

# Kashmir Convener



عید الاضحیٰ  
مبارک

Spectrum Ads | 7006500019



MYSTIC THOUGHTS



MUHAMMAD MAROOF SHAH

It has been aptly observed that most people, whether believers or not, are happy to sleepwalk their way through life, preferring the status quo of their mental habits to the rigors of genuine inquiry. God debate is not for such people but those who find themselves ill at ease with so unexamined life and who are eager for the opportunity to peel away their habitual patterns of thinking so as to reach, finally, a truly satisfying conclusion regarding Ultimate Reality Sacred and our orientation towards the Real. If God/Absolute has been of central importance to mankind and masses and the best minds across cultures – sages/saints – and modernity has been ill at ease with this and there have been colossal consequences in the form of nihilism and associated psycho-spiritual costs and widespread violence, we need to clarify or revisit God debate and take it seriously.

God debate is really about arguably the most serious issue of life – its meaning. God for the believing world that takes Him very seriously is the Meaning of Life that which is “in the image of everything, that which is understandable in every intellect, the meaning that is in every heart, the thing heard in



"God is not a concept to be argued, but a Reality to be contemplated—with mind, heart, and soul. The deeper we listen, the more we are transformed."



every ear, the eye that sees in every eye” – an ideal that is morally, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually fulfilling. “If we gaze, it is upon Him; if we use our intelligence, it is towards Him; if we reflect, it is upon Him; if we know it is Him.” It is the greatest adventure of consciousness to find attunement to that –God as Sacred Mystery – that concerns one ultimately and gives final rest or sustains perpetual movement onwards in the odyssey of life Attempting to decipher that which is able to show His Being either within or without; that which is in the image of everything, that which is understandable in every intellect, the meaning that is in every heart, the thing heard in every ear, the eye that sees in every eye is life’s task, a great adventure that is the meaning of life.

Nothing has been more vital than the question of God for diverse cultures, literatures, philosophies, religions and art traditions. It has haunted every man at some point of time and keeps haunting us in the age of nihilism. While previously it constituted both horizon and ground of traditional man and guaranteed health and happiness of communities, it continues to be the key to the meaning of life needed for psycho-spiritual health of communities in modern secular times. Even if it is assumed that the ethical has been delinked from the religious domain as the political, God question keeps informing various forms of newer cultural formations. It seems God has been substituted by some poor images and not done away with or supplanted. There is no purely secular culture. It is at the centre of history. Indifference towards it is simply not possible or a sign of impoverished life.

One needs to clarify or spell out one’s position or relation to this “greatest of present facts” and yet the most elusive and “hopeless quest.” It is with respect to proximity or distance from God that mankind has defined heaven and hell or such images of the former as eudemonia, blessedness or salvation or enlightenment. Prayer as a means of accessing this reality is central to religious life. Moving with dignity in the odyssey of life or winning a soul or fulfilled life here depends on how one orients to this Centre. Finding meaning in life, celebrating life, enjoying higher pursuits such as art and contemplative life are all associated with the problem of God. The great problem of suffering and how to face it and how to maintain calm and composure in the face of all kinds of incongruous experiences constitute the test of one’s philosophy of life and theodicy. God grounds and vivifies every endeavour we take to live more creatively, joyfully, soulfully. We are all, willy nilly, secular in certain sense, in certain areas. Design of our cities, homes, roads, certain profanation of sacred spaces, worldwide domination of secularism in political constitutions, text books, academia, certain secularization of dress etc. are all associated with secularizing current and hardly irritate us now. Technological culture is inherently secularizing and we have been competing with one another in embracing it.

In order to approach the problem of God we need to note the peculiar need for methodological requirements to properly appreciate the sublime object of enquiry. The subject and object need to be adequate to each other, as scholastics noted. There is a need of replacing I by we and monologue by dialogue. There is better learning from listening as against scanning from our side. We are required to see, to attend, to be receptive to the other. One needs to take note of “democracy of the dead,” collective heritage of mankind and guidance by the best minds, the greatest poets, sages and saints who sought to realize the perfection of the human state. We are called to embrace the most universal of categories or unifying principle that doesn’t write off uniqueness and difference. One needs to pray for steadfastness in submission to Truth or pray for the grace to follow those who have sought to develop such an inclusive view, as far as it is possible for us humans, which “leaves nothing out and which is not a Judeo-Christian or Islamic perspective, but it is this which has informed and given rise to the Abrahamic line and to all spirituality everywhere... this point of view is completely distinguished from all partiality, and all qualifying adjectives, and that it is free from the qualifications of all religions, and is thereby completely muslim to the Truth.”

Invitation to faith in God is invitation to faith in faith and gratitude for the gift of being to the Great Giver. It considers the testimony of the world fraternity of prophets and sages, that the world is a Mystery, a Mystery whose contemplation is intrinsically joyful thanks to its inalienable bond with beauty. One can’t help being gripped by the Holy in its countless manifestations in nature, in the other when approached without pride, in silent depths of our own being, in epiphanic moments. One is asked to gratefully take the gift of being which is the core of individual that is mysteriously shared with the other when he affirms the I in him. The world for all its apparent denseness that weighs down those who have forgotten the meaning of symbolism and seek to enjoy the fleeting glittering surfaces outside the Real, is not impenetrable to the eyes that see with love, to the Imagination that scans and kisses heavens, to the Intellect that merges with the world and becomes vision without objects, to the silent watchful waiting humble approach of which artists and traditional philosophers and mystics have spoken. The Mystery refuses to be dissolved at any cost – it constitutes our very subjectivity – and it isn’t a problem that logical or scientific tools could solve in principle. The world has never ceased to be and will never cease to be an object of wonder and fascination. Beauty, the attractive power of the Good – never ceases to attract. Man must travel ceaselessly as love will never be satiated and man’s quest for the Absolute will have no full stop in all eternity. Artists, scientists, mystics, philosophers and lovers shall never be out of business. We are called to resist rationalization as sin against thinking, familiarization as death of poetic vision, desacralization of knowledge and the world as inhuman, alienating and absurd gesture of darkness that accompanied the modern project. The Word speaks and our felicity lies in listening to it. All the wisdom is at bottom discipline of attention and seeing without blinkers and what we call God is attention without distraction.

