

# Kashmir Convener



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## ‘Pak Stuck In Bad Habits’: Jaishankar

KC News Network

**ANAND (GUJARAT):** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday said the 2008 Mumbai terror attack marked a turning point in relations with Pakistan when Indians collectively felt that such behaviour from a neighbouring country could no longer be tolerated.

Speaking at Charotar University of Science and Technology during an interactive session, Jaishankar acknowledged India's transformation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the last decade.

In contrast, Pakistan has remained unchanged, continuing with what he termed as its "bad habits."

When asked why the Indian government rarely discusses Pakistan publicly anymore,



Jaishankar explained that there was no need to waste "precious time" on them.

"India has changed. I wish I could say Pakistan has changed. They unfortunately,

in many ways, are continuing their bad habits. I would say the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attack was the turning point. I think that was when the Indian public, across political parties, said this is too much," he said.

"People felt that the country (India) cannot accept this behaviour from a neighbour. I think that feeling was very very strong in society, but it may not have been entirely understood at that time by the Government at that time, which is a different matter," the Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat told the audience. After 2014, when the government changed, Pakistan was given a firm message that there will be consequences if acts of terrorism are committed, he said.

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## My voice no longer matters in NC: MP Ruhullah

KC News Network

**SRINAGAR:** National Conference MP from Srinagar Aga Ruhullah Mehdi said that the party has "virtually ended" all communication with him, especially after his participation in a student demonstration against the controversial reservation policy outside the CM's residence last year.



"Until the Assembly elections, my opinions mattered. Even if the party disagreed with my methods, it still supported my ideas. But after the reservation protests, the party stopped engaging with me," Ruhullah said while speaking during a X Space session as per news agency JKNS.

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## Cultural exchanges can strengthen India: LG Sinha

KC News Network

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today attended the celebration of 'Himachal Diwas', hosted by Jammu Kashmir Raj Bhawan at Jammu.

Security personnel, students and the people of Himachal Pradesh living in J&K UT were the special invitees for the evening.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations and best wishes to the people of Himachal Pradesh on the occasion.

"This Devbhoomi is blessed by nature, rich spiritual and cultural heritage and vibrant traditions. It has also emerged as a major hub



for hydropower, and this sector is significantly contributing to its local economy. I pray that the aspirations of the people of this state are fulfilled and Himachal keeps strengthening the nation's growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised the need to increase the Cultural exchanges between the States and Union Territories. He said, the cross-cultural engagement programmes

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## “Adjournment motion cannot be brought against actions of central Govt in J&K Assembly”



KC News Network

**SRINAGAR:** Amid controversy over the adjournment motion brought by MLAs of National Conference and their ally parties regarding the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025—which caused disruptions in the J&K Assembly for three

consecutive days—former Lok Sabha Secretary General P.D. T. Achary on Monday said that such a motion cannot be brought against actions of the central government in the J&K Assembly. He also said that MLAs of the ruling party cannot bring an adjournment

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## Adjournment motion on Waqf Act ‘misplaced action’: CM Omar

Jahangeer Ganaie

**SRINAGAR:** Terming the adjournment motion on Waqf Act moved by the J&K legislators as a "misplaced action" Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that National Conference has now approached the Supreme Court (SC) in this regard.

Talking to reporters here, Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The adjournment motion brought by the members was an inappropriate move as the motion is aimed to contest the local government's move. However, if resolution would have been

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## NIA Files Chargesheet Against Pakistani Handler, 2 Others

KC NEWS NETWORK

**NEW DELHI:** The National Investigation Agency on Tuesday filed a chargesheet against three accused, including a Pakistani handler, in a terror conspiracy case involving seizure of arms and ammunition in the Poonch region of Jammu and Kashmir.

The chargesheet filed before a special NIA court in Jammu has named Abdul Aziz, Munawar Hussain and Nazir Hussain alias Nazir Ahmed alias Shaheen

as accused in the case.

Nazir Hussain, currently active in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), is an operative of the banned Jammu and Kashmir Ghaznavi Force (JKGF) terrorist organisation, a statement issued by the probe agency said.

According to NIA investigations, Nazir was involved in motivating vulnerable people of Kashmir to engage in acts of violence as part of the larger conspiracy

hatched by various proscribed organisations and their associates to carry out terrorist activities in the region.

Nazir would share inflammatory audio clips and video notes with local sympathisers of the terror outfits, inciting them to pursue 'Jihad' and wage a war against India, the NIA said.

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## CM Omar Abdullah inaugurates vital Rohmoo Bridge in Pulwama



KC News Network

**PULWAMA:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday inaugurated the 50 meter-long vital Rohmoo Bridge in Pulwama district, connecting the

three districts of Shopian, Kulgam, and Pulwama with the capital city Srinagar.

The bridge, constructed at a cost of Rs 25.97 crore by the Public Works (Roads and Buildings) Department

under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP), connects over 80,000 residents of several villages including Rahmoo, Mitrigam, Pakherpora, Zagigam, Putrigam, Tujan, Mirgund, Thokerpora, Tilsar, Char-e-Sharief, Yusmarg, Kamrazipora and adjoining areas of Pulwama district.

Addressing a large public gathering on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated that with the commissioning of the Rohmoo Bridge, a long-pending demand of a large population in South Kashmir has been fulfilled. The Chief Minister expressed hope

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## PM's J&K Visit on April 19 Postponed



Umair Gull Ganie

**Qazigund :** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Jammu and Kashmir on April 19 for the inauguration of the much-awaited Vande Bharat Express from Katra to Srinagar has been postponed, officials said on Monday.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the PM's visit to inaugurate the Vande Bharat Express on a stretch of the Udhampur-

Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), a 272-km-long mega railway project, has been postponed.

Preparations were already underway for the high-profile visit, with mock drills and trial runs being conducted on the USBRL section.

Speaking to KNO, Chief Area Manager (CAM) Kashmir, Saqib Yousuf Yatoo (IRTS), confirmed the postponement of the PM's visit, stating that no fresh date has been announced yet.

The Vande Bharat Express, specially designed to operate in sub-zero temperatures of the Kashmir Valley, is already stationed at Katra. The train consists of eight fully air-conditioned coaches equipped with cab heating, HVAC systems with 9kW heating capacity, sealed gangways, infotainment displays, CCTV surveillance, LED lighting, mobile charging ports, automatic plug doors, and electro-pneumatic brakes.

Although the train is capable of running at speeds up to 160 km/h, it will operate at a limited speed of 85 km/h between Katra and

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## ‘Power sector second highest revenue contributor for JK’

Riyaz Bhat

**SRINAGAR:** In the past four years, Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department has become the second highest revenue contributor



for the government. The department in this period has witnessed a 67 percent increase in revenue generation.

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## Kashmir records season's hottest day at 30.4 Celsius

Owais Gul

**SRINAGAR:** Meteorological Department (MeT) has issued yellow and orange alerts for the two days, April 18 and 19 (Friday and Saturday) predicting light to moderate rains and snow in Jammu and Kashmir.

The forecast was issued amidst Kashmir recording the season's hottest day on Tuesday with mercury settling at 30.4 degree Celsius in Srinagar, marking 10.2 degree Celsius above than average temperature.

The other parts of Kashmir including Qazigund (29.8 degree Celsius), Pahalgam (25.4 degree Celsius), Kupwara (29.5 degree Celsius) and Kokernag (27.5 degree Celsius) also witnessed the season's hottest day today.

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## Chief Secretary for making joint efforts to cultivate land near IB



KC News Network

**JAMMU:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, while chairing a joint meeting of Civil administration and Security forces, remarked that joint efforts by the Agriculture Production Department, concerned district administrations and security forces should be made to encourage

the farmers to cultivate the land patches between the fence and International Border (IB).

The meeting, which was attended by Principal Secretary, APD; Principal Secretary, Home Department; IG, BSF; Deputy Commissioner, Kathua/Jammu/Samba/Poonch and Rajouri along with other officers was called to discuss different

measures to help the farmers to take-up these lands for cultivation.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned to encourage the farmers to cultivate all the arable land between the fence and International Border. He maintained that irrespective of the status of such lands these should be put to productive use to add to our local food basket.

He further made out that these farmers should be facilitated by the Agriculture Department besides given assurances by the security forces about their security. He called upon them to give suitable advice to the farmers about the kind of food or fodder to be sown. He also called for extending all the possible assistance to these farmers so that

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## From 52,000 to 10,000: JKAHUC seeks PM's intervention

>>> Urges Centre to restore private Hajj-quota <<<

Mubashir Alam Wani

**SRINAGAR:** Amid mounting anxiety among Hajj pilgrims intending to go through private Hajj Group Operators (HGOs) this year, the Jammu & Kashmir Association of Hajj & Umrah Companies (JKAHUC) on Tuesday raised alarm over the reduction of India's private Hajj quota from 52,000 to just 10,000, urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene and prevent the cancellation of thousands of pilgrims.

Addressing a press conference here in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir Association of Hajj &



Umrah Companies (JKAHUC) president Sheikh Feroze, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), called upon the Government of India to immediately intervene and resolve the crisis surrounding

the reduction of the Hajj quota for private tour operators.

The Association during the presser revealed that over 52,000 pilgrims across India, including at least 3,000

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# Allahabad HC rape case remarks: Why make such observations? SC asks

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday took exception to the Allahabad High Court's recent remarks in a rape case as reportedly saying the complainant "herself invited trouble", and wondered why it made such observations while deciding a bail plea.

The high court recently granted bail in the rape case, observing the complainant "herself invited trouble" by agreeing to go to the applicant's house after getting drunk.

The apex court's observations came when it was hearing a suo motu case over the Allahabad High Court's separate order of March 17 in which the high court said grabbing breasts and pulling the drawstring of a woman's "pyjama" or "lowers" did not amount to the offence of attempt to rape.

"There is another order passed by another judge of the same high court," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih said.

Justice Gavai went on, "If one wants to grant bail that is okay but why make such observations that she invited trouble and all that. One has to be very careful on this side (bench) also."



Solicitor general Tushar Mehta asked how a common man perceived such observations was required to be kept in mind.

The bench adjourned the hearing in the suo motu case for four weeks.

On March 26, the apex court stayed the high court's March 17 order in the attempt to rape matter which meant the same couldn't be used in any judicial proceeding

for seeking reliefs by the present set of accused or others.

The top court had said some of the observations made in the order reflected total "insensitivity" and "inhuman approach".

It had taken a suo motu cognisance of the matter after it was brought to the notice of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna. The high court's March 17 order held

that the attempt to rape offence was not made out against the accused and they were liable to be summoned for the lesser offence of assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe her.

The high court's order had come on a petition by the accused challenging the order of a special judge in Kasganj through which they were summoned for the alleged offence under section 376 (rape) of IPC among other sections.

In another case, the high court passed an order granting bail to an accused and said, "

Having heard counsel for the parties and examined the matter in its entirety, I find that it is not in dispute that victim and applicant both are major. Victim is student of M.A., hence she was competent enough to understand the morality and significance of her act as disclosed by her in the FIR."

The court added, "This court is of the view that even if the allegation of the victim is accepted as true, then it can also be concluded that she herself invited trouble and was also responsible for the same."

## PM Modi believed 'false propaganda' about land at UoH: CM Revanth Reddy

**HYDERABAD:** Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Tuesday hit out at opposition parties over their stand on the 400-acre land adjacent to the University of Hyderabad (UoH) here, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi also made "bulldozer comments" on the state government, believing the "false propaganda".

Addressing the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting here, Reddy said the opposition parties spread false propaganda using artificial intelligence on the lands.

In a public meeting in Haryana on Monday, PM Modi said the Congress government in Telangana is busy destroying jungles through bulldozers, causing damage to nature and endangering animals, describing it as "the working style of the Congress." "The opposition spread false propaganda using artificial intelligence on HCU (Hyderabad Central University) lands. Believing the opposition campaign to be true, Prime Minister Modi also made bulldozer comments. BJP and BRS are jointly spreading a poisonous campaign against the people's government. We will have a good future only if the prestige of the party and the government is enhanced," a press release quoted Reddy as saying.

Until yesterday, Union Ministers Bandi Sanjay



and Kishan Reddy criticised the state government, and now the PM has also entered the fray.

"Modi is facing trouble after the People's Government (Congress Government) launched a slew of big schemes in Telangana," Revanth Reddy said. The Telangana government's plan to develop 400 acres of land in Kancha Gachibowli here to create an IT infrastructure has sparked protests by the UoH Students' Union. BRS and BJP have also opposed the government's decision. The matter is now being heard in the Telangana High Court and the Supreme Court. Petitioners in the HC are alleging that the flora and fauna of the area will be adversely impacted by the Congress government in the state.

## National Herald Case: ED Chargesheets Congress Leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi

**NEW DELHI:** The Enforcement Directorate has filed a chargesheet against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others accusing them of allegedly laundering Rs 988 crore in the National Herald case.

Special judge Vishal Gogne examined the chargesheet, which was filed on April 9, on the point of cognisance and posted the matter for further proceedings on April 25.

The chargesheet also names Congress leader Sam Pitroda and Suman Dubey as accused.

