delhi Court Junks

The NIA argued that Rashid could neither be granted interim bail nor allowed custody parole as he had no enforceable right to attend the Parliament session while in lawful custody.

Calling Rashid a “highly influential” person who might sway witnesses back home, the NIA said, “Under Section 43D(5) of the UAPA, the accused cannot be granted bail if there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusations against him are prima facie true.”

Rashid’s counsel urged the high court to permit him to attend the ongoing Parliament session on

custody parole, akin to a previous two-day reprieve granted to him.

Custody parole entails a prisoner being escorted by armed police personnel to the place of visit.

The Baramulla MP, who defeated Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, is facing trial in a terror funding case with allegations that he funded separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the NIA’s FIR, Rashid’s name cropped up during the interrogation of businessman and co-accused Zahoor Watali.

**Pvt universities**

Private Universities in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the meantime, the minister while responding to the queries regarding establishing of satellite campus in the Ramban district through University of Jammu said, “At present, there is no proposal regarding the establishment of a Satellite Campus in the Ramban Constituency by the University of Jammu on the pattern of the Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University”

The minister however said that a committee has been constituted to assess the feasibility of setting up an ‘Offsite Campus in Ramban District keeping in view the requirements.’ Presently Jammu and Kashmir have 11 Universities including ‘nine State Universities and two Central Universities.’

Centre has initiated

of the NPS and retired on or before March 31, 2025-whether through regular retirement, voluntary retirement, or retirement under Fundamental Rules 56(j) and is eligible for UPS. If such an employee has superannuated retired or passed away before exercising the option for UPS, their legally wedded spouse will be eligible for the scheme. The enrolment and claim forms for all these categories of central government employees will be available online from 1st April on website of Protean CRA - npskra.ndsl.co.in. The employees can also submit the forms physically.

20th Death Anniversary

HAJI ABDUL REHMAN WANPOH

(1931-2005)

Passing of a Renowned Religious/Islamic Figure being associated with Dawat Tableegh for more than 4-decades...

It was exactly two decades back when our beloved father Haji Abdul Rahman Wanpoh left for heavenly abode on 23rd March 2005 leaving the entire family in deep shock and pain. But we still do not forget him and his ideal principles of life, foresightedness, love, affection, and sincerity. We pray to Allah for his eternal peace and a place in Jannat-ul-Firdous (Ameen). The FatehKhawani will be held at Raja House, Rose Lane(I) Colony, Chanapora, Srinagar on Saturday 23rd March, 2025 at 10:00 am and at Raja House Opp SKUAST KhudwaniKulgam at 02: 00PM on the same day.

All bereaved family members through (Son) Mohammad Rouf Rahman (JKAS) Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara.

علوم اسلامیہ اور دین اسلام کے خدام آپ کے محسوب ادارہ

دارالعلوم رحیمیہ بانڈی پورہ کشمیر

کی آپ مندرجہ ذیل طریقوں سے رجسٹرڈ کے اس مہینہ میں مدد کر سکتے ہیں

۱۔ صدقہ جاریہ (خریدی زمین اور تعمیرات وغیرہ)

کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ دارالعلوم رحیمیہ کے بک بین بازار بانڈی پورہ کشمیر

0061010100001532

IFSC Code: JAKA0WULLAR

۲۔ زکوٰۃ، نیاز وغیرہ

کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ دارالعلوم رحیمیہ کے بک بین بازار بانڈی پورہ کشمیر

0061010100000321

IFSC Code: JAKA0WULLAR

۳۔ عام امداد، عمومی خیرات، اللہ عطیہ

بینک اکاؤنٹ دارالعلوم رحیمیہ کے بک بینک نٹھال پاک بانڈی پورہ

0727040100000386

IFSC Code: JAKA0NIPARK

۴۔ تعمیر مسجد شریف

کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ دارالعلوم رحیمیہ کے بک بین بازار بانڈی پورہ کشمیر