Regarding the often rehearsed complaint that God debate is difficult to follow or abstruse bunch of abstractions (my writings are often accused of being difficult or abstruse), I wish to point out that while I have sought to edit out purely technical language (though I have failed at places and sometimes the risk of oversimplification is an obstacle) to make it more accessible, we need to note that the best minds whom we invoke or discuss on the most sublime subject of God aren’t, generally speaking, easy reads. One needs to exert to learn from the best in their own idiom. Proust wrote:

To allow only the kind of art that the average man understands is the worst small-mindedness and the murder of mind and spirit. It is my conviction that the intellect can be certain that in doing what most disconcerts the crowd, in pursuing the most daring, unconventional advances and explorations, it will in some highly indirect fashion serve man - and in the long run, all men.

To understand a profound thought is to have, at the moment one understands it, a profound thought oneself; and this demands some effort, a genuine descent to the heart of oneself ... Only desire and love give us the strength to make this effort. The only books that we truly absorb are those we read with real appetite, after having worked hard to get them, so great had been our need for them.

I want to remind those who think they (their sects) have all the answers or seek to drag God in the market of ideologies or sell God’s words cheaply as an answer to the Question that is God or veto philosophical and mystical approaches in the name of their esotericist theologies that a cursory glance at God debate is enough to humble oneself or alert us to the danger of making judgments or claim holier than thou stance and privilege one term of popular binaries. There are some who have absolutely no use for dialogue that involves listening and readiness to transform oneself in the process. It is for them that Upton Sinclair

wrote: It’s hard to make a man understand something when his job depends on him not understanding it. Goethe says in his letters: When one thinks differently from great minds, it generally is a sign of a small mind. Here it has been attempted

"Prayer, art, love, suffering—all find depth when seen as responses to the Sacred at the heart of life."

To present more or less unanimous understanding regarding the primacy of the Sacred and its rights and the hermeneutic of different languages of the Self or essential agreement amongst foremost sages, saints, poets and representative commentators

God debate can be best appreciated from the choicest or costliest sources – world scriptures, wisdom traditions, sages, philosophers, artists and writers. We would relish it provided we can pay the bill and that bill is our own dearest self. Here is the rub. The Scripture corrects us as has been said and not the vice versa. Are we ready to be corrected by that which grounds and transcends us and illuminates our very faculties with which we judge the world? If it is God who really perceives and not the eyes and if God is attention without distraction and it is for His sake –for the sake of Self – that all things are dear, then we must be ready for deep self examination and tread very carefully when we talk about God. It isn’t really a thing to be debated about but the Holy of holies to be contemplated with our whole mind, heart and soul. It has to do with the question of understanding. Understanding or the faculty of judgment. It is about our very being or the Ground of being. It is the very Truth that is at stake and not some argument that one could do away with. It is the very grammar of Life that is to be deciphered to be able to meaningfully speak about God. God is Life, Eternally Living, Vivifying Principle. God is Beauty and Bliss/Rasa of existence. He is the Ideality of man and embodiment of such values as Justice. Everything significant in life hangs on how we construe God and relate to That Which Is. The Isness of things, Suchness, Essence of Existence and such pre-reflective primordial – the most palpable or immediate fact as Whitehead would put it – things that are given or in the light of which everything else is to be judged or that illuminates everything – “God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth.” God debate is about that which is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden as the Quran puts it. Let us examine in some detail some key points about God debate in upcoming columns.

Regarding the often rehearsed complaint that God debate is difficult to follow or abstruse bunch of abstractions (my writings are often accused of being difficult or abstruse), I wish to point out that while I have sought to edit out purely technical language (though I have failed at places and sometimes the risk of oversimplification is an obstacle) to make it more accessible, we need to note that the best minds whom we invoke or discuss on the most sublime subject of God aren’t, generally speaking, easy reads. One needs to exert to learn from the best in their own idiom. Proust wrote:

To allow only the kind of art that the average man understands is the worst small-mindedness and the murder of mind and spirit. It is my conviction that the intellect can be certain that in doing what most disconcerts the crowd, in pursuing the most daring, unconventional advances and explorations, it will in some highly indirect fashion serve man - and in the long run, all men.

To understand a profound thought is to have, at the moment one understands it, a profound thought oneself; and this demands some effort, a genuine descent to the heart of oneself ... Only desire and love give us the strength to make this effort. The only books that we truly absorb are those we read with real appetite, after having worked hard to get them, so great had been our need for them.

I want to remind those who think they (their sects) have all the answers or seek to drag God in the market of ideologies or sell God’s words cheaply as an answer to the Question that is God or veto philosophical and mystical approaches in the name of their esotericist theologies that a cursory glance at God debate is enough to humble oneself or alert us to the danger of making judgments or claim holier than thou stance and privilege one term of popular binaries. There are some who have absolutely no use for dialogue that involves listening and readiness to transform oneself in the process. It is for them that Upton Sinclair wrote: It’s hard to make a man understand something when his job depends on him not understanding it.” Goethe says in his letters: “When one thinks differently from great minds, it generally is a sign of a small mind.” Here it has been attempted to present more or less unanimous understanding regarding the primacy of the Sacred and its rights and the hermeneutic of different languages of the Self or essential agreement amongst foremost sages, saints, poets and representative commentators

This is a banquet of ideas from the choicest or costliest sources – world scriptures, wisdom traditions, sages, philosophers, artists and writers. We all would relish it provided we can pay the bill and that bill is our own dearest self. I have no claim to have perfectly or better understood the great minds I quote or invoke. All I claim is that I have endeavoured to read them and I have been fascinated and humbled by their ideas, to

Author can be reached at maroof123@gmail.com

"The true cost of engaging with the God debate is nothing less than the self—our dearest possession."



# Kashmir Convener



ECI Streamlines Post-Poll Data System, Launches Automated Index Cards, Statistical Reports

P/02



Dharmendra Pradhan Unveils "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0", Eco-Club Modules

P/02



Modi Govt's 11 Years Redefined Governance and Public Trust: Dr. Jitendra

P/02

## PM Modi connects Kashmir with rest of country

*Dedicates USBRL project to nation, flags off train to Valley*

*Inaugurates world's highest Chenab railway bridge, India's first cable staged Anji bridge;*

**Dedicates multiple development infrastructure projects worth Rs 46000 cr to nation**

Yogesh

**KATRA:** June 6, 2025 became the historic day for Jammu and Kashmir as the long cherished dream of connecting Kashmir with rest of the country with rail connectivity came true as Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote history by dedicating the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project to the nation by flagging off the Vande Bharat train to Srinagar from Katra railway station in Reasi district.

PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), flagged off Vande Bharat in line with his



commitment to boost rail infrastructure and connectivity in the region.

Prime Minister landed at Udhampur Air Force Station this morning from there

he flew to Katra, the base camp for pilgrims visiting the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district. He was accompanied by Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw,

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The Prime Minister inspected Chenab Rail Bridge, the world's highest railway arch bridge over the Chenab River in Reasi district, a critical component of the USBRL project. Standing 359 meters above the river, the 1,315-meter-long bridge is designed to withstand winds up to 260 kmph and seismic activity. The Prime Minister walked to a viewpoint near the bridge and was briefed on its engineering marvels.

He also visited a railway museum set up near the bridge, interacting with engineers and workers involved in the project.

The Prime Minister formally inaugurated the Chenab Rail Bridge, marking a significant step in connecting Kashmir to the rest of India by rail. The event included the release of

## J&K witnessing fastest pace of infra growth under Modi Govt: Amit Shah

Sajid Raina

**SRINAGAR:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that Jammu and Kashmir is now witnessing the fastest pace of infrastructure growth under the Narendra Modi-led government.

"Earlier, Jammu and Kashmir was given the least priority in development. Under Modi government, it is witnessing rapid development. Today, Modi ji dedicated the world's highest railway arch bridge 'Chenab Rail Bridge' to the public. This reflects our commitment to Jammu and Kashmir's progress," Shah wrote on X.

He added, "This steel arch bridge built on the Chenab River is a living symbol of India's engineering capability in the field of infrastructure."

In another post, he wrote, "Congratulations to our sisters and brothers in J&K on the inauguration of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project by PM Shri @narendramodi ji today. It will serve as a new artery of growth, making the progress of the region unstoppable. The two Vande Bharat trains flagged off today will instill more power in the region's syncretic culture by

boosting religious tourism to Vaishno Devi, while the new health and road projects worth 2,400 crore will further elevate living standards to a new height."



Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated several key railway and road infrastructure projects to the nation

>>>SEE ON P-7

## Pak enemy of peace, development and humanity: PM Modi



Yogesh

**KATRA:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday launched a scathing attack on Pakistan and accused it of being an enemy of peace, development, and humanity. Addressing a public rally in

>>>SEE ON P-7

It attacked Kashmir's soul by targeting tourists in Pahalgam, wanted to trigger communal clashes in India; Poor worker Adil was shot dead for resisting terrorists

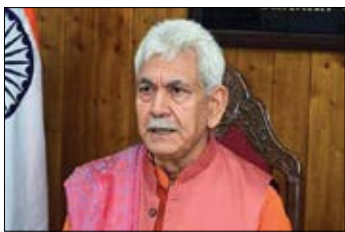
J&K people sent loud and clear message to Pakistan by rejecting terrorism, standing united; Just month ago, terrorists in Pakistan saw their doomsday, Operation Sindoor will always make them recall their humiliation, defeat

Announces Rs 2 lakh additional central assistance for Pak shelling hit completely damaged houses, Rs 1 lakh for partially damaged; If anyone tries to disrupt J&K progress will have to face Modi first

**PM Modi has changed J&K UT in the last 6 years: LG Manoj Sinha**

KC NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the iconic Chenab Bridge, Anji



rail bridge and Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project and flagged off Vande Bharat Trains, connecting Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Speaking on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha called it a momentous occasion that will go down in history. In his address,

>>>SEE ON P-7

## Kashmir to Kanyakumari no longer a dream: PM Modi

Yogesh

**KATRA:** Stating that Kashmir to Kanyakumari is no longer a dream, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi on Friday termed completion of Kashmir rail project as "festival of India's unity, strength, and integration."

After dedicating the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link Project (USBRL) addressed a massive public rally in Katra, marking his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir after the successful

>>>SEE ON P-7

## CM Omar Abdullah hails Railway Link as a historic milestone

KC NEWS NETWORK

**KATRA:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today hailed the rail-link of Kashmir with the rest of the country as a "historic accomplishment," stating that the development will boost tourism, trade and bring comfort in the daily lives of people of Jammu & Kashmir.



The Chief Minister was addressing a large

gathering at Katra during the inauguration of the Chenab and Anji Bridges and at the flagging off ceremony of the Vande Bharat Train to Kashmir by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This marks Kashmir's first all-weather railway connectivity with the rest of India.

Also present on the occasion were Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union MoS PMO Dr. Jitendra Singh and other dignitaries.

"The benefits to Jammu & Kashmir will be substantial."

>>>SEE ON P-7

## J&K Hails Historic Rail Connectivity



Rehan Qayoom Mir

**SRINAGAR :** With Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating major railway projects in Jammu and Kashmir, including the world's highest Chenab Bridge, Anji Cable-Stayed Bridge, and flagging off Vande Bharat trains, the residents across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, have welcomed the development as a "historic step" that promises to boost the region's economy, tourism and mobility.

People from various districts of Jammu and Kashmir shared their reactions with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). They described the rail connectivity as a long-awaited "lifeline" for the valley and a symbol of inclusion and growth.

In south Kashmir's Shopian, a fruit grower, Bashir Ahmad Dar, said the railway connectivity will be very helpful in transporting apples, cherries and other fruits to outside markets on time. "We often suffer losses due to delays. This is going to change our future,"

he said.

In Srinagar, the capital city, locals have welcomed the move, calling it a welcome step towards more affordable travel.

Jibran, a local from Sonwar Srinagar, said this rail link is more than just a transportation project, as it feels like they are finally being connected to the rest of the country by tracks and on the ground.

"For middle-class families who have relatives in Jammu or Delhi, this makes travel safer and more affordable," Jibran said. "Earlier, we had to rely on costly flights or worry about highway closures. Now, there is a new sense of ease and connection."

The houseboat owners also welcomed the move, saying, "With Vande Bharat reaching Kashmir, more tourists will come. People from Delhi and Punjab can now reach Srinagar faster and in comfort. This will definitely benefit us."

In north Kashmir's Kupwara, a far-flung district near the Line of Control (LoC), locals have welcomed the steps,

>>>SEE ON P-7

## "Vande Bharat trains will boost tourism in Kashmir"

Rehan Qayoom Mir

**SRINAGAR:** Amidst the slump in tourism activities post Pahalgam terror attack, the flagging off of two Vande Bharat Express trains at Katra on Friday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seen as a major step towards giving a boost to the tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the valley.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the tourism players, including hoteliers, houseboat owners and tour operators, have expressed happiness over the arrival of semi-high-speed trains, saying that it will encourage tourists to travel to the valley.

>>>SEE ON P-7

## Traders, horticulturists, artisans hopeful of economic benefit Demand direct rail services to Delhi

Jahangeer Ganaie

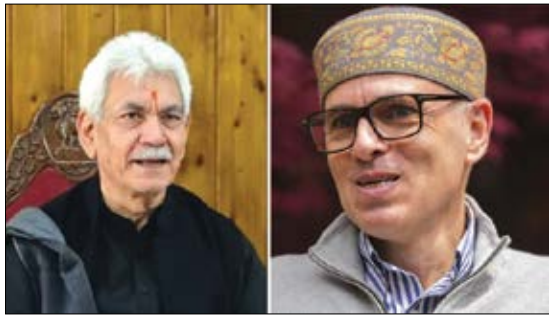
**SRINAGAR:** The inauguration of the Srinagar-Katra rail link has been widely hailed by stakeholders from horticulture, handicrafts and trade sectors in Kashmir as a "historic and transformative step" towards boosting the region's economic landscape.

They have urged the government to introduce direct train services from Kashmir to major metropolitan cities, especially Delhi, with a dedicated goods train service.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer

>>>SEE ON P-7

## LG Sinha, CM Omar Greet People on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha



KC News Network

**SRINAGAR:** The Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, has greeted the people on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha, which will be celebrated on Saturday, June 07, 2025.

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "Eid Mubarak! Heartiest greetings and good

May this festival spread peace and bring prosperity to all," he added.

Meanwhile Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, wishing them peace, well-being and prosperity.

In his message on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha, the Chief Minister said the holy occasion imbues in us the spirit of making honesty, truthfulness and selflessness a way of life.

He added that the festival commemorates the timeless example of absolute faith and unwavering obedience set by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his devoted son Prophet Ismail (AS).

>>>SEE ON P-7

## Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela symbol of 'new, hopeful' J&K: PM

Raja Syed Rather

**KATRA:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed the changing face of Jammu and Kashmir, citing recent events such as the Mata Kheer Bhawani Mela—where thousands of devotees gathered—as a powerful reflection of the region's growing optimism and return to normalcy.

In his public address, the Prime Minister, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), mentioned the "painful past" marked by terrorism, where many residents had abandoned their dreams and accepted violence as an inescapable reality. However, he said this narrative has shifted under his government's leadership.

"Today, the youth of Jammu



and Kashmir are dreaming again—and fulfilling those dreams," PM Modi said. "They take joy in bustling markets, vibrant shopping malls, and flourishing cinema halls. This is the new spirit of the valley."

He underlined the aspirations of locals to re-establish Jammu and Kashmir as a premier

destination for film shoots and to develop it as a hub for sports and tourism. Events like the upcoming Amarnath Yatra and the celebration of Eid, he added, signify not just cultural vitality but the resilience and progress of the people.

Touching upon security concerns, Modi said the

momentum of development will not be derailed by incidents like the recent Pahalgam attack. "Any obstacle threatening the dreams of Jammu and Kashmir's youth will have to face me directly," he declared.

The Prime Minister also invoked Operation Sindoor, conducted exactly a month ago, describing it as a decisive blow to Pakistan-based terrorist networks. "Whenever Pakistan hears the name Operation Sindoor, it will remember its humiliating defeat," he said, adding that the operation dismantled terror infrastructure that had taken decades to build—within minutes.