Sources said the other accused include Young Indian, Dotex Merchandise Pvt Ltd and Sunil Bhandari.

"The present prosecution complaint shall next be taken up for consideration on the aspect of cognisance before this court on April 25, 2025 when the special counsel for the ED and IO shall also ensure the production of the case diaries for perusal by the court," the judge said.

The chargesheet was filed under Sections 3 (money laundering) and 4 (punishment for money laundering) of Prevention of Money Laundering Act by ED's special public prosecutor N K Matta.

"Let the complaint be checked and registered. The Ahlmad (court staff) shall ensure that the entire file/documents are properly paginated. The ED is directed to file a soft copy of the complaint and documents in readable/OCR format by the next date," the judge said.

The special court dealing with the cases of lawmakers noted the submission of the ED, which would be moving an application before the district judge for the transfer of the case related to the predicate offence for alleged cheating, criminal conspiracy and other offences, based on which the ED had started its investigation in the present matter, from another court to Judge Gogne's court.



The predicate offence is required to be tried by the same court which takes cognisance of the offence under Section 3 PMLA, the judge said, and Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha respectively.

"Essentially, the two offences viz the predicate offence and the PMLA offence are required to be tried by the same court," the judge said.

Since the allegations in the present complaint were arising from the predicate offence, the file in the predicate offence were required to be called for perusal, the court added.

"However, the power of assignment or transfer of a matter is not vested with this court and is rather the prerogative of the Principal District & Sessions Judge, Rouse Avenue Courts Complex, New Delhi," the court pointed out.

The Enforcement Directorate Saturday said it has served notices to take possession of immovable assets worth Rs 661 crore that it had attached as part of a money laundering probe linked to Congress-controlled National

Herald newspaper and the Associated Journals Limited (AJL).

The ED investigation began in 2021 after a metropolitan magistrate in Patiala House courts in Delhi took cognisance of a private complaint filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy on June 26, 2014.

The complaint, the ED said, highlighted a "criminal conspiracy" by several prominent political figures, including the first family of the Congress party led by Sonia, her MP son Rahul, late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes aside from Dubey, Pitroda and a private company Young Indian for their alleged involvement in money laundering in relation to the fraudulent takeover of properties valued over Rs 2,000 crore belonging to the Associated Journals Limited (AJL).

"The legal proceedings against the accused have faced challenges but have been upheld by both the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court of India, allowing the investigation to proceed," the ED said.

AJL is the publisher of the National Herald news platform (newspaper and web portal), owned by Young Indian Private Limited.

Congress leaders Sonia and Rahul are majority shareholders of Young Indian with 38 per cent shares held by each one of them. They were questioned for hours by the ED in this case a few years ago.

The ED claimed its investigation has "conclusively" found that Young Indian, a private company "beneficially owned" by Sonia and Rahul, "acquired" AJL properties worth Rs 2,000 crore for a mere Rs 50 lakh, significantly undervaluing its worth.

"Young Indian and AJL properties were used for generation of further proceeds of crime in the form of bogus donations to the tune of Rs 18 crore, bogus advance rent to the tune of Rs 38 crore and bogus advertisements of Rs 29 crore," the ED has alleged.

## 90% Of Women In Police Force Serving In Junior Ranks: Report

**NEW DELHI:** India's police force has less than 1,000 women in senior positions like Director-Generals and Superintendents of Police, with 90 per cent of all women in policing serving in the constabulary, according to a new report.

The India Justice Report (IJR) 2025, initiated by Tata Trusts and supported by several civil society organisations and data partners, tracked the performance of states across four areas — Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid.

According to the report, despite growing awareness about the need for gender diversity in law enforcement, not a single state or Union Territory has met its target for women's representation in the police force.

The IJR 2025, released on Tuesday, ranked Karnataka as the top-performing state among the 18 large and mid-sized states in terms of justice delivery, maintaining its position from 2022.

Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu followed Karnataka, with the five southern states outperforming others due to better diversity, infrastructure and staffing across sectors.

The report also underscored gender disparities within the police hierarchy.

Out of 2.4 lakh women in police, only 960 are in the Indian Police Service (IPS) ranks, while 24,322 hold non-IPS officer



positions such as Deputy Superintendent, Inspector, or Sub-Inspector. The authorised strength of the Indian Police Service (IPS) is 5,047 officers.

Astaggering 2.17 lakh women serve in the constabulary. Madhya Pradesh tops the chart for the highest number of women Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs), with 133.

Around 78 per cent of police stations now have Women Help Desks, 86 per cent of prisons are equipped with video conferencing facilities, and the per capita expenditure on legal aid has nearly doubled between 2019 and 2023, reaching Rs 6.46. The share of women in the district judiciary has also increased to 38 per cent in the same period.

However, the share of Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) in the district judiciary remains low at 5 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively.

In the police force, SCs account

for 17 per cent and STs 12 per cent, falling short of proportional representation.

Paralegal volunteers (PLVs), considered a crucial link for access to legal aid, have declined by 38 per cent over five years, with only 3 PLVs per lakh population now available. There are only 25 psychologists/psychiatrists available across prisons nationwide, the report said.

The IJR also flags serious infrastructural and staffing deficiencies across the justice system. India has just 15 judges per million people, far below the Law Commission's 1987 recommendation of 50.

High Courts are operating with 33 per cent vacancies and district courts with 21 per cent, leading to massive workloads — up to 15,000 cases per judge in High Courts like Allahabad and Madhya Pradesh. District court judges, on average, are handling 2,200 cases each.

Prison overcrowding is

another area of concern, with a national average occupancy rate of 131 per cent.

Uttar Pradesh has some of the worst instances — one in every three jails there holds over 250 per cent of its capacity, the report said.

Furthermore, the availability of medical personnel in jails remains inadequate, with the prisoner-doctor ratio standing at 775:1 against the recommended 300:1.

In many large states, including Haryana, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, this ratio exceeds 1,000:1.

Among the small states, Sikkim retained the top rank, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha showed the most improvement among large and mid-sized states between 2022 and 2025.

Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand also improved, surpassing Gujarat and Haryana on the improvement index.

The report also evaluated the functioning of 25 State Human Rights Commissions and featured essays on access to justice for persons with disabilities and mediation as an alternative dispute resolution method.

With India's prison population projected to hit 6.8 lakh by 2030, the IJR warned that unless systemic reforms are prioritised, the justice system will continue to disproportionately burden the vulnerable and marginalised.

## Haj Tour Operators Failed To Comply With Timelines Set By Saudi Authorities: Govt On 'Quota Cut'

**NEW DELHI:** Amid concerns over Saudi Arabia reportedly "cutting" India's private Haj quota this year, the government on Tuesday said the Combined Haj Group Operators (CHGOs) had failed to comply with the necessary timelines set by the Saudi authorities despite reminders.



authorities closer to the time of the pilgrimage.

"The Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) through the Haj Committee of India manages arrangements for the bulk of the quota allotted to India, which is 1,22,518 in the current year. All the necessary arrangements, including flight schedules, transportation, Mina camps, accommodation, and additional services have been taken up and completed as per the Saudi requirements, within the given timelines," the statement said.

The balance of the quota was allotted, as is customary, to private tour operators.

Due to changes in Saudi guidelines, more than 800 private tour operators were consolidated into 26 legal entities termed Combined Haj

Group Operators (CHGOs), by the ministry this year.

Addressing legal challenges, the Haj quota was allocated by MoMA to these 26 CHGOs well in advance.

"However, despite reminders, they failed to comply with the necessary timelines set by the Saudi authorities and failed to finalise the mandatory contracts, including for Mina camps, accommodation and transport of pilgrims, as required under the Saudi regulations," the statement said.

The Government of India has been continuously engaging on this matter with the Saudi authorities concerned, including at the ministerial level, the statement said.

The Saudi Haj Ministry highlighted its concerns for the safety of the pilgrims, particularly in Mina,

## One Heatwave Can Lead To Back-To-Back Hot Spells: Study

**NEW DELHI:** A heatwave can create conditions in the environment conducive for the next one, which can increase the chances of back-to-back heatwaves, a new study has suggested.

A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and Germany's Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz looked at why South Asia experienced extreme heat events one after the other during March

and April 2022.

Temperatures reached extraordinary levels for that time of the year across the region, including India and Pakistan, which were consistently 3-8 degrees Celsius above average. The prolonged period of hot weather continued into May, too.

The findings of the study, published in the Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres, also showed a "concerning pattern," whereby the succeeding heatwave is more intense, the researchers said.

The extreme heat of the first heatwave removes moisture from the soil, making it dry. Excess dryness can then trigger a cycle of atmospheric processes, making the next spell even worse, they said.

Co-author Arpita Mondal, associate professor at IIT Bombay, explains, "Think of it like this — when (the) soil

has moisture, under clear sky conditions, some of the sun's energy goes into evaporating that moisture rather than heating the air."

"But when the soil is already dry, all that energy goes straight into making the air hotter," she said.

Comparing the heatwaves of March and April, the team found that each was driven by a different atmospheric process — the former by winds in high altitudes and the latter by dry soil conditions, which were created as a result of the former.

"Our analysis shows that the March heatwave was primarily linked to a sudden increase in the amplitude of short-lived atmospheric Rossby waves, which are large-scale meanders in high-altitude winds, resembling bends in a winding river," said lead author Roshan Jha, IIT Bombay.

## CBI Cracks Down On Digital Arrest Syndicates, Arrests 4 After Searches At 12 Locations



**NEW DELHI:** In a major crackdown on syndicates running digital arrest scams, the Central Bureau of Investigation has arrested four people following searches at 12 locations, officials said on Tuesday. Terming it "Operation Chakra-V", they said the CBI carried out searches in connection with a digital arrests case registered by it on the request of the Rajasthan government in which two persons each were arrested from Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai.

It was alleged that the arrested accused extorted a total of Rs 7.67 crore in 42 instalments. The victim

was digitally detained for over three months by cybercriminals posing as personnel of various law enforcement agencies, the officials said.

"The CBI has been adopting a multi-pronged approach in investigating digital arrest cases, with a special emphasis on dismantling the infrastructure behind such offences."

A CBI spokesperson said in a statement. He said the CBI has registered multiple cases of digital arrests in recent months.

The agency conducted an in-depth investigation involving extensive data analysis and profiling after taking over the Rajasthan case.

"The CBI employed advanced investigative techniques to identify the perpetrators."

Based on the leads generated during the investigation, the CBI conducted extensive searches recently across 12 locations in Moradabad and Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh, Krishnanagar in West Bengal, Mumbai and Jaipur, leading to the arrest of four individuals involved in this highly organised crime syndicate," the spokesperson said.

## SC Extends Protection From Arrest To Former IAS Probationer Khedkar In Cheating Case

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday extended till April 21 the protection from arrest granted to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar, accused of cheating and wrongly availing OBC and disability quota benefits in the civil services examination.

A bench comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma took note of the submissions of Khedkar's counsel that her rejoinder to the reply filed the Delhi government has been filed, but it has not come on record.

The bench took note of the submissions and listed the matter for hearing on April 21 and asked the apex court registry to verify

whether Khedkar's rejoinder is filed.

The bench, meanwhile, allowed the plea of her counsel that the protection from arrest granted her on January 15 in the case be extended till the next date of hearing.

On March 18, the top court orally told Khedkar that she cannot avail separate attempts to clear the test as an "able candidate" and a "disabled candidate".

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the Delhi government, had said they need custodial interrogation of Khedkar to ascertain the identity of the middlemen involved in the alleged scam of preparing fake disability



# Bandipora Entrepreneurs Receive Shot in the Arm as JKEDI Launches RAMP-Backed MDP

## Structured training programme aims to enhance managerial skills and boost sustainability of local MSMEs

**BANDIPORA :** Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Monday inaugurated a Management Development Programme (MDP) under the RAMP scheme at its RSETI Centre in Bandipora, aimed at strengthening local entrepreneurs and MSMEs through structured training and skill-building.

An official spokesperson of district administration Bandipora said the inaugural ceremony of MDP under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme was held by JKEDI at its RSETI Centre, Bandipora, marking a significant step towards strengthening the capabilities of local entrepreneurs and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through structured training and capacity-building interventions.

On the occasion, DC Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, interacted with the participants, shared his valuable thoughts on the importance



of entrepreneurship, and highlighted its role in driving self-reliance and local economic development.

He encouraged the participants to take full advantage of such training programmes and accelerate their entrepreneurial activities with confidence and innovation.

The MDP is a key component of the RAMP scheme, focused on enhancing managerial competencies, improving decision-making skills, and promoting business sustainability among existing and aspiring entrepreneurs.

DNO, JKEDI, Syed Nazneen provided a detailed overview of the RAMP scheme, which is a World Bank-supported programme launched by the

Ministry of MSME, Government of India. The scheme is designed to improve the performance of MSMEs across the country by enhancing market access, streamlining policy implementation, and providing focused support in areas like digital enablement, skill development, and financial access. The Managerial Development Programme (MDP) under RAMP plays a vital role in building the managerial and entrepreneurial skills of grassroots-level business owners.

The initiative reflects JKEDI's continued commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and driving economic development in the district by empowering individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to start, manage, and grow their enterprises effectively.

Among others the event was attended by Director RSETI, Chief Planning Officer Bandipora, Mohammed Maqbool Lone ; officials from JKEDI and aspiring entrepreneurs.

# IIPA Jammu & Kashmir Charts Roadmap for Governance Initiatives in Kashmir

**Srinagar:** The Jammu & Kashmir Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) held a meeting in Srinagar on Saturday to chalk out plans for upcoming programs focused on good governance and public administration across the Kashmir Division over the next few months.

According to an official spokesperson, the meeting was attended by Vice Chairman (Kashmir) Dr. G.N. Qasba, A.M. Watali (IPS Rtd.), Executive Committee Member Kh. Bashir Ahmad (IAS Rtd.), Prof. Gul Mohammad, Mr. Mir Showkat Ahmad, Mr. Bashir Ahmad (Executive Committee Member), Mr. G.M. Andrabi (Hon. Joint Secretary), and Shah Nawaz Bukhari (JKAS), Joint Director Information, who joined as a special invitee.

The members unanimously resolved to revitalize IIPA's activities in the region, emphasizing crucial governance issues and public service improvements. They acknowledged with appreciation the continued support and guidance of IIPA's Patron Dr. Ashok Bhan and Chairman Mr. B.R. Sharma.

Among the key decisions taken was the plan to pursue dedicated accommodation for IIPA's activities in Srinagar. A DO letter by the Chairman to the Chief Secretary in this regard was discussed, and as an interim arrangement, the use of the Conference Hall at the Directorate of Information on Residency Road was proposed, pending approval from the Director Estates and



Secretary Information.

The committee also scheduled the Annual Debating Contest for August this year, with members tasked to suggest or finalize the contest theme. A proposal from Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, former Advisor to the Governor, to host a special lecture on a topic of public interest received unanimous support. It was further resolved to invite the Transport Commissioner to speak on how Information Technology is enhancing service delivery in the Transport Department.

The urgent need to address traffic management in Srinagar also featured prominently in the discussions, with members proposing to engage stakeholders such as the Traffic Police to develop effective strategies.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to organizing smaller, thematic sessions on governance-related issues in the months ahead, aimed at fostering dialogue and actionable insights for better public administration in Jammu and Kashmir.

# Buyer-Seller Meet Held at IIKSTC Pampore to Boost Direct Agri Trade

BILAL HABIB

**PAMPORE:** The Department of Agriculture, Kashmir, on Monday organised a Buyer-Seller Meet at the Indian International Kashmir Saffron Trade Centre (IIKSTC) in Dusoo, Pampore, with the aim of facilitating direct trade between growers and buyers and boosting agricultural commerce in the region.

The event was inaugurated by Chief Guest and MLA Pampore, Retired Justice Hasnain Masoodi, who also inspected various stalls set up by participating sellers. A large number of saffron growers and dignitaries from across Kashmir attended the meet, making it a significant platform for stakeholder engagement.

In his address, Justice Masoodi said that interactive platforms like Buyer-Seller Meets are essential for building trust and transparency in the agriculture value chain, as they offer growers a chance to connect directly with potential buyers and discuss trade-related issues.

Speaking to Kashmir Convener, Justice Masoodi, however, raised concerns about the scale of participation. "Only 28 kilograms of saffron have been offered at this meet, which is merely about one percent of the total production," he said, questioning the lack of trust



among growers in the facility created at a cost of 37 crore under the National Saffron Mission.

Calling for accountability and reflection, the MLA said that the Saffron Mission – which involved an outlay of 411 crore – has largely failed to meet its objectives. "None of the bore wells dug under the project have become functional so far. A comprehensive review is urgently needed to determine whether any success can be salvaged from this project," he said.

Justice Masoodi added that the saffron industry, once valued at nearly 500 crore with an annual production of around 22,500 kilograms, is now facing serious challenges. He expressed hope that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is aware of the issue, would personally look into it, while Agriculture Minister Javid Ahmad Dar is also expected to conduct an independent review. He said the coming days should be focused on identifying root causes and exploring possible remedies.

Joint Director Agriculture Kashmir Sartaj Ahmad Shah told Kashmir Convener that the event was held under the Jammu and Kashmir Sustainable Investment Programme (JK SIP), with active participation from the Spices Board of India, APEDA, and the Trade Promotion Organisation (TPO).

# PM Shri Middle School Gulshanabad Unveils Annual Newsletter "Akse-e-Gulshan"

GOWHAR MAQBOOL

**HAJIN:** PM Shri Government Middle School Gulshanabad Hajin on Tuesday released its annual school newsletter titled Akse-e-Gulshan 2025 and Logo in an impressive ceremony held in the



school premises.

Clusterhead, Principal Govt Higher Secondary School Hajim Mehboob Ahmad Khan was the chief guest on the occasion. ZEO Hajin Masood Ahmad Magray, Head of Institution Mohammad Shafi Wagay, Parvaiz Ahmad, Dr. Riyaz ul Hassan, Mehraj ud din Parray, Zafar Iqbal Parray, Javid Ahmad Bhat, Javid Ahmad, Mohd Yaqoob Parray, Shameema Akhtar, staff members, and students were also present during the event.

The school newsletter was formally presented by HOI Mohammad Shafi Wagay. It highlights the school's achievements, various activities held during the year, and future plans.

Speaking on the occasion, Mehboob Ahmad Khan appreciated the efforts of the school staff. He said, "I am happy to see the dedication of the teachers and students. The release of this newsletter shows their commitment to improving the standard of education in government schools." He also encouraged the staff to continue such efforts for the betterment of students.

Many speakers delivered speeches on various topics during the event.

Zafar Iqbal Parray delivered the vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, staff, students, and organisers for their support and participation in making the event successful.

# DC Srinagar reviews implementation of AMRUT 2.0 Water Supply projects

## Scheme will make Srinagar City self-sufficient to address water demand

**SRINAGAR:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Tuesday chaired a meeting at DC Office Complex, here to review the implementation of AMRUT 2.0 water supply projects in the district.

DC held detailed discussions on the progress of various approved schemes under AMRUT 2.0, highlighting key developments and challenges. He also took a detailed project wise and component wise review of all the schemes.

At the outset, DC highlighted the significance of AMRUT 2.0. He said that the scheme is aimed to prioritize ensuring water security for urban areas by promoting water conservation, reuse of treated wastewater, and rejuvenation of water bodies.

Dr Bilal stressed the Officers to redouble the efforts to ensure timely completion of all projects so that people are benefited from the scheme.

On the occasion, Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar through a detailed powerpoint presentation highlighted the progress of different projects under the scheme.



The chair was informed that a total number of 20 projects have been approved for Srinagar City, out of which 18 projects have been tendered and allotted.

He was also informed that a total of 14 Over Head Tanks are under execution for improving the service levels. Besides, two Water Treatment Plants of 4.1 MGD capacity are also being taken up.

It was given out that one Activated Carbon Chamber of 7 MGD Capacity under AMRUT 2.0 is in progress that shall address the issues of odour and color issues in the raw water.

During the meeting, DC also reviewed the project for laying 'Raw Water Conductor from Preng to Rangli' which shall augment the water supply of Srinagar City by 25 MGD.

The DC was further informed that with the execution of AMRUT 2.0 Programme, Srinagar City shall be self-sufficient to address water demand up to year 2040.

Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar and Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, the meeting was attended by Executive Engineers of Water Works Division, Water Supply Master Plan Division, FA/CAO Srinagar Municipal Corporation and other concerned Officers.

# 18 Undertrials Recommended for Release in Bandipora UTRC Meeting

**BANDIPORA:** The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora on Tuesday held the second meeting of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC), during which 18 cases of under-trial prisoners were recommended for release.

An official spokesperson said the meeting chaired by Khalil Ahmad Choudhary, Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Bandipora, with the members of the Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC), was attended by District Magistrate, Bandipora Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, Senior Superintendent of Police Bandipora, Harmeet Singh Mehta; Secretary District Legal Services Authority, Bandipora, (Through Virtual Mode), Iqbal Ahmad Akhoun, Chief Prosecution Officer, Bandipora, Abdul Majeed, and Chief LADC, Bandipora Bilal Ahmad Bhat.

The meeting was convened in order to expedite the identification and review of prisoners who are eligible to be considered for release, as well as to accelerate the regular functioning of UTRC and review all eligible under-trial prisoners (UTPs)/Prisoners.

In the meeting, the committee reviewed cases of eligible UTPs/Prisoners shortlisted by the Chairman, DLSA Bandipora for consideration and recommended 18 cases of UTPs/Prisoners besides directed Legal Aid Defense Counsels to take necessary steps and file applications/bail applications.



# Airtel Partners with Blinkit to Deliver SIM Cards in Just 10 Minutes

**SRINAGAR:** Bharti Airtel has announced a new partnership with quick-commerce platform Blinkit to deliver SIM cards to customers' homes in just 10 minutes.

The service, a first in the telecom sector, is currently available in 16 cities across India and will be expanded further.

Customers can now order Airtel SIM cards through Blinkit and receive them at their doorstep for a nominal convenience fee of 49. After receiving the SIM, customers can complete the activation process using Aadhaar-based KYC authentication. They can choose between prepaid and postpaid plans or port their existing number to the Airtel network.

To help with the process, Airtel has made a video guide available online for easy activation. Support is also accessible through the Airtel Thanks App for existing users, while new customers can call 9810012345 for assistance. Customers must activate the SIM within 15 days of delivery.

Siddharth Sharma, CEO – Connected Homes and Director of Marketing at Bharti Airtel, said, "Simplifying customer lives is central to everything we do at Airtel. We are thrilled to partner with Blinkit for 10-minute SIM card delivery across 16 cities and plan to expand this service further."

Albinder Dhindsa, Founder and CEO of Blinkit, said the partnership is aimed at saving customers time and making SIM delivery and activation more convenient.

The service is currently available in Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Sonapat, Ahmedabad, Surat, Chennai, Bhopal, Indore, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, Lucknow, Jaipur, Kolkata, and Hyderabad.

# Forest Fire Rages in Aragam, Bandipora for Third Consecutive Day

**BANDIPORA:** A massive forest fire has continued to rage for the third consecutive day in the Aragam area of Bandipora district, causing significant damage to the green cover and posing serious environmental concerns.

According to locals, the fire has destroyed a substantial number of trees and is rapidly spreading to adjacent forest compartments. The flames are reportedly visible from the main roads, underlining the intensity and scale of the blaze. Efforts to douse the fire are underway, with teams from the Forest Department, Forest Protection Force, and local residents jointly battling the flames. However, officials said that the challenging terrain and remote location of the affected area are hampering the control operations.

Authorities have appealed to the public, particularly shepherds and those venturing into forest areas, to exercise extreme caution and refrain from using fire-related items such as cigarettes and matchsticks.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation, while teams continue their efforts to contain the blaze and prevent further spread.

# Indian Army Conducts Lecture on Physical Fitness for Students at Mallan, Doda

**Doda:** As part of its ongoing outreach and youth engagement initiatives, the Indian Army organized an informative lecture on physical fitness at Government Middle School, Mallan in Doda district. The session aimed to raise awareness among students about the importance of regular physical activity for maintaining overall health and well-being. During the session, students were educated on the multifaceted benefits of physical fitness, including improved physical health, enhanced mental well-being, and better academic performance. The lecture also featured practical advice and simple exercises to help students incorporate healthy habits into their daily routines.

This initiative is part of the Indian Army's broader efforts to promote holistic development among youth, particularly in remote and far-flung areas. It also seeks to motivate students to lead disciplined lives and consider future careers in the armed forces. By organizing such events, the Indian Army continues to strengthen civil-military ties and reaffirm its commitment to empowering communities and nurturing responsible citizens.



Editorial

E-Shram Card

Over 30.42 crore unorganised workers have registered on the eShram portal, an initiative by the Government of India designed to support the unorganised workforce. To expand the range of benefits, the eShram portal has been integrated with several government schemes, enabling workers to access a variety of social security services. One of the key features of eShram is its integration with the National Career Service (NCS) Portal, allowing unorganised workers to register using their Universal Account Number (UAN) and search for job opportunities. Additionally, eShram is linked to the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) pension scheme, which offers a monthly pension of ₹3,000 to workers aged 18-40. The government contributes 50% of the scheme's funding, making it an affordable option for workers. Moreover, eShram's integration with the Skill India Digital Portal provides unorganised workers with access to skill development and apprenticeship opportunities, enhancing their employability. In addition to these services, eShram is connected to the myScheme portal, which helps workers discover and access various government schemes based on their eligibility. On October 21, 2024, the Ministry of Labour and Employment launched eShram as a One-Stop-Solution for unorganised labour, aligning with the recent budget announcements. This new platform centralises multiple social security schemes, allowing workers to access all the benefits they are entitled to through a single portal. Currently, 12 central schemes are integrated, including Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Ayushman Bharat, and PM Awas Yojana, among others. This integration of various welfare schemes through eShram is a significant step toward providing unorganised workers with easier access to government services and financial security, reinforcing the government's commitment to their well-being.

Book review: ‘A Comprehensive Perspective on Adolescent Mental Health’ by Arshad Qalami



BY: WANI ARFAT

Kashmir has long been a cradle of knowledge, literature, intellectual thought, and spiritual wisdom. The region's scholars and writers have not only revolutionized the fields of knowledge and research but have also illuminated the paths of awareness and enlightenment for generations.

The sagacious teachings of Sheikh-ul-Alam (RA), the mystical poetry of Lal Ded, the scholarly eminence of Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (RA), and the intellectual contributions of luminaries like Ghulam Rasool Nazki, Abdul Ahad Azad, Mohiuddin Kamran, Mir Ghulam Rasool, Riyaz Punjabi, and Fayaz Tilgami have continuously upheld Kashmir's status as a hub of intellectual pursuit.

Over time, these intellectual beacons have grown even brighter, and in the modern era, many distinguished Kashmiri writers have made remarkable contributions to various academic, intellectual, and social issues.

Mental health.....one of the most sensitive and intricate subjects has also drawn the attention of Kashmir's thinkers, leading to the creation of impactful works that have gained significant recognition in the academic world.

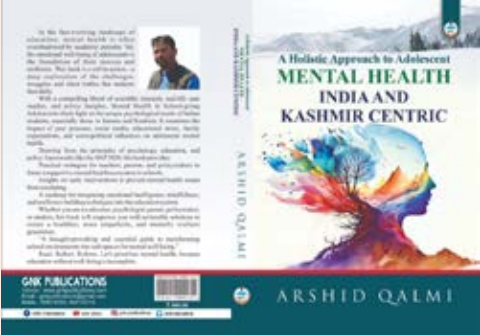
In this domain, eminent psychologists and scholars such as Dr. Mushtaq Momin, Professor Bashir Ahmad Dar, Dr. Waseem Bhat, and Dr. Manzoor Ahmad have highlighted mental health challenges through research and writing, providing valuable resources not only for general readers but also for experts in the field.

Among these notable scholars, Arshid Qalami has emerged as a distinguished name, contributing an insightful and profound book on mental health. His writing is characterized by intellectual depth and a unique analytical perspective that compels readers to think critically.

By delving into the complexities of mental health, its societal impacts, and possible solutions, Arshid Qalami has crafted a work that may serve as a guiding document for future researchers in this field.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that

Kashmiri intellectuals have consistently paved new avenues for thought and awareness through the power of their words. Their writings are not only invaluable intellectual assets but also guiding lights for future generations. Those who contribute to the discourse on mental health are, without a doubt, serving humanity, for a healthy mind is the foundation of a healthy society. Such efforts deserve the



highest appreciation, and one can only hope that this scholarly tradition continues with the same brilliance in the future.

Arshid Qalami: An Educator, Psychologist, and Intellectual Guide

Arshid Hussain Mir, known in academic circles as Arshid Qalami, holds a distinguished place in Kashmir's intellectual and scholarly landscape. He hails from Aripal, a region known not only for its natural beauty but also for its complex socio-cultural dynamics. This environment has played a crucial role in shaping his intellectual journey...

Academically, he is exceptionally qualified. Holding a Master's degree in Psychology and a Bachelor's degree in Education, he is currently pursuing another Master's in Counselling and Family Therapy. He is not merely a theoretical expert but also a practical educator and a passionate mental health advocate. His research on adolescent mental health has earned him significant recognition in this field.

Currently serving as an educator at Government High School Aripal... His contributions extend far beyond the classroom. He actively collaborates with organizations such as the Pramal Foundation, Chhote Taare Foundation, Muslim Students Federation, and Kashmir Lifeline to promote mental health awareness in schools.

His vast academic and practical experience is deeply reflected in his book, which stands as a

ground-breaking research work on youth mental health and educational psychology.

The Book: A Unique Scholarly and Intellectual Achievement

This book is not just an academic document; it is an intellectual movement that advocates for the integration of mental health within the education system. The author convincingly argues that neglecting students' mental well-being can have irreversible consequences on their academic and personal lives.

The book comprises five foundational chapters:

- Fundamentals of Mental Health
- The Importance of Mental Health in Schools
- The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Positive Thinking
- Psychological Resilience and Crisis Management Strategies
- Challenges and Opportunities

The Impact of Social Media, Substance Abuse, and Academic Pressure

Unique Psychological Challenges Faced by Kashmiri Youth

Exploration of Modern and Practical Solutions  
Restructuring the Educational and Social System  
Harmonizing the Roles of Teachers, Parents, and Psychologists

The Contribution of Government and NGOs in Promoting Mental Health in Educational Institutions  
Empowering Teachers and Students  
Training Programs for Teachers on Mental Health Awareness

Fostering Confidence and Leadership Skills Among Students

Practical Guidelines and Resources  
Research Tools and Questionnaires for Mental Health Assessment

A Blueprint for a Long-Term, Comprehensive Educational Policy

Significance of the Book: The Context of India and Kashmir

This book is not just a theoretical discussion on educational psychology; it provides a detailed analysis of the real and urgent challenges faced by the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Compared to other regions of India, Kashmiri youth experience unique academic, social, and psychological challenges. They are affected by educational

pressure, socio-political instability, and mental health crises. This book scientifically examines these issues and presents an alternative educational model that places mental health at its core.

Arshid Qalami introduces a comprehensive strategic framework, guiding teachers, parents, and policymakers on how to transform the educational system into a holistic structure that ensures both academic excellence and mental and emotional well-being.

The Intellectual and Literary Eminence of the Book  
This book is not merely a scientific research paper; it is also an intellectual, literary, and philosophical masterpiece. Arshid Qalami's writing blends academic depth with literary elegance and philosophical wisdom, making it both enlightening and revolutionary. (However, the book is currently available only in English.)

His style is not confined to dry technical jargon; rather, it reflects a broad intellectual vision, academic expansiveness, and a reformative spirit, compelling parents, educators, and policymakers to perceive education from a holistic human perspective.

This book is not just a publication... it is a manifesto of educational and psychological awareness, redefining the narrative of education, psychology, and social progress.

Conclusion: An Essential Book for Every Home and Educational Institution

A Comprehensive Perspective on Adolescent Mental Health: In the Context of India and Kashmir  
This book is not merely an academic research paper... it is an intellectual and scholarly revolution that has the potential to unify education and psychology, opening new doors for future progress.

This book is a must-read for anyone concerned about education, psychology, and the future of youth. It serves as a guiding principle for teachers, parents, policymakers, and educational institutions, encouraging them to view education not merely as information transfer but as a comprehensive personality-development process.

This is not just a scholarly achievement; it marks the beginning of an intellectual movement that can redefine adolescent mental health and educational well-being.

(The reviewer is a passionate writer and a social activist)

Bacterial Diarrhea: Mild To Severe Complications



DR. RAJKUMAR SINGH

Bacterial diarrhea is a condition caused by harmful bacteria infecting the intestines, leading to frequent, loose, or watery stools. It can range from mild to severe and is often associated with foodborne illnesses. It originates from consuming contaminated food, water, or coming into contact with infected individuals. The most common bacterial culprits include: a. Escherichia coli (E. coli) - Some strains, like E. coli O157:H7, produce toxins leading to severe diarrhea. b. Salmonella - Found in contaminated poultry, eggs, and dairy products. c. Shigella - Spreads through contaminated water or food, often in crowded areas with poor sanitation. d. Campylobacter - Commonly found in undercooked poultry and unpasteurized dairy. e. Vibrio cholerae (Cholera) - Causes watery diarrhea and is linked to poor sanitation and contaminated water. Symptoms: Frequent watery diarrhea, Abdominal cramps and pain, Nausea and vomiting, Fever and chills, Blood or mucus in stool (in some infections), and Dehydration (dry mouth, dizziness, reduced urination). Diagnosis: Doctors diagnose bacterial diarrhea based on: Stool tests - Identify the specific bacteria. Blood tests - Detect complications like dehydration. Physical examination - Evaluating symptoms and medical history. Treatment: Hydration - Drinking water, oral rehydration solutions (ORS), or IV fluids in severe cases. Antibiotics - Used for severe bacterial infections (e.g., ciprofloxacin for severe cases). Probiotics - Help restore gut bacteria balance. Dietary Adjustments - Avoiding dairy, spicy foods, and raw vegetables until recovery. Prevention: Wash hands regularly with soap. Cook food thoroughly. Drink bottled or purified water in high-risk areas. Avoid raw or undercooked meat and seafood. Maintain proper sanitation and hygiene. Proper diet and precautions are essential for managing bacterial diarrhea and ensuring a faster recovery.

Diet and precautions

Foods to Eat (BRAT Diet and More): A bland, easy-to-digest diet helps soothe the gut and prevent dehydration. BRAT Diet (Banana, Rice, Applesauce, Toast) - These foods are gentle on the stomach. Boiled Potatoes - Provide energy and are easy to digest. Plain White Rice - A good

source of carbohydrates without irritating the gut. Boiled Vegetables (Carrots, Zucchini) - Soft and non-irritating. Soups & Broths - Chicken or vegetable broth replenishes fluids and electrolytes. Probiotic Foods (Yogurt, Buttermilk) - Help restore



good bacteria in the gut. Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) - Prevents dehydration and replenishes lost electrolytes. Foods to Avoid: Dairy Products - Milk and cheese can worsen diarrhea. Fatty & Fried Foods - Hard to digest and may irritate the stomach. Spicy & Acidic Foods - Can cause further irritation. Sugary & Artificial Sweeteners - May worsen diarrhea by pulling more water into the intestines. Raw Fruits & Vegetables - Can be hard to digest; cooked versions are preferable. Caffeine & Alcohol - Can cause dehydration. Precautions to Take: Hygiene & Sanitation: Wash Hands Regularly - Use soap, especially before eating and after using the toilet. Use Clean Utensils - Avoid sharing food, drinks, or cutlery. Drink Safe Water - Use boiled or bottled water. Maintain Proper Sanitation - Properly dispose of waste and clean toilets regularly. Food Safety: Cook Food Thoroughly - Ensure meat, poultry, and seafood are properly cooked. Store Food Properly - Keep perishable foods refrigerated. Wash Fruits & Vegetables - Rinse well to remove bacteria. Following a proper diet and hygiene measures can help in faster recovery and prevent reinfection.

Advancements in the treatment

Recent advancements in the treatment of

bacterial diarrhea focus on faster recovery, reducing antibiotic resistance, and improving gut health. Following are some of the latest developments: a. Next-Generation Antibiotics: Traditional antibiotics like ciprofloxacin and azithromycin

are effective, but rising antibiotic resistance has led to new alternatives: Ridinilazole - A novel antibiotic specifically targeting Clostridioides difficile infections with minimal impact on gut microbiota. Zoliflodacin - A new antibiotic under research for multidrug-resistant bacterial infections. Berberine-Based Compounds - Plant-derived molecules showing promise in fighting E. coli and Shigella infections. b. Phage Therapy (Bacteriophages): Uses viruses (phages) that specifically attack harmful bacteria while sparing beneficial gut microbes. Shown effective against antibiotic-resistant Salmonella and E. coli. Ongoing clinical trials explore its use for foodborne illnesses. c. Probiotics and Microbiome Restoration: Next-Gen Probiotics - Engineered probiotics (e.g., Bacillus clausii, Lactobacillus rhamnosus) help restore gut balance. Fecal Microbiota Transplant (FMT) - Used for severe C. difficile infections by restoring healthy gut bacteria through stool transplants. Prebiotics & Synbiotics - Promote beneficial bacteria growth and improve recovery. d. RNA-Based Therapies: Antisense RNA Drugs - Target bacterial RNA to block toxin production. CRISPR-Based Antibacterials - Precision gene-editing tools designed to kill only harmful bacteria without disrupting the

microbiome. e. Immunotherapy & Vaccines: Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) Updates - New formulations provide longer immunity. Shigella & E. coli Vaccines - Several candidates are in clinical trials for preventing traveller's diarrhea and dysentery. Monoclonal Antibodies - Under development to neutralize bacterial toxins in severe cases. f. Nanotechnology in Treatment: Nano-Antibiotics - Deliver drugs more effectively to infected areas with fewer side effects. Silver Nanoparticles - Show antimicrobial properties against drug-resistant bacteria. Hydrogel-Based Drug Carriers - Slow-release formulations for prolonged treatment. g. AI & Digital Health Innovations: AI-Powered Diagnosis - Faster stool sample analysis using AI for early detection. Smart ORS Solutions - Improved electrolyte formulations for rapid dehydration management. Wearable Sensors - Real-time monitoring of hydration and gut health. These advancements aim to make bacterial diarrhea treatment more effective, personalized, and resistant-proof. In India, the management of bacterial diarrhea has seen significant advancements, integrating established treatment protocols with innovative therapies to enhance patient outcomes.

Current treatment status

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) provides comprehensive guidelines for the management of acute diarrhea: a. Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS): The cornerstone of diarrhea management. ORS effectively prevents and treats dehydration. b. Zinc Supplementation: A 10-14 day course of dispersible zinc tablets is recommended to shorten the duration of diarrhea and improve outcomes. c. Antibiotic Therapy: Routine use of antibiotics is discouraged. They are reserved for specific cases, such as: Shigella Infections: Ciprofloxacin 500 mg twice daily for 3 days or a single 2g intravenous dose of Ceftriaxone. Cholera (Vibrio cholerae): A single 300 mg dose of Doxycycline (not recommended for children and pregnant women) or 1g of Azithromycin. d. Amoebiasis: Metronidazole 500 mg three times daily for 5 days. Challenges and Areas for Improvement: Despite advancements, challenges persist in the effective management of bacterial diarrhea in India: a. Antibiotic Stewardship: There is a need to improve adherence to guidelines recommending limited antibiotic use, as over prescription contributes to resistance. b. Quality of Care: Ensuring that healthcare providers adhere to standard treatment protocols, includ-

ing the use of ORS and zinc supplementation, is crucial for effective management. Sanitation

Recent advancements in the treatment of bacterial diarrhea focus on faster recovery, reducing antibiotic resistance, and improving gut health. Following are some of the latest developments: a. Next-Generation Antibiotics: Traditional antibiotics like ciprofloxacin and azithromycin are effective, but rising antibiotic resistance has led to new alternatives: Ridinilazole - A novel antibiotic specifically targeting Clostridioides difficile infections with minimal impact on gut microbiota..

and Hygiene: Improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities is essential to prevent the spread of diarrheal diseases. In conclusion, while India has made notable progress in treating bacterial diarrhea through established guidelines and innovative research, continuous efforts are needed to address existing challenges and ensure optimal patient care.



# Sakeena Itoo reviews traffic regulations across J&K

Emphasises enhanced safety of college, school going students

Asks to enforce complete ban on picnics by schools, colleges on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays

**JAMMU:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat to review the existing traffic regulations for enhanced safety and security of school and college going students of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Education, Shantamanu; Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; Secretary Transport department, Niraj Kumar; DIG Traffic Jammu Zone, Special Secretary School Education department, Transport Commissioner, Director Colleges, Director School Education Kashmir/Jammu, RTO Kashmir/Jammu, Chief Education Officers of all districts, ARTOs and other concerned officers, either in person or through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Minister assessed several aspects of traffic regulations like validity of driving licenses, fitness certificates and documents of college and school buses, curbing overloading and installation of CCTVs and Fire safety tools in college and school buses besides other measures to enhance safety protocols for the students.

Speaking during the meeting, Sakeena Itoo passed on strict directions for installation of CCTVs in all school buses including private buses transporting school children. She emphasized on the need for stricter enforcement of traffic laws, enhanced coordination among schools, transport and police departments



for effective implementation of road safety regulations. "It is our collective responsibility to create a safe and secure environment for the school and college going students", Sakeena stated.

Expressing displeasure over rising road accidents, the Minister called upon transport and police departments to launch effective drives against over speeding, drunken driving as well as licence violations with special focus on college and school going students.

She further asked them to keep through check on stunt biking and rash driving among youngsters and juveniles

and make their parents fully responsible for such incidents.

The Minister also called upon both the departments for strict implementation of 'no helmet no fuel rule'. She asked them to constitute joint checking squads to ascertain its on ground implementation.

While reviewing other safety

work in tandem and organise regular safety drills and awareness programmes regarding road safety protocols.

Meanwhile, the Minister during the meeting, also assessed the SOPs and protocols for conduct of picnics by schools and colleges.

She passed on strict directions to enforce complete ban on picnics by schools and colleges on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.

The Minister directed the officers that Higher Secondary schools and High Schools within a district should seek prior permission from the concerned Chief Education Officer, who shall make a proper list as per the applications received and grant permissions accordingly.

She added that the Middle Schools and below should seek permission from respective ZEOs who shall inform the CEO so that the schools can be allowed for picnics in hassle free manner.

The Minister further directed the officers that the schools who intend to go for picnics located outside their districts, need to seek prior permission from the concerned Director of School Education, who shall allow them after checking the influx of visitors at these locations.

She also asked the Director colleges to establish a mechanism for granting permission to colleges regarding picnics.

## Agriculture Deptt organises ‘Buyer-Seller meet’ at IIKSTC Dussu Pampore

MLA Pampore, Retd. Justice Hasnain Masoodi inaugurates event

**SRINAGAR:** Agriculture Department Kashmir organised a mega Buyer-Seller meet at India International Kashmir Saffron Trading Centre (IIKSTC) Dusoo Pampore.

The program was inaugurated by member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Pampore, Retd. Justice Hasnain Masoodi, who was also the chief guest at the event.

Addressing the inaugural session, MLA Pampore reiterated the government's commitment for uplifting the agriculture sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the buyer-seller meet would be an important step towards boosting local agriculture, economic growth and access to the national and international markets.

Masoodi underlined the importance of collective efforts for the promotion of saffron crop in the area.

He emphasized that the Pampore area holds immense potential in the saffron sector, and urged participants to fully capitalize on the opportunities

in this sector to drive economic development in the region.

He underscored the importance of promoting regional products, expanding market

Ahmad Shah highlighted the different dimensions of today's program. Later, a series of interactions were held between buyers and sellers.



access and contributing to the economic development of J&K. He said the buyer-seller meet would prove an important step towards boosting local agriculture business in Pampore areas.

Later, the MLA Pampore inspected the stalls established by different sellers.

Earlier, Joint Director Agriculture Extension, Sartaj

Director Agriculture Kashmir, M. Ilyas Khateeb; General Manager JKTPO Er., Dawood Wani; Chief Agriculture Officer Pulwama, M. Iqbal Khan; Information Officer, representatives from APEADA and Spice Board of India graced the occasion by their presence.

A number of buyers from different states also participated in the meet through virtual mode.

## Lieutenant Governor launches Dr. Suraj Gupte's Pediatric Education Network Portal

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha launched the online portal of Pediatric Education Network, a free-to-access digital platform curated and developed by eminent Pediatrician and Academician, Dr Suraj Gupte.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated Dr Suraj Gupte and everyone associated with the initiative, which aims to enhance Pediatric healthcare education and empower practitioners, medical professionals, students, and institutions with credible and up-to-date resources.

Pediatric Education Network is a comprehensive, user-friendly

portal designed to serve as a centralized hub for the knowledge of child health.



It features a wealth of resources including lectures, clinical guidelines, case studies, interactive modules, and expert insights – a 'free to access' feature for all medical professionals, students, and institutions.

The portal [https://](https://drsurajgupte.com/)

[drsurajgupte.com/](https://drsurajgupte.com/) seeks to bridge geographical and academic gaps in Pediatric education.

The launch ceremony at Raj Bhawan was attended by several leading healthcare professionals, former Professors, senior Pediatricians and prominent citizens including Dr Sanjeev K Digra; Dr Ashok Gupta, Dr Ghanshyam Saini, Dr Sunil Dutt Sharma, Dr Kewal Samnotra and Dr Gotam Goel; Shri Rakesh Gupta, former President CCI Jammu; and Shri Subhash Gupte, Smt Shamma Bakshi, Shri Rajendra Gupte and Shri Robin Bakshi - members of Pediatric Education Network Foundation.

## Quality Seedlings distributed among beneficiaries at Shopian

**SHOPIAN:** In a proactive step towards boosting agricultural productivity and supporting the local farming community, the Department of Agriculture Shopian today distributed high-quality vegetable and fruit seedlings at Mini-Secretariat Shopian.

The initiative is part of the department's ongoing efforts under various centrally sponsored schemes to promote sustainable agriculture and ensure timely availability of inputs to the farmers.

A wide variety of seedlings including knol khol, tomato, cucumber, squash and other exotic varieties of vegetables were made available to the beneficiaries.

The department staff also provided on-the-spot technical guidance on nursery management, transplanting techniques and organic cultivation methods to help farmers get the best yield.

The officials of the Agriculture Department highlighted the government's commitment to



doubling farmers' income and encouraged the use of high-quality varieties for better output.

The farmers expressed gratitude for the timely support and quality of the seedlings provided to them on the occasion.

Senior officials from the Agriculture Department, field officers and technical staff were present.

## Functioning of RDD and Municipal Committees in Langate, Handwara reviewed

**KUPWARA:** In a continued effort to strengthen grassroots governance and ensure efficient public service delivery, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi convened a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning of the Rural Development Department (RDD) and the Municipal Committees of Langate and Handwara.

ADC underscored the importance of timely interventions and responsive administration.

Block Development Officers (BDOs) were instructed to prioritize the desilting of khuls (traditional irrigation water channels) to ensure uninterrupted water supply and prevent blockages.

The functioning of the Municipal Committees in Langate and Handwara was critically reviewed, with emphasis on improving service delivery, sanitation and public infrastructure.



## India, Italy Deepen Defence Ties; MoU Signed Between SIDM & AIAD to Boost Industrial Collaboration

**Rome, (PIB):** Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh concluded a successful two-day official visit to Rome, Italy, aimed at strengthening bilateral defence ties between India and Italy. During the visit from April 14–15, Shri Singh called on Italian Defence Minister Mr. Guido Crosetto, with whom he held wide-ranging discussions focused on elevating defence cooperation as a cornerstone of the strategic partnership between the two nations.

The visit also featured the 11th India-Italy Joint Defence Committee meeting, co-chaired by Defence Secretary Singh and the Italian Secretary General of Defence, Ms. Luisa Riccardi.

The meeting covered crucial areas such as maritime cooperation, information sharing, and regional security, with particular attention to the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean Region. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to working together under the Trans Regional Maritime Network.

Highlighting India's focus on indigenous defence production, Shri Singh underscored the importance of closer collaboration in the fields of defence technology and armament manufacturing.

He elaborated on the proactive steps taken by the Indian government to build a self-reliant ecosystem through policy reforms, innovation, and industrial development.

Delivering the keynote address at the India-Italy Defence Industry Roundtable, Shri Singh noted that India's defence industry has undergone transformative changes in recent years. These reforms have fostered a transparent and predictable environment that promotes ease of doing business and industrial growth.

A key outcome of the visit was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) and the Federation of Italian Companies for Aerospace, Defence and Security (AIAD).

The agreement is aimed at enhancing B2B collaboration and joint ventures between the defence industries of both countries.

Shri Singh was accompanied by a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Defence, including senior officials from Service Headquarters, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Defence Production.

A strong contingent of Indian defence industry representatives from SIDM also participated in the visit to explore avenues for deeper cooperation with Italian counterparts.

The visit marks a major step in strengthening India-Italy defence partnership, with emphasis on joint development, co-production, and greater industry engagement in the strategic sector.

## DSEK, SBI distribute bicycles among students

Initiative aimed to encourage deserving students to do better in future: DSEK

**SRINAGAR:** Under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), State Bank of India and Directorate of School Education Kashmir today distributed free bicycles to meritorious students from different districts of Kashmir Division, who have excelled in the academics or sports belonging to economically weaker sections.

The distribution of bicycles was held in a function, held today at Girls Higher Secondary School Kothibagh Srinagar where Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK), Dr. G.N. Itoo was present as the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Director School Education said that the Department will continue its efforts at all levels to provide various facilities to all the students across the Kashmir division.

Director was accompanied by Joint Director Central, Syed Shabir Ahmad and other officers from State Bank of India.

## UTRC convenes 2nd quarterly meeting to discuss cases of Under Trial Prisoners in Srinagar

**SRINAGAR:** District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority, convened its 2nd quarterly Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting on Tuesday at District Court, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Sajad Ur Rehman, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Srinagar; Mir Imtiyaz-ul-Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Srinagar; Umer Shah, SP Headquarter Srinagar; Dysp Central Jail Srinagar, Sr. Public Prosecutor, District Court Srinagar; Senior Medical Officer, Central Jail Srinagar; Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel and Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel, Srinagar.

The meeting was chaired by Tasleem Arief, Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA) Srinagar, and brought together key stakeholders from the judiciary, police, administration, and medical fraternity to address the significant issue of ensuring fair and expedited trials for under trial prisoners.

This collaborative forum underscores the importance of a collective approach in safeguarding the rights of individuals awaiting trial.

During the meeting, the committee meticulously reviewed 09 cases involving under trial prisoners.

Each case was examined thoroughly through detailed discussions and deliberations, with the objective of understanding the specific circumstances of the individuals concerned.

The committee subsequently formulated the recommendations aimed at expediting the judicial process, thereby upholding the principles of equity and justice.

Tasleem Arief, emphasizing the significance



of UTRC meetings, highlighted their critical role in strengthening the criminal justice system and safeguarding the fundamental rights of under trial prisoners.

He reiterated the necessity of regular initiatives such as these to ensure a fair and efficient legal process, reflecting the commitment to justice and transparency.

DLSA Srinagar remains unwavering in its commitment to upholding the rights of under trial prisoners by ensuring that they receive fair and speedy trials.

## Sakeena Itoo engages daily with scores of public delegations, individuals at Civil Secretariat

Initiative reflects Omar govt's proactive administration, people-first policies

**JAMMU:** In her continued efforts towards ensuring transparent governance and prompt grievance redressal of public-centric issues, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, is engaging with scores of public delegations, individuals on daily basis at Civil Secretariat.

The initiative has drawn widespread appreciation from public as scores of delegations, civil society members and individuals from various districts of Jammu and Kashmir call on the Minister to share their pressing concerns, development needs

and welfare issues.

The Minister, who is holding crucial portfolios of Health

necessary action on the grievances raised.

While engaging with



and Medical Education, Social Welfare, School Education and Higher Education departments, during these interactions issues on the spot directions to the concerned departments for

these public delegations and individuals, Sakeena Itoo reaffirmed the commitment of government to grassroots governance.

"Public Darbars are a bridge

## Arrangements for NEET Examination reviewed at Handwara

**KUPWARA:** Ahead of the upcoming NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) examination, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi today conducted an inspection of the designated examination centers to assess the preparedness for the smooth conduct of the exam.

The ADC visited Government Degree College Handwara and Girls Higher Secondary School Handwara, where he took a detailed review of the arrangements being made for the

examination scheduled in the coming days.

Special focus was laid on the seating arrangements to ensure proper spacing in line with examination norms.

Later, the ADC inspected academic activities at the Girls Higher Secondary School and interacted with the students. He inquired about the quality of education being imparted and urged teachers to continue their efforts in nurturing students' academic growth.

## Indian Army Distributes Blankets to Gujjar and Bakkarwal Communities in Rajouri

**Rajouri:** In a compassionate outreach effort, the Indian Army stationed at Samote organized a blanket distribution drive for the Gujjar and Bakkarwal communities in the remote area of Hubbi, Rajouri. These nomadic groups, known for their seasonal migrations, often brave severe weather conditions without adequate protection. The initiative aimed to offer much-needed relief and comfort as they navigate the harsh cold during their travels.

This welfare activity underscores the Indian Army's continued commitment to supporting marginalized communities and enhancing their living conditions. By providing essential items like blankets, the Army not only mitigates immediate hardships but also fosters goodwill and deepens the bond with local populations.

The event witnessed the participation of local leaders, including Sarpanchs, Panchs, and other respected community members, who lauded the

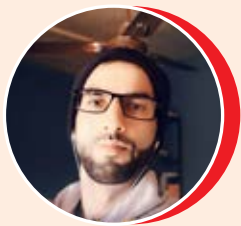
Army's efforts and expressed their sincere gratitude for its ongoing assistance to the underprivileged. They acknowledged the Army's role in promoting social harmony and inclusivity through such humanitarian initiatives.

This drive stands as a testament to the Indian Army's ethos of service beyond duty, reinforcing its role not only as a protector of borders but also as a pillar of support for the country's most vulnerable communities.



PART I

# The Future of Israel and Palestine: Navigating Uncertainty in a Changing World



Malik Firdous

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains one of the most enduring and intricate disputes in the modern world. Decades of peace efforts, negotiations, and international mediation have failed to produce a sustainable solution, leaving millions of Israelis and Palestinians to navigate a future marked by uncertainty. The situation is characterized by ongoing violence, humanitarian crises, and a political deadlock that has entrenched divisions

of the Palestinian population. In the West Bank, the PA faces growing criticism for corruption, authoritarian governance, and its security cooperation with Israel. Meanwhile, Hamas remains isolated, facing international sanctions and maintaining a hardline stance against Israel. Efforts at reconciliation between the two factions, including multiple rounds of negotiations brokered by Egypt and other regional actors, have repeatedly failed to produce lasting unity. Without a unified leadership that can represent the interests of all Palestinians, prospects for a cohesive and credible negotiating partner in any future peace process remain bleak.

Israeli politics have experienced a pronounced shift toward the right in recent years, with nationalist and religious parties gaining significant influence. This shift has been reflected in successive governments that have adopted hardline positions on security, settlements, and the future of Palestinian statehood. Public sentiment in Israel has also moved away from the idea of a two-state solution, driven by years of violence, distrust, and the perception that Palestinian leadership is not a viable partner for peace. The growing influence of settler movements

movement of people and goods, citing security concerns. This blockade has devastated Gaza's economy, crippled infrastructure, and left its population of over two million people facing dire living conditions. Access to clean water, electricity, and healthcare is severely limited, and unemployment rates in Gaza are among the highest in the world. The lack of economic opportunities and basic services has created a sense of despair and hopelessness among Gaza's residents, particularly its youth. Periodic military confrontations between Hamas and Israel have further exacerbated the situation, resulting in widespread destruction and loss of life. Efforts to rebuild Gaza's infrastructure have been hampered by political divisions, continued hostilities, and restrictions on the flow of construction materials. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza not only fuels resentment and anger among Palestinians but also contributes to cycles of violence that further destabilize the region. Without meaningful improvements in living conditions and a sustainable political solution, Gaza will remain a flashpoint for conflict and a symbol of Palestinian suffering.

The current realities In Israel and Palestine are marked by

limited. Despite its rhetorical support for Palestinian aspirations, Turkey has maintained economic ties and periods of diplomatic engagement with Israel, reflecting a pragmatic balance between ideological commitments and economic interests.

Egypt and Jordan have historically played critical roles in mediating between Israel and Palestinian factions, particularly during periods of violence and escalation. Egypt, which controls the Rafah crossing into Gaza, has been instrumental in brokering ceasefires between Israel and Hamas, while Jordan maintains a special role as custodian of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem. Both countries have a vested interest in maintaining regional stability and preventing the spread of violence across their borders. However, their ability to influence long-term political outcomes is constrained by internal challenges, shifting regional priorities, and the waning influence of traditional Arab power brokers. Despite their efforts, Egypt and Jordan have struggled to move beyond crisis management and contribute meaningfully to a sustainable political resolution. Their mediation efforts, while



and deepened mistrust. With the absence of meaningful dialogue between the parties, the conflict continues to escalate, exacerbating human suffering and fueling regional instability.

As the region looks toward the future, several factors will likely shape the trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. Political dynamics within both Israeli and Palestinian societies have hardened in recent years, with diminishing support for compromise and rising nationalist sentiments on both sides. In Israel, the shift toward right-wing politics and the growing influence of settler movements have made territorial concessions less likely. Meanwhile, Palestinian politics remain fragmented between the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza, making it difficult to present a unified front in negotiations.

The humanitarian situation, particularly in Gaza, continues to deteriorate due to the ongoing blockade and periodic military escalations. The blockade has severely limited access to essential goods, healthcare, and economic opportunities, leaving millions of Palestinians in Gaza trapped in poverty and despair. In the West Bank, expanding Israeli settlements and the fragmentation of Palestinian territories further complicate the possibility of a viable Palestinian state. The combination of these factors has led to a growing sense of hopelessness among Palestinians, particularly the younger generation, who see little prospect for a better future.

Regional and global dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping the future of the conflict. The Abraham Accords, which normalized relations between Israel and several Arab states, have altered the traditional Arab consensus on Palestine, reducing pressure on Israel to engage in meaningful negotiations. Saudi Arabia, a key regional player, has hinted at the possibility of normalization with Israel, but only if progress is made toward Palestinian statehood. Iran's support for Hamas and other proxy groups in the region adds another layer of complexity, increasing the risk of broader regional escalation.

The United States, historically the primary mediator in the conflict, faces its own domestic political constraints that limit its ability to exert meaningful pressure on the parties. Meanwhile, the European Union and other international actors continue to call for a two-state solution, but their influence remains limited in the absence of political will on the ground.

Looking ahead, several scenarios could unfold. A viable two-state solution, while increasingly difficult to achieve, remains the most widely accepted framework for resolving the conflict. However, the continuation of the status quo—marked by occupation, settlement expansion, and periodic violence—appears more likely in the absence of a breakthrough. Alternatively, the erosion of the two-state paradigm could lead to a de facto one-state reality, raising difficult questions about democracy, demographics, and equal rights.

The path forward remains fraught with challenges, but the choices made by leaders, civil society, and international actors will determine whether the region moves toward peace and coexistence or further entrenches division and conflict.

Palestinian politics remain deeply fractured, with two rival authorities governing the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian Authority (PA), led by Mahmoud Abbas, holds limited control over parts of the West Bank, while Hamas, an armed Islamist group, governs Gaza. This division has persisted since 2007 when Hamas took control of Gaza following a violent power struggle with Fatah, the dominant faction within the PA. The lack of political unity has weakened the Palestinian national movement and undermined efforts to negotiate with Israel effectively. The split has not only hindered progress toward statehood but also eroded the trust

and right-wing parties has resulted in policies that prioritize the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the consolidation of control over East Jerusalem. These policies have further complicated the possibility of a negotiated settlement. The Israeli political landscape is also deeply polarized, with divisions between secular and religious communities, as well as between supporters and opponents of territorial compromise. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been a dominant figure in Israeli politics for over a decade, has repeatedly formed coalitions with nationalist and ultra-Orthodox parties to maintain his grip on power. His approach has been characterized by a reluctance to make concessions on core issues such as settlements and the status of Jerusalem, making the revival of meaningful peace talks increasingly unlikely. As the political landscape in Israel becomes more entrenched, the possibility of a government willing to pursue a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians grows more remote.

Jerusalem remains a central and highly contentious issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both Israelis and Palestinians claim the city as their capital, with its religious, historical, and political significance making it a flashpoint for violence and unrest. Israel considers Jerusalem its "eternal and undivided capital" and has taken steps to consolidate its control over East Jerusalem, which was captured in 1967. This has included the expansion of settlements, the demolition of Palestinian homes, and the revocation of residency rights for Palestinian residents. For Palestinians, East Jerusalem is seen as the future capital of a Palestinian state, and they view Israeli actions in the city as an attempt to change its demographic and political character. Periodic clashes at holy sites, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, have triggered widespread unrest and escalated tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. Efforts to resolve the status of Jerusalem in previous peace negotiations have proven immensely difficult, with both sides unwilling to compromise on their claims to the city. Any future agreement would need to find a way to address the status of Jerusalem that respects the aspirations of both peoples, a task that remains elusive.

The continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank is one of the greatest obstacles to achieving a viable two-state solution. Since the 1967 war, Israel has built a network of settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, home to over 700,000 settlers today. These settlements, considered illegal under international law, have fragmented Palestinian territory and made the prospect of a contiguous Palestinian state increasingly difficult. Settlement expansion has been accompanied by the construction of bypass roads, security barriers, and checkpoints, further entrenching Israeli control over large portions of the West Bank. The presence of settlements not only complicates territorial compromise but also fuels tensions between settlers and Palestinian communities, often resulting in violence and confrontations. Successive Israeli governments have supported and incentivized settlement growth, viewing it as a means of securing territorial and strategic advantages. While the international community has repeatedly condemned settlement expansion, diplomatic pressure has failed to halt their growth. As the settler population continues to grow and become more politically influential, the likelihood of reversing this trend diminishes, further undermining the possibility of a two-state solution.

Gaza remains in the grip of a worsening humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by years of blockade and periodic military escalations. Since Hamas seized control of the territory in 2007, Israel and Egypt have maintained a blockade that severely restricts the

political fragmentation, entrenched divisions, and humanitarian crises that make progress toward peace increasingly difficult. The lack of unified Palestinian leadership, the shift of Israeli politics to the right, and the continued expansion of settlements have created a situation where the possibility of a two-state solution is steadily diminishing. Meanwhile, the unresolved status of Jerusalem and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza continue to fuel tensions and perpetuate cycles of violence. Without significant changes in political dynamics and renewed commitment from international actors, the future of Israel and Palestine remains fraught with uncertainty and instability.

The normalization of relations between Israel and several Arab states under the Abraham Accords has reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. These agreements, which formalized ties between Israel and countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan, marked a significant departure from the traditional Arab position that normalization with Israel should only occur after the resolution of the Palestinian issue. While the Accords have brought economic and strategic benefits to Israel and its new partners, they have also marginalized the Palestinian cause by reducing pressure on Israel to negotiate a settlement. The agreements demonstrate that normalization with Israel is possible without addressing Palestinian aspirations, which may further entrench the status quo and diminish prospects for Palestinian statehood.

Saudi Arabia remains a key regional player whose potential normalization with Israel could significantly alter regional dynamics. However, Saudi leaders have maintained that any formal agreement would require progress toward Palestinian statehood, reflecting Riyadh's long-standing support for the Arab Peace Initiative, which links normalization with Israel to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Saudi Arabia's cautious approach reflects its effort to balance strengthening ties with Israel and maintaining its leadership role in the Islamic world. As Saudi Arabia explores deeper security and economic ties with Israel, it faces growing pressure to weigh its regional interests against its historical commitment to Palestinian aspirations. If Saudi Arabia eventually chooses to normalize relations with Israel without significant concessions for the Palestinians, it could signal a broader shift away from prioritizing Palestinian rights in regional diplomacy.

Iran's support for Palestinian resistance groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, continues to fuel tensions between Israel and Iran's regional proxies. Tehran views its support for Palestinian factions as part of its broader strategy to challenge Israeli and U.S. influence in the region while positioning itself as a defender of Palestinian resistance. This dynamic has increased the likelihood of escalation, with the potential for a wider conflict that could destabilize the region. Iranian-backed militias and proxy groups in Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza maintain a constant threat of confrontation with Israel, complicating efforts to establish lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Iran's influence over these groups also means that any effort to stabilize the region or negotiate a settlement must take into account the broader power struggle between Israel and Iran.

Turkey has positioned itself as a vocal advocate for Palestinian rights, using its influence to criticize Israeli policies and rally support for Palestinians in international forums. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has frequently condemned Israeli actions in Gaza and East Jerusalem, framing Turkey as a champion of the Palestinian cause. However, Turkey's approach is often driven by domestic political considerations and its broader regional ambitions. While Turkish support for Palestine resonates in the Arab and Muslim world, its practical impact on the ground remains

“The humanitarian situation, particularly in Gaza, continues to deteriorate due to the ongoing blockade and periodic military escalations. The blockade has severely limited access to essential goods, healthcare, and economic opportunities, leaving millions of Palestinians in Gaza trapped in poverty and despair. In the West Bank, expanding Israeli settlements and the fragmentation of Palestinian territories further complicate the possibility of a viable Palestinian state. The combination of these factors has led to a growing sense of hopelessness among Palestinians, particularly the younger generation, who see little prospect for a better future.

“essential in preventing large-scale conflicts, have not translated into tangible progress toward a lasting peace. The regional and global dynamics surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have shifted significantly in recent years, with normalization agreements, geopolitical rivalries, and competing national interests reshaping traditional alliances. While new opportunities for cooperation have emerged, these changes have also marginalized the Palestinian issue and complicated efforts to achieve a lasting resolution. Without renewed international engagement and a commitment to addressing the core grievances of Palestinians, the evolving regional order risks entrenching a status quo that perpetuates instability and undermines long-term peace prospects.

Israeli society remains deeply divided on the future of the conflict, with security concerns shaping much of the public discourse. Decades of violence, military operations, and waves of terrorism have instilled a sense of caution and skepticism among many Israelis regarding the prospect of a peaceful resolution. For a significant portion of the population, security remains the top priority, and any agreement that involves territorial concessions is viewed with suspicion. The fear of rocket attacks from Gaza, the potential for renewed violence in the West Bank, and the influence of regional actors such as Iran contribute to a national mindset that prioritizes strength and deterrence over compromise. At the same time, there are segments of Israeli society that continue to advocate for peace and coexistence. Human rights organizations, peace activists, and left-leaning political groups emphasize the importance of dialogue and mutual recognition. However, these voices have become increasingly marginalized as Israeli politics shift to the right, and public sentiment favors policies that emphasize military deterrence over diplomatic engagement. The growing influence of nationalist and religious parties has further complicated efforts to build consensus around a path toward peace. These groups advocate for the expansion of settlements, reject the idea of Palestinian statehood, and promote a vision of Israeli sovereignty over the entirety of the land. The political polarization within Israel has created an environment where meaningful debate about the future of the conflict is often overshadowed by ideological battles and short-term security concerns.

TO BE CONTINUED...



# Continued From P1...

## ‘Pak Stuck

“During this period, we have grown economically and politically, and our standing in the world has improved. But, Pakistan continued the old playbook,” he said.

Jaishankar said Pakistan was also trying to gain something from the conflict in Afghanistan when the US and NATO were present there.

“Pakistan was playing a double game. It was with both the Taliban and also with the other side. But, when the Americans left, the double game could not be sustained. Whatever benefits they were getting out of the double game that also went down. Moreover, the very terrorism industry they had promoted came back to bite them,” he added. (Agencies)

### Adjournment motion

motion in Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assemblies.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Achary, an authority on parliamentary affairs in India, said, “An adjournment motion against the central government can only be moved in the Lok Sabha. It cannot be brought on the Waqf (amendment) bill -2025 in J&K Assembly.”

The National Conference and its allies had submitted notices to adjourn the Assembly’s proceedings to discuss the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025. However, the Speaker rejected these motions, citing that matter is sub -judice.

Achary described J&K’s ruling party’s attempt to bring adjournment motions in the J&K Assembly as “strange,” stating that such motions are censure motions against the government and can only be initiated by the opposition.

“In J&K Assembly, only opposition can bring an adjournment motion against the elected government,” he said.

A censure motion is an expression of disapproval of a specific policy, action, or conduct of the government, a minister, or a group of ministers. It is used to highlight government’s failures.

The adjournment motion has its origin in the House of Commons in the United Kingdom. In India, the Rules of the pre-independent bicameral legislature established under the Government of India Act of 1919 provided for the adjournment. In 1952, the adjournment motion was placed in the Lok Sabha Rule Book. As per Rule 56 of The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in J&K Legislative Assembly, a motion for an adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance may be made with the consent of the Speaker. It is pertinent to mention that three MLAs of the ruling alliance- Muhammad Yosouf Tarigami, Nizamuddin Bhat had to withdraw their cut motions after they were told that they cannot use the parliamentary device as it amounts to showing disagreement with government’s budgetary proposals.

### Cultural exchanges

can strengthen India by fostering mutual understanding, breaking down barriers, and building social cohesion.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that when people from different states and regions share traditions, food and art, they reduce the division and bridge the gaps.

“Cultural exchanges between the States and UTs under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat can also spur economic benefits. The local festivals will attract tourists and cross-state collaborations will help in curating mega festivals and also boost community pride and local economies,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor paid homage to General Zorawar Singh, the great warrior and military strategist. He also recalled the significant contributions of army bravehearts and prominent luminaries from Himachal Pradesh.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor released an Activity Calendar of Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

### Adjournment motion

tabled differently, the outcome could have been different.”

He said that the Speaker (Abdul Rahim Rather)

made everything clear on the last day of the session. “Our party has now approached the Supreme Court in this regard and let’s wait for the court’s response,” he said, as per KNO.

On statehood, Omar said, “Statehood is not our end goal, but it is an essential step to achieve our larger objectives. Without the restoration of statehood, we cannot move forward.”

He reiterated his party’s stance on the constitutional changes made on August 5, 2019, stating, “We have already passed a resolution declaring those changes as unconstitutional, and we will continue our struggle to reverse them.”

### My voice no

He said the disconnect began right after the elections were over. “From the time they persuaded me to fight the Lok Sabha elections to the period just before the Assembly polls, I was consulted. But soon after, my views stopped being acknowledged,” he said.

Ruhullah stated that the NC leadership has not sought his inputs in recent times, even though he continues to represent the party in Parliament. “There are no takers for my political thinking anymore,” he said.

The Srinagar MP, however, clarified that he refrained from confronting the party directly because he understood its compulsions. “I know they have to manage equations with the central government for governance. That’s why I didn’t impose my stance on them. At least no one can say that I cost them statehood,” he said.

He attributed the fallout to his support for the December 23 protest. “I didn’t organise any protest. It was a spontaneous gathering of students who felt betrayed. I just stood with them. If my presence helped raise their voice, I consider it my duty fulfilled,” Ruhullah said. “Call it a protest or anything else, it doesn’t matter. If standing with students made me an enemy in the party, I’m okay with that.”

“I have a moral duty to speak for my people both within and outside the party. But this disconnect is eating me up from the inside,” he said.

Ruhullah stressed that his politics wasn’t motivated by ambition. “What I say comes from my conscience, not from any political design. I don’t need to prove it to anyone. God is my judge.”

The protest he referred to was held against a new reservation policy which, students say, cuts the open merit quota down to about 30 percent. The remaining seats are now earmarked for reserved categories. The move has triggered anxiety among general category aspirants.

In response to the protest, CM Omar Abdullah had said that a Cabinet sub-committee would re-examine the policy and consultations with stakeholders were underway.

It is important to note that on Saturday ACB filed a chargesheet against 22 individuals, including Mehdi and six of his relatives, alleging manipulation of land revenue records. In response to the Chargesheet Ruhullah termed chargesheet as baseless and also responded to a question When asked regarding nay communication from his party after ACB Chargesheet, Ruhullah said, no one from the National Conference had contacted him. “Had they done so, they would’ve known the facts of the case,” he added, indirectly expressing concern over the party’s internal communication.

### NIA Files Chargesheet

He also provided them with arms, ammunition and hand grenades, etc to carry out the violent agenda of the terrorist organisations seeking to spread terror among the people, it said.

The case was registered by the NIA on the basis of a police FIR of October 2024. The FIR was based on the arrest of Abdul Aziz and seizure of two grenades from his bag by a police party at Surankote, Poonch, according to the statement. “His interrogation had led to the arrest of Munawar Hussain, from whom one pistol with one magazine and nine rounds was seized,” it added. Both the accused were in contact with handler Nazir, subsequent investigations revealed, exposing a conspiracy from across the border to destabilise Jammu and Kashmir through acts of violence and terror aimed at disrupting the region’s communal harmony and peace, the NIA

## Birla Opus Paints opens three new franchisee stores in Kashmir

**SRINAGAR:** Birla Opus Paints, a part of Grasim Industries under the Aditya Birla Group, marked a significant expansion in the Kashmir Valley with the inauguration of 3 new franchisee stores in Srinagar. This strategic expansion marks the brand’s second foray in Jammu & Kashmir, strengthening Birla Opus Paints’ retail presence in Northern India and demonstrating its commitment to nationwide growth.

The brand had already unveiled its first franchise in the city earlier this year at Jamia Chowk, Nowgam. It, now, further expanded its footprint in Srinagar by inaugurating three additional franchisee stores- River Edge at the Amargarh Bypass Sopore, Zam Zam Hardware store in Rambagh Main Bazar and Mahad Traders at 90ft Road, Umerhain.

With 3 new franchisee stores, strategically located across key areas in Srinagar and its surroundings, the brand will offer customers high-quality paints, innovative solutions, and a seamless shopping experience. This expansion strategy not only strengthens Birla Opus Paints’ presence in Jammu & Kashmir but also highlights its commitment to “Make Life Beautiful” by focusing on convenience, innovation, and regional engagement across India.

Rakshit Hargave, CEO, Birla Opus Paints, said, “We are beyond thrilled to continue expanding our presence across India with the opening of our three new franchisee stores in Srinagar. It is not just a market expansion strategy for us, but an opportunity to connect with a region known for

its architectural heritage and aesthetic sensibilities. Kashmiri homes have long had beautiful facades and alluring interiors and our aim is to enhance the beauty of Kashmir even more through our superior paints. The extreme climatic conditions and the love for wooden structures present unique painting requirements from consumers, and our products are specially formulated to protect and beautify these distinctive properties while complementing the region’s architectural style.”

To help with a seamless shopping experience, customers visiting these new stores will have access to in-store paint consultants for free and get customized color and shade selection tailor-made to their preferences. The franchisee stores will house the brand’s full product portfolio along with exclusive offerings such as wallpapers and designer finishes as well. These stores aim to provide a personalized, one-stop solution for all painting needs in the region.

Embracing the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir, Birla Opus Paints proudly celebrates the region’s breathtaking landscapes and tradition with 22 shades inspired by its beauty and culture. These shades are launched at a national level as a tribute to the union territory so that consumers across India can experience these amazing colors at their homes through Kashmiri shades. These locally inspired shades include September in Kashmir capturing the golden hues of early autumn; Mehrun Nissa’s

said. (Agencies)

### ‘Power sector

According to the official figures available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), since Financial Year 2022, amongst the major revenue contributors, the power development department has become the second highest revenue contributor with 67 percent increase in power revenue generation.

The official documents further reveal that till November 2024, transmission and distribution capacity of 32,762.49 MVA with electric line length of 1,66,633.44 Circuit Kilometer (Ckm) has been established by the Government. Transmission and Distribution capacity has increased by more than 35% during the last five years.

“Over the span from 2020-21 to 2023-24, Jammu and Kashmir saw a steady increase in electricity consumption per capita, rising from 1,322 KWHr to 1,532 KWHr,” it reads.

It further said that this trend was reflecting a growing demand for power amidst a population increase from 13.41 million to 13.70 million, with units purchased/consumed escalating from 17,721.76 million to 20,985.70 million units over the period.

The documents further reveal that the renewable energy sector in J&K is advancing significantly with a focus on solar and small hydro power projects.

“JaKEDA has allocated 35 Mini Hydel Projects (MHPs) with a capacity of 103.05 MW under Independent Power Producer (IPP) mode, already commissioning projects like 5 MW SHP Bultikulan and 3.75 MW SHP Khari,” it reads.

The documents further said that infrastructure development has been a key focus, with significant progress in power generation, connectivity, and urban development. “The doubling of hydel-power generation capacity and on-going road and rail projects are expected to further bolster the region’s infrastructure and connectivity.”

“4,635 Government buildings and 4,000 households covered under Rooftop solar energy plants with capacity of 19.35 MW. Rooftop Solar Power Plants with a capacity of 8.5 MW have been installed for 300 beneficiaries,” it reads.

### PM’s J&K

Srinagar, as per the Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS) approval.

Officials said the journey will reduce travel time between the two cities to just three hours, compared to the current 6-7 hours by road.

The USBRL project spans 272 km and includes 119 km of tunnels. It connects major areas including Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban, Anantnag, Pulwama, Budgam, Srinagar, and Baramulla. Two iconic engineering marvels—the Chenab Bridge, the world’s highest railway bridge, and the Anji Khad Bridge, India’s first cable-stayed railway bridge—are part of this ambitious project.

The Chenab Bridge stands at 467 meters, making it 35 meters taller than the Eiffel Tower. Officials revealed that around 29,000 tonnes of steel were used in its construction. Designed to withstand earthquakes up to magnitude 8, the bridge posed significant engineering challenges due to its location in a high-seismic zone.

Approved in 1994-95 and declared a National Project in 2002, the USBRL has been completed in phases. Key sections such as Qazigund–Baramulla (2009), Banihal–Qazigund (2013), Udhampur–Katra (2014), and Banihal–Sangaldan (2020) have already been commissioned. A trial run of MEMU trains was also successfully conducted last year on the electrified Reasi–Sangaldan section.

Currently, train services in the Valley are operational only on the Sangaldan–Baramulla section, while long-distance trains terminate at Katra

### CM Omar

that the bridge will significantly boost connectivity from South Kashmir to Srinagar, particularly to Charar-i-Sharief, Pakharpora and other areas of Budgam District.

Reaffirming his government’s commitment, the Chief Minister said, “We will leave no stone unturned in fulfilling the promises and commitments made to the people during elections.”

Underscoring the importance of Statehood, the Chief Minister said, “Statehood is not our destination but a prerequisite to start the process of reclaiming what the people have lost in the last six to seven years,” adding that the people’s mandate was for restoring their dignity and protecting their identity.

He also highlighted various initiatives and welfare

measures undertaken during the last six months of his government.

The Chief Minister further added that the Rohmoo Bridge holds significant importance as it connects several villages in Pulwama with key historical sites in Budgam district, such as Pakherpora and Charar-i-Sharief, which attract numerous devotees from across Kashmir.

The bridge was severely damaged during the devastating floods of September 2014.

He expressed hope that the Rohmoo Bridge would serve as a vital link, promoting development and bringing much-needed relief to the local population.

Local public representatives and residents expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister for addressing their long-standing demand, which will now provide greater convenience and accessibility.

The Deputy Chief Minister, in his speech, highlighted the various significant initiatives and public welfare measures of the present dispensation led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in Jammu and Kashmir.

Advisor to the Chief Minister and local public representatives also addressed the gathering.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Rajpora Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Mir, DDC Chairman Pulwama Syed Baari Andrabi, MLA Pampore Hasnain Masoodi, DDC members, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

### From 52,000

from Jammu & Kashmir, are at risk of being dropped from the pilgrimage due to non-compliance-related forfeiture of the original quota by the Saudi government.

Feroze said that despite completing bookings and payments, they were informed that the original quota of over 52,000 had been forfeited and replaced with a drastically reduced quota of just 10,000.

The JKAHUC president said that the Saudi authorities cited ‘non-compliance’ in the process, stating that the matter should be thoroughly investigated but not at the cost of pilgrims, who have been preparing for Hajj for years.

“This is not a matter of 52,000 people, it is about 52,000 families whose dreams and decades of savings are on the line,” Feroze said, appealing directly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, and the Ministry of Minority Affairs to take urgent diplomatic steps with Saudi authorities to restore the original quota.

JKAHUC questioned the reduced quota, questioning the fair distribution and raising ethical and logistical concerns.

“If an operator has bookings for 100 pilgrims and is now told to take only 20, how do we choose who goes and who gets left behind.

We can’t take that burden,” the Association said.

The Association, however, assured that all deposited money is safe and can be refunded if required but said the focus must remain on ensuring no pilgrim is denied the opportunity.

“This is a humanitarian and religious issue. Many of these pilgrims are elderly and may not be able to make the journey next year,” the JKAHUC president said.

Notably, the crisis comes as the Ministry of

Minority Affairs confirmed through an official communication that the revised quota stands at only 10,000 for private tour operators.

JKAHUC also clarified that while it acknowledges the 10,000 quota allocation; it was unable to manage the fallout fairly and demanded the Centre work swiftly to restore the full allotment in collaboration with the Saudi authorities

### Kashmir records

Gulmarg, however, recorded the highest departure of 11.2 degree Celsius than normal maximum temperature as the mercury at the famous ski-resort settled at 20.7 degree Celsius.

As per the details accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the local MeT department issued yellow alert on April 18 in some parts of J&K while yellow and orange alerts have been issued for April 19 in several areas of the region.

Yellow alert warns to be aware while orange alert indicates to be prepared and updated.

As per the detailed forecast, the weather is expected to remain generally dry for the next two days while from April 18 to April 20,

there is a possibility of light to moderate rain and snow (higher reaches) at most places and moderate to heavy rain at isolated to scattered places during 18th & 19th April accompanied with thunder and gusty winds from April 18th evening onwards.

On April 21, the MeT predicted cloudy weather with possibility of light rain and thunder at scattered places. “From April 22 to 25, the weather conditions would remain generally dry,” it added.

In between April 26 & 27, the weather would again turn cloudy in the region, the MeT said.

Meanwhile, the department has advised the travellers, tourists and transporters to plan accordingly & follow administration and traffic advisory.

The farmers have been advised to continue farm operations till April 17th, adding that there is a possibility of landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at vulnerable places during the period.

### Chief Secretary

all such fallow lands come into production from the next sowing season. He further directed the senior officers from Agriculture Department to visit these districts to take cognizance of the issues and resolve them on the spot in consultation with the district administration and the security forces guarding the border there.

In his remarks, Principal Secretary, APD, Shailendra Kumar made out that the Department is ready to provide the necessary handholding to the farmers for cultivating these lands.

He further advised the Deputy Commissioners to do the prior ground work on the instant issue so that the obstacles are ironed out on the spot on the day of inspection.

On the occasion, a detailed assessment of land use between the International Border (IB) and the Border Security Fence was given by the IG, BSF. He also flagged some demands of the locals for successful cultivation of these lands besides giving assurance on part of the forces that they would extend full cooperation to the locals for making productive use of these lands here in the UT.

NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that I want to transfer the Power Connection registered under Consumer ID 0216020004940 with Consumer Name as Mohi ud Din Baba S/O Gh Ahmad Baba R/O Barzulla Bandipora to my name (below Mentioned) at the concerned office of AEE JK PDD. Anybody having objection in this regard may file the same before the office of concerned officer within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained thereafter.

**Mushtaq Ahmad Peerzada**  
**S/O Gh Mohiudin Peerzada**  
**R/O Barzulla Panzigam Bandipora**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that Electricity Agreement Bearing Consumer ID No: 0216010004886, which is Registered in the name of Gh Mohammad Wani, S/O Habibulla Wani. Now i want to apply for change this Electricity Agreement in the name of Nazir Ahmad Wani, S/O Gh Mohi -U -din Wani, in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Assistant Executive Engineer Electricity Sub Division Bandipora within a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Nazir Ahmad Wani.**  
**S/O Ghulam Muhi Uddin Wani.**  
**R/O Sumlar Shok baba Bandipora.**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that in my Bank account No: 0738040800000382, my name and address has been mentioned as Haseena Gani, D/O Abdul Gani Hakla, R/O Chattergul kangan. While as After Marriage my name and address has been changed, as per my Aadhaar Card my name and address is Haseena Begum, W/O Abdul Hameed Gojar Haqla, R/O Chettibandi, Bandipora. Now i want to apply for its correction in this regard any person having any objection he/she may file the Objections in office of the Manager jammu and kashmir Bank branch office Garoora Bandipora within a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Haseena Begum.**  
**W/O Abdul Hameed Gojar Haqla.**  
**R/O Chettibandi, Bandipora.**

NOTICE

This is an information for general public that Electricity Agreement Bearing Consumer ID No: 0216020004755, which is Registered in the name of my Father Namely Mohammad Shaban Sheikh, S/O Mohammad Ramzan Sheikh, Now i want to apply for Change this Electricity Agreement in the name of Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh, S/O Mohammad Shaban Sheikh, 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 within a period of seven days from the date of the publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be accepted.

**Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh.**  
**S/O Mohammad Shaban Sheikh.**  
**R/O Onagam, Bandipora Dated- 16-04-2025.**



# We need to play on better tracks that give batters confidence: Dhoni on Chepauk surface

Mahendra Singh Dhoni has urged the curators at the Chepauk to prepare better surfaces which can give his batters the confidence to play their shots like they did here as he doesn't want Chennai Super Kings to play timid cricket.

Dhoni's 11-ball 26 was instrumental in CSK's win over Lucknow Super Giants after the five-time champions snapped their four-match losing streak, which also included three defeats at home. Chasing a target of 167, CSK won with three balls to spare with a markedly better batting performance.

CSK have been invincible at 'Fortress Chepauk' over the years but the 'Yellow Brigade' is yet to open its account at home this season.

"One of the reasons could be that the Chennai wicket is slightly on the slower side. When we have played away from home, the batting unit has done slightly better," Dhoni, who won his first player of the match award in six years, said in the post-match presentation on Tuesday.

"Maybe we need to play on wickets that are slightly better so that it'll give the batters confidence to play their shots. You don't want to play timid cricket," the 'Captain Cool' said.

Dhoni admitted that his batters need to fulfil their roles and responsibilities better.

"As a batting unit, we can do better. Roles and responsibilities - that's what we talk about. If you get off to a good start, and you're someone who can play through the innings, then why not. I think he batted really well today."

He also agreed that CSK's Powerplay

performance has been an issue in the past five games.

"If you see the powerplay, whether it was the combination or the conditions, we were struggling with the ball. And then we weren't

We were putting too much pressure on Ash. He was bowling two overs in the first six (overs). We made changes and this looks like a better attack. As a bowling unit we've done well."

able to get the start we wanted as a batting unit. Also the fall of wickets. We keep losing wickets at the wrong time to some extent."

In fact, R Ashwin often bowled in Powerplays with not much success during this edition.

"We were putting too much pressure on Ash. He was bowling two overs in the first six (overs). We made changes and this looks like a better attack. As a bowling unit we've done well."

Praise for young Shaik Rasheed  
Former India U-19 World Cup winner

Shaik Rasheed made his debut for Chennai Super Kings scoring 27 off 19 balls with six boundaries. Rasheed has been around for past two seasons but got his debut only this year and the legendary former India captain

"It's good to win a game. When you play a tournament like this, you want to win games. Unfortunately the (earlier) matches didn't go our way for whatever reasons. There can be lots of reasons."

"It gives confidence to the whole team and helps us improve in areas we want to improve. We all knew that when it doesn't come your way in cricket, God makes it very tough, and it was a tough game."

He also said in lighter vein that he didn't know why the adjudicators zeroed in on him to win the Player of The Match award.

"Even today I was like - 'why are they giving me the award?'" Noor (Ahmed) bowled really well."

seemed happy with what he saw.

"He has been with us for quite a few years (Shaik Rasheed). This year he has been batting really well in the nets against both pacers and spinners. It's just the start. He has the capability to dominate with authentic shots," the skipper said.

When it doesn't come your way, God makes it tough

Dhoni felt that in a tournament like IPL, losing a few games on the bounce can make comebacks a bit tough.

## Jaffer: Pant 'needs to get better at rotating strike'

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) captain Rishabh Pant showed signs of a return to form with his 49-ball 63 against Chennai Super Kings (CSK), even though his side lost by five wickets. Coming into this game, he had scored just 40 runs off 50 balls across five innings in IPL 2025.

It was a strange knock, though. Pant walked in at No. 4, after LSG had lost two early wickets, and moved to 27 off just

16 balls. But he slowed down considerably after that and was on 38 off 38 at one point. He struggled, in particular, against Noor Ahmad, scoring just six off 15 balls he faced from him. Ten of those were dots.

In all, Pant's innings included 21 dot balls. For comparison, Virat Kohli's 62 not out off 45 balls against Rajasthan Royals (RR) on Sunday had only nine dots. Among those who have faced at least 50 balls this season, Pant's dot-ball percentage of 48.48 is the worst. With big shots not coming off as often as he would have liked, this has impacted his strike rate, which currently stands at 104.04.

"I don't know whether he looks to do that [rotate strike]," former India opener Wasim Jaffer said on ESPNcricinfo TimeOut. "Kohli is a master at that. He gets off strike so nicely as he can play all around. But Pant sometimes does get stuck, and that's the issue. Then he goes for that big shot. I just feel he needs to get better at rotating strike as well."

Jaffer also wants Pant to target the straight boundaries more, against both spinners and fast bowlers. Of his four fours and as many sixes on Monday, only one came down the ground.

"I feel he never looks to hit straight," Jaffer said. "He always looks to go towards the leg side, towards square leg, cow corner. He hit one straight six right towards the end [against CSK]. Otherwise, at the start of the innings, he was always looking to go towards the leg side, or that reverse scoop that he played, but that was the only thing."

"One of the reasons could be that the Chennai wicket is slightly on the slower side.

When we have played away from home, the batting unit has done slightly better," Dhoni, who won his first player of the match award in six years, said in the post-match presentation on Tuesday.



# Khyber Cement Ka Zarra Zarra Dil Se Bana Hai