0727010100000084

IFSC Code: JAKA0NIPARK

۵۔ مدرسۃ البنات

کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ جواں و کشمیر بینک

0727010100000200

IFSC Code: JAKA0NIPARK

۶۔ ریلیف کے لئے (بھگائی آفات، مہربانوں کے ڈانکس ر بھناج)

کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ ریلیف سہل ہے کے بک بین بازار بانڈی پورہ

0061010100001098

IFSC Code: JAKA0WULLAR

۷۔ محمود غلامی ادارہ پارمپورہ یتیم خانہ، امداد بیوگان مساکین)

کرنٹ اکاؤنٹ بام محمود چٹلڈن ہوم پارمپورہ نیوٹرینڈی سرنگار

0181010100002615

IFSC Code: JAKA0FRUITS

نوٹ:- آپ جس اکاؤنٹ میں رقم داخل کریں اس کی اطلاع دفتر کو فون 01957-225271 پر ضرور کریں یا موبائل SMS پر 9419089250 کریں تاکہ دوسرے حسابات اور بینک کے اندراجات میں موافقت رہے اور فرق نہ آئے۔

الدامی الی الخیر

محمد رحمت اللہ ناظم دارالعلوم رحیمہ بانڈی پورہ کشمیر پین: 193502 فون دفتر: 01957-225271

جاری کردہ: رمضان المبارک ۱۴۴۶ھ مطابق مارچ ۲۰۲۵ء

NOTICE

It is hereby informed that my name has been incorrectly recorded as Mehbooba Begum on my Aadhaar card instead of Mahbooba Bano, which requires rectification. Due to this error, my son Sarim Nazir Malik's mother's name has also been recorded incorrectly in his admission records at Faize Aam Secondary School and hence to be rectified.

Anyone having any objection in this regard may kindly contact the concerned departments within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained thereafter.

Mahbooba Bano  
M/o Sarim Nazir Malik  
R/o plan Bandipora

NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that my father Lt Mehraj ud Din Sofi had shops at Kaloosa, Bandipore and was an electric consumer under ID No. 0216020010543, who expired on 6th Feb 2024. Now I have sold the said shops to Jawahira Begum W/O Saif Ud Din Dar R/O Kaloosa.

Now I intend to transfer the said agreement from my deceased father's name to the lady Jawahira Begum. I have cleared all the dues up to Feb 2025 and I have no objection if the said agreement is transferred from my above deceased father's name to the above-named lady. Anybody having objection in this regard may file the same before the office of AEE Electric Sub Division, Kaloosa, within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained thereafter.

RAMEEZ MEHRAJ SOFI  
S/O LT MEHRAJ UD DIN SOFI  
R/O KALOOSA BANDIPORE

NOTICE

The applicant namely Aga Syed Hadi, S/o Syed Amjad ali, Resident of ichgam budgam, has applied for the change of name on his passport from wrong name, Syed Mohammad Hadi to Aga Syed Hadi (right name) at passport office Srinagar. Anyone having any objection in this regard may contact Passport office Srinagar within seven days after publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of time given in this notice

Regards: Aga Syed Hadi

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that i have lost my 8th class pass Discharge Certificate some where, Now i want to apply for its duplicate in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Headmaster GOVT High school Pazalpora Mantrigam Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Haseena Bano.  
D/O Noor Hassan Gojar Turk.  
R/O Chandaji Bandipora.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that, I have Changed my name from (Old name) Mohammad Latif Khan Gojar. to (New name) Mohd Latief Khan. In Future i will be known as (New name) Mohd Latief Khan. If any body is having any objection he/she may Contact Passport office, Srinagar with in 7 days. After 7 days no objection Will be accepted.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that Electricity Agreement Bearing Consumer ID No: 0216020004541, which is Registered in the name of Mohad Ganai, S/O Mohd Subhan. Now i want to apply for change this Electricity Agreement in the name of Ghulam Mohammad Ganie, S/O Mohad Ganie, in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Executive Engineer Electricity Sub Division Kaloosa Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Ghulam Mohammad Ganie.  
S/O Mohad Ganie.  
R/O Kaloosa Bandipora.