He said Pakistan retaliated with cowardly attacks on innocent civilians in Jammu, Poonch and other districts.

>>>SEE ON P-7

## J&K Bank Fixes EMI-Credit Mismatch: CEO JK Bank

KC NEWS NETWORK

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant relief for salaried employees, Jammu and Kashmir Bank said it has resolved recent concerns regarding temporary drops in credit scores by rescheduling EMI deduction dates to align with salary credits.

J&K Bank Managing Director and CEO, Amitava Chatterjee, confirmed the move, saying the issue arose due to a timing mismatch—salaries were being credited early in the month, while loan EMIs were scheduled toward the end. This gap led to temporary defaults in some cases, adversely affecting CIBIL scores.

"We have now changed the EMI dates to match the salary credit timing. This ensures that employees have enough money in their accounts when EMIs are deducted,"

>>>SEE ON P-7



Editorial



Srinagar’s Rise

Srinagar district has emerged as the top performing district across Jammu and Kashmir in key sectors for the year 2023–24 under District Good Governance Index (DGGI 4.0). The district has secured the 2nd rank among the 20 districts of JK with composite score of 6.5840, and also ranked 1st in the Kashmir division, standing out in critical governance domains like Industries & Allied Sectors (1st rank), Public Infrastructure & Utilities (2nd), and Environmental Management (3rd). In a place often associated with complex challenges, this model of quiet, focused, and efficient governance is a powerful counter-narrative—one of hope, results, and resilience. Equally significant is the economic validation that came with the release of DDP Estimates by the Chief Minister. Srinagar, with just over 10% of the Union Territory’s population, contributes a striking 14.53% to J&K’s Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Its Per Capita Income (₹1,88,723) far exceeds the UT average, underlining the district’s pivotal role as an economic engine for the entire region. Whether it is entrepreneurship, tourism, IT services, or urban infrastructure, Srinagar is emerging as a laboratory for economic rejuvenation in a post-conflict environment. This progress is not accidental—it is the result of sustained administrative vision, citizen participation, and better convergence of state schemes with district-level execution. With the government now expanding district-level data granularity through tools like DGGI and DDP, the focus on localized development and tailored policy interventions is stronger than ever. However, with recognition comes responsibility. For Srinagar to retain and build on these ranks, the administration must now focus on deeper citizen engagement, digitization of services, sustainability in infrastructure, and further investments in human capital. The next phase of development must ensure that economic growth translates into inclusive opportunities—especially for the youth, women, and marginalized communities. As Jammu and Kashmir seeks to script a new developmental narrative, Srinagar’s success stands as a powerful template for replication and inspiration. The message is clear: with visionary leadership, effective planning, and community participation, even the most complex regions can set benchmarks in governance and growth. Srinagar has shown the way.

More Than a Ritual: Discovering the True Meaning of Eid ul-Adha

DANISH ASHRAF KHAN

Eid ul-Adha is one of the most special and sacred festivals in Islam. It is not just a holiday marked by new clothes, family visits, and delicious meals—it is a day steeped in deep meaning, powerful lessons, and a

timeless symbol of devotion and submission to Allah.

Every year, Muslims around the world commemorate this act of obedience through the ritual of sacrifice. However, the true essence of Eid ul-Adha goes far beyond the act of slaughtering an animal. It calls us to look inward. Are we truly embracing the

and one for those in need. Unfortunately, today this practice is often misunderstood or misused. Some people keep the best cuts for themselves and offer the less desirable pieces to the poor. This contradicts the very values Eid stands for. Allah does not look at the meat or the blood; He looks at our sincerity, our

who might otherwise be left out.

As we enjoy the festivities, we must ask ourselves: are we only performing rituals, or are we truly living the message of Eid? Are we opening our hearts and homes to others? Are we remembering the poor, the lonely, and the forgotten? Are we willing to change ourselves for the better?

In conclusion, Eid ul-Adha is not merely a cultural tradition. It is a living message, a divine reminder of



call for both spiritual and social reflection. At its core, Eid ul-Adha reminds us of the extraordinary story of Prophet Ibrahim and his son Prophet Ismail (peace be upon them both), a story that teaches us the true meaning of faith, trust, and sacrifice.

Many years ago, Prophet Ibrahim had a dream in which Allah commanded him to sacrifice his beloved son, Ismail. For any father, this would have been an unimaginable test. Ismail was not just any child—he was the long-awaited son, born after years of prayer and longing. He was obedient, kind, and deeply loved. Yet Ibrahim did not question Allah’s command. He accepted it as a test of faith. Even his wife showed incredible patience and trust in Allah’s plan. Together, they prepared for what seemed like a heartbreaking act.

When Prophet Ibrahim shared the dream with his son, Ismail responded with maturity and courage beyond his years. He encouraged his father to fulfill Allah’s command and assured him that he would remain patient. It was not just the father who submitted to God’s will; the son too demonstrated complete obedience and trust. As Ibrahim raised the knife to carry out the sacrifice, Allah intervened and sent a ram in Ismail’s place. The test was passed. Their willingness to surrender what they loved most became a

spirit of sacrifice? Are we willing to part with our pride, greed, comforts, and selfish desires for the sake of what is just, kind, and right? Are we putting the needs of others ahead of our own?

In today’s world, Eid is often treated like any other celebration. Our focus tends to be on shopping, decorating, and elaborate feasts. While these customs bring joy, we must not lose sight of the deeper message. Eid ul-Adha is rooted in compassion, kindness, and community. It calls us to remember those who struggle silently: orphans longing for a warm hug and a new outfit, widows worried about feeding their children, elderly people who feel forgotten on this joyous day.

The days before Eid are the perfect opportunity to show kindness. We shouldn’t wait until after the celebration to give away leftovers or distribute charity. We must plan ahead—visit families in need, offer them meat, clothes, or even comforting words that bring light to their hearts. True compassion means acting before we are asked. It means thinking beyond our own homes and helping others feel the spirit of Eid.

One of the key traditions of Eid ul-Adha is the division of the sacrificed animal’s meat into three parts: one for the family, one for relatives and friends,

intentions, and the purity of our hearts.

When giving meat to the less fortunate, it must be done with respect and love. No one should feel they are being given leftovers or handouts. Every piece shared in Allah’s name should be given with dignity. The act of sacrifice is not about the animal—it’s about surrendering our ego, our pride, and our sense of superiority.

Another overlooked but important aspect is the condition of the animal being sacrificed. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) clearly instructed that the animal must be healthy, mature, and free from defects. Choosing a sick or weak animal to save money is disrespectful to the sacred act. When we give to Allah, we must offer the best—not what is cheapest or most convenient.

Eid day begins with beautiful traditions. Muslims wake early, take a bath, wear clean clothes, apply fragrance, and head to the mosque for Eid prayers. Along the way, they recite the Takbeer, glorifying Allah. This chant is not mere formality—it is a powerful reminder of unity, gratitude, and faith. After the prayer, the sacrifice is carried out. Families gather to share meals, exchange greetings, and celebrate life’s blessings. But this celebration must include those

The days before Eid are the perfect opportunity to show kindness. We shouldn’t wait until after the celebration to give away leftovers or distribute charity. We must plan ahead—visit families in need, offer them meat, clothes, or even comforting words that bring light to their hearts. True compassion means acting before we are asked. It means thinking beyond our own homes and helping others feel the spirit of Eid.

what it means to be a believer. It is a celebration of faith, a test of character, and a call to action. Let us honour the legacy of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail—not only through words, but through our deeds. Let us share our joy generously, give sincerely, and offer only the best of what we have. And above all, let us live each day with the values Eid ul-Adha teaches us: Faith. Compassion. Responsibility.

May Allah accept our sacrifices and guide us on the path of righteousness. Ameen.

Author is Writer, Teacher and Public Servant. He can be mailed at [khandaanishashraf506@gmail.com](mailto:khandaanishashraf506@gmail.com)

Silent Wounds: Understanding and Healing the Hidden Pain of Women



MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI, MUNTAZIR ALI

In the vast panorama of human experience, women have long carried burdens that often remain unseen, unacknowledged, and unspoken. While many parts of the world have made progress toward gender equality, the reality for countless

From dawn to dusk, millions of women carry the weight of domestic life—managing homes, raising children, caring for elders, and supporting families emotionally and often financially. Yet, this labor is dismissed as “natural” or “expected,” with little recognition or gratitude.

Men often have social outlets for emotional relief; women, in contrast, are confined, isolated, and expected to suppress their own desires for the sake of harmony. This emotional and mental load leads to silent suffering—manifesting in anxiety, depression, and burnout, often trivialized by society.

The weight of a thousand unspoken words crushes the heart of a woman who labors unseen and unheard.

2. The Myth of the “Ornament of the Home”

Phrases like “Aurat ghar ki zeenat hai” (a woman is the ornament of the home), while meant to honor, are often misused to justify restricting women’s freedom. In many households, safety and honor become tools of control—curbing women’s joy, friendships, and self-expression.

A woman is not a decorative object. She is a human being with dreams, emotions, and the right to live freely.

True honor does not bind wings—it nurtures the soul to soar.

Marriage often marks a sharp turn in a woman’s social life. Her circle of friends and confidantes shrinks, while societal expectations grow. Men continue to enjoy social networks and emotional support; women are expected to suffer silently.

Her tears are silent, but they echo louder than any spoken grief—yet society looks away.

4. The “Second Home” Dilemma

For many girls, marriage is presented as destiny—a shift to a “second home.” But for most, this new environment is unfamiliar, and acceptance is uncertain. Unlike men, who usually remain rooted in their natal families, women often feel like guests or even outsiders in their marital homes.

5. Education: A Promise or a Paradox?

While the push for girls’ education is positive, it sometimes serves ulterior motives: social status or better marriage prospects. Even worse, some daughters, once educated, drift from the mothers who sacrificed for them—exposing a painful paradox.

Education must liberate, not merely reflect society’s expectations.

6. Unequal Labor: Time to Share the Burden

The notion that women’s labor is a duty while men’s is optional is outdated and unfair. Emotional support, caregiving, and housework must be shared responsibilities. Equality begins at home—not just in law or policy.

Justice is not about what one receives, but about the burdens one shares.

7. Achievements Amid Constraints

Despite progress in education and professions, many women still face invisible shackles. Their choices are limited, their freedoms curtailed. Their successes, often achieved with immense struggle, remain shadowed by cultural limitations.

Breaking barriers takes more than degrees—it requires challenging norms.

8. Mental Health: The Cost of Neglect

Years of emotional labor, restriction, and neglect lead to deep psychological distress. While men can seek therapy or community support, women often suffer in isolation. Their silent wounds become chronic and corrosive.

Invisible wounds leave the deepest scars. Healing begins with acknowledgment.

9. Religion, Culture, and the Road Ahead

Islam, like many faiths, emphasizes dignity, kindness, and justice for women. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) championed women’s rights, compassion, and respect. Reclaiming these teachings from distorted cultural practices is essential.

Religion must not be used as a cage—but as a compass of compassion.

Conclusion: When Women Thrive, Societies Heal  
The silent suffering of women must no longer be ignored. We must listen. We must support. We must change.

Women deserve lives filled with friendships, emotional support, dignity, and joy. Men must become empathetic partners. Families must share responsibilities fairly. And society must make space for women to flourish.

When the silent wounds of women are heard and healed, humanity itself finds its voice.

Author Bios: Mohammad Arfat Wani and Muntazir Ali are social observers and writers from Kuchmulla, Tral (Pulwama), Kashmir. Their work focuses on gender, justice, and the emotional well-being of marginalized communities. Authors can be mailed at [wania6817@gmail.com](mailto:wania6817@gmail.com)

1. The Unseen Labor: Exhaustion Without Recognition

3. Social Isolation After Marriage



# Kashmir Convener Organises Mehndi Art Competition at AGS Bandipora on Eid Eve

Event witnesses overwhelming response; Kashmiri Pandit women join in a touching show of cultural unity

MARIUM FAYAZ

**BANDIPORA:** A day before Eid-ul-Adha, Kashmir Convener organised a Mehndi Art Competition at Army Goodwill School Bandipora with an aim to revive the traditional way of celebrating festivals besides appreciating art as a powerful form of expression.

The event was organised in collaboration with Army Goodwill School Bandipora and Kashmir Environment and Social Organisation (KESO).

During the Mehndi Art Competition, students applied mehndi on fellow students and staff members.

The most heart-warming moment of the event came when Kashmiri Pandit women also joined in, and students adorned their hands with beautiful mehndi designs – a moment that powerfully echoed Kashmir’s legacy of communal harmony.

“That was the true message of the event – symbolising the spirit of communal harmony and our shared cultural roots. We have a history of celebrating each other’s festivals, and today, we witnessed a glimpse of that legacy,” said Aurmella Roohie, Managing Editor of the Kashmir Convener who participated as a special guest.

Speaking on the occasion she said the Mehndi Art Competition, organized by Kashmir Convener, is not just about beautiful designs. “It’s a way to connect with our roots. Mehndi has always been a joyful part of Eid, especially for



our daughters and sisters. Today, we are here to keep that tradition alive, and celebrate art as a powerful form of expression,” she added.

To honour their talent, I am delighted to announce that a special page in tomorrow’s edition of Kashmir Convener will feature their Mehndi art. This is our way of saying: you matter, your

art matters, and our culture matters,” she added.

Principal AGS Shabnam Kausar said they were amazed by the creativity shown by the students. While expressing gratitude to Kashmir Convener, said, “We are proud to host such a meaningful event that not only celebrates art but revives the traditional way of Eid celebration – collectively,

joyfully, and inclusively.”

She also praised the initiative’s deeper cultural impact, saying, “Our students learned today that festivals are not just rituals, but living expressions of our heritage.”

She also praised the initiative’s deeper cultural impact, saying, “Our students learned today that festivals are not just rituals, but living expressions of our heritage.”

The programme featured students applying intricate Mehndi designs, sharing stories of Eid traditions at home, and learning about the cultural significance of Mehndi in Kashmiri traditions.

The girl students who designed mehndi art on students included Seerat Tariq, Mir Mannat, Suhana Mohammed, Iram Shafi, Aayat zameer, Iritiqa shehri, Razia, Sahreen Wani, Shaimaa lone, Hoor Pair, Sadiya Riyaz, Zanita Tariq, Faika Javid, Hafsa Saleem, Mehreen Mah-raj, Kfiya, Aleeza Zameer and Ayesha Feroz.

The boys who performed the mehndi art included Salim Farooq, Manan Iqbal, Fayiq (6th), Abu Hanzala, and Farhan.

## DC Bandipora Calls for Proactive Steps For Tribal Development

CONVENER NEWS DESK

**Bandipora :** To review the progress under the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA), the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri Friday convened a review meeting on Monday here in the VC Room, Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

According to an official spokesperson, the meeting focused on the implementation status, preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), and conducting gap analysis in 31 notified tribal villages of the district.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the need for timely and result-oriented actions to ensure that the objectives of the Abhiyan are met effectively.

During the meeting, the DDC emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination for addressing developmental gaps in tribal villages. He urged the concerned officers to ensure accurate data collection and proactive planning for the preparation of village-specific DPRs.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC assured that the district administration is committed to upliftment and inclusive development of tribal communities through focused initiatives under the DAJGUA framework.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Revenue Bandipora Shabir Ahmad wani; Chief Planning Officer Bandipora Mohammed Maqbool Lone;

District Programme Officer Bandipora, Chief Medical Officer, Assistant Director CAPD, and Executive Engineers from R&B, PHE, PDD, and PMGSY Bandipora.



## Dr. Farooq, Omar Abdullah extend Eid-ul-Azha greetings to people

**Srinagar:** On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, and Vice President & CM Omar Abdullah, conveyed their heartfelt greetings to the people, wishing them peace, prosperity, and unity.

In his message, Dr. Farooq Abdullah reflected on the profound significance of the day, saying, “As the Muslim Ummah comes together in celebration of Eid-ul-Azha, I extend my warmest greetings to everyone. This blessed day commemorates the supreme sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH), who, in his unwavering faith, was prepared to sacrifice his son, Hazrat Ismail (AS), in submission to the will of the Almighty. But Allah’s mercy prevailed, sparing Hazrat Ismail (AS) and providing a ram in his place. This day, therefore, stands as a timeless symbol of sacrifice, devotion, and trust in divine wisdom. It is a moment for us all to reflect on the importance of compassion, generosity, and empathy. Let us come together to uplift the less fortunate and bring joy to those in need. May the spirit of Eid bring solace to the people of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, and may it help ease their burdens.”

CM Omar Abdullah, in his greetings message, emphasized the values of equality, harmony, and communal unity. “Eid Mubarak. Eid-ul-Azha teaches us to embrace the principles of equality, divine consciousness, and, most importantly, the spirit of giving. The selfless sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) and the unwavering obedience of Hazrat Ismail (PBUH) are a source of eternal inspiration for mankind. On this blessed day, I pray that it strengthens the bonds of brotherhood among the people of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Let this Eid be a beacon of peace, stability, and mutual respect across our region.”

## 402 Agniveers Pass Out from Dogra Regimental Centre in Grand Ceremony

CONVENER NEWS DESK

**JAMMU:** The Dogra Regimental Centre proudly conducted the Passing Out Parade and Attestation Ceremony of its 5th Agniveer Course on June 4, 2025, at the historic Jamedar Lala Parade Ground.

An official spokesperson said a total of 402 Agniveers officially joined the ranks of the Indian Army after successfully completing 31 weeks of rigorous training.

The parade, marked by military precision and grandeur, was reviewed by Major General Anupam Baghi, Additional Director General of Rashtriya Rifles. Brigadier Jitendra Sharma, Commandant of the Dogra Regiment-

tal Centre, along with other officers, civil dignitaries, family members, and proud parents of the Agniveers, attended the event.

The training for the 5th Agniveer Course began on November 1, 2024, and concluded on June 4, 2025. The comprehensive training regime included tactical and physical drills, weapons handling, battle craft, and endurance exercises. A strong emphasis was placed on discipline, teamwork, and the core values of the Indian Army.

A major highlight of the training was a weeklong field exercise conducted under realistic combat conditions. Agniveers were made self-sufficient for 72 hours in field environ-

ments and underwent a series of tactical missions. The exercise culminated in the demanding 40-kilometre ‘Josh Run’, designed to test the trainees’ stamina, grit, and willpower.

Taking the oath of allegiance, the young soldiers pledged to serve the nation with honour and uphold the values of the Indian Army. The occasion marked another milestone for the Dogra Regimental Centre, which continues its legacy of producing valiant and disciplined soldiers.

The induction of the 5th batch of Agniveers into various battalions of the Dogra Regiment was hailed as a proud moment for the institution and the families of the newly attested recruits.

## KESO Organises Massive Environment Day Celebrations Across Bandipora

**BANDIPORA:** In a remarkable demonstration of environmental activism and youth engagement, the Kashmir Environmental and Social

organization (KESO) marked World Environment Day 2025 with large-scale celebrations across four different locations in Bandipora district. Hundreds of students, educators, and community members actively participated in a series of events aimed at spreading awareness on this year’s theme: “Beat Plastic Pollution.”



Under the direct supervision of its Chairperson Mtr. Shabnum Kounser, KESO led programmes at Army Goodwill School Bandipora, Emergent Modern School of Education Quil Muqam, Shah-i-Hamdan English Medium School Bandipora, and

school, praised the initiative and applauded KESO’s efforts to bring environmental education to tribal students in remote areas.

At the Army Goodwill School Bandipora, a variety of events including debate competitions, a student rally, a plantation drive, skit performances, and a poster-making competition were held under the direct oversight of Chairperson Mtr. Shabnum Kounser. She took a round of the school campus to view the posters made by students, appreciating their creativity and concern for environmental issues. “These young minds are the custodians of

our planet’s future. Today, they have shown remarkable awareness and artistic expression,” she said.

Meanwhile, Shah-i-Hamdan English Medium School Bandipora saw equally vibrant celebrations led by KESO front-line members Malik Anayatullah, Feroz Ahmad, and Momin Ahmad, in collaboration with the school’s Principal, Mr. Shabir Ahmad. The programme included painting competitions, a cleanliness drive, and a multi-house rally. Students, teachers, and even local residents participated with great enthusiasm, making it a community-wide event focused on environmental preservation.

KESO President Mtr. Rukhsana Maqbool, in her message, lauded the efforts of the volunteers, members, and school authorities who came together to organize Environment Day activities on such a large scale. “Our success lies in the unity and commitment of every individual involved. This event is a testament to what collective resolve can achieve when it comes to protecting our environment,” she said.

With participation from grassroots communities and an emphasis on education and awareness, KESO’s Environment Day initiative has not only spotlighted the pressing issue of plastic pollution but also inspired hundreds to become agents of change in their localities..

## DC Bandipora M.A. Qadri Extends Eid-ul-Adha Greetings to the People

Convener News Desk

**BANDIPORA :** Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, has extended heartfelt greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, a festival symbolizing sacrifice, compassion, and devotion.

In his message, the Deputy Commissioner said that Eid-ul-Adha reminds us of the values of selflessness, empathy, and sharing. “May this sacred occasion bring peace, prosperity, and harmony to all,” he said.

Wishing everyone a joyful and blessed Eid, Qadri emphasized the importance of unity and caring for one another, especially the less fortunate. He prayed for peace, development, and collective well-being across Jammu and Kashmir.

He urged people to support the underprivileged and celebrate Eid with a spirit of unity and generosity.



## Airtel Launches First Flagship COCO Store in Srinagar

**SRINAGAR:** Bharti Airtel inaugurated its maiden flagship Company-Owned Company-Operated (COCO) store in Srinagar’s Bhagat Barzulla area on Thursday, marking a major milestone in its efforts to deepen customer engagement and retail presence in the Kashmir Valley.

The store was formally inaugurated by Dibyendu Aich, Chief Operating Officer, J&K.

The new outlet offers Airtel’s full suite of cutting-edge services, including Airtel 5G Plus, Wi-Fi, Fixed Wireless Access (FWA), Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), and Direct-to-Home (DTH) services, under one roof. Designed to provide an immersive and seamless experience for customers, the