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that the Name and DOB of my Daughter has been Mistakenly Mentioned in his school records as Aazma Bano, and DOB, 05-03-2015. While as her actual and correct name and DOB, as per her Aadhaar card is Azama Bano, and DOB is, 05-03-2013. In this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the principal Al - Noor Public school Arin Bandipora with in a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

Qasim Mohamad khan,  
F/O Azama Bano.  
R/O Sumlar Gojarpathi, Bandipora.



# IPL to serve as catalyst for Jaiswal's T20 World Cup inclusion: Formative coach

Jwala Singh, the formative coach of Yashasvi Jaiswal, believes the IPL season will be key to the opener's bid to reclaim a spot in India's squad for next year's T20 World Cup.

The 23-year-old Jaiswal has impressed in Tests but faces stiff competition in the T20I setup, with openers Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma in solid form for the national team.

The T20 showpiece will be co-hosted by defending champions India and Sri Lanka from February to March in 2026.

"He has played a lot of T20s for India, with many fifties at a good strike rate, but in the last 2-3 series, he was rested, I can say that.

"But yes, I believe this year's IPL will give him that opportunity (for the T20 World Cup) because there will be a lot of matches and high-pressure games," Singh told PTI Videos on Friday.

Jaiswal has so far scored 723 runs in 23 T20Is.

Singh emphasized on IPL's role as a platform for players to make a mark.

"If you see Indian cricket, IPL is the platform from where we get the season's big hits because all IPL performances are taken into account, and you get noticed," he said.

"So yes, I think this is an opportunity because he got selected based on his IPL performance in 2023. So I think this is a fresh start, and if he performs well, scores some runs, that will really help him to get back in the team."

The 18th edition of the IPL is beginning on Saturday.

Jaiswal, however, will be without his former Rajasthan Royals opening partner, England's

"I think he will definitely miss Buttler because he used to always call him 'Jos bhai' to me on call or whenever he spoke about him," he said.

Singh, who has mentored Jaiswal, urged the opener not to lose sight of the bigger picture.

"But I think it is always more important to



Jos Buttler, who has joined Gujarat Titans.

Singh acknowledged that Jaiswal will miss Buttler's presence but is confident the young opener will adapt.

"So yes, when you have played cricket with someone for quite some time in a team as an opener, it will take a little bit of time to get adjusted."

"So, I expect to see him finishing as nothing more than the highest run-getter of the league. He just needs to take to the field with the mindset of being the best."

"But I think it is always more important to move on and get the right combination because the target is to win matches for your team, hence you are in the team, so these things are always a little uncomfortable at first," he said.

## Former MI coach Boucher feels battle-hardened Hardik Pandya will shine in IPL 2025

Former Mumbai Indians coach Mark Boucher feels the torrid time endured by Hardik Pandya in the last IPL season added to his already tough character and the "battle-hardened" all-rounder will be at his best in the upcoming edition.

It was a turbulent last season for Pandya after he replaced Rohit Sharma as MI skipper. The decision didn't go well with MI fans and they booed the all-rounder at the Wankhede Stadium at every opportunity. The results also didn't go in his favour as MI finished last in the points table.

But things have changed since then and Pandya is expected to get the support of the fans after playing a vital role in India's T20 World Cup and Champions Trophy triumphs.

"It was really tough for him (Pandya) last season. He was being booed by the crowd every time he took the field, he deserves better, he deserves 100 per cent respect," said Boucher, a JioStar expert for the league starting on Saturday.

"A cricketers never wants such a thing to happen with him. But he is a tough character," he added.

The former South Africa wicket-keeping star was at the helm in MI when Pandya took over from Rohit and had first-hand access to the all-rounder as he dealt with the public backlash.

"He is a battle-hardened cricketer. He has been through tough times, injuries, form, many things but he overcame everything and achieved success. The greats of the cricket have to be tough and he has shown that," Boucher said.

"IPL is better with Hardik on the field, the game of cricket is better with Hardik on the field," he added.



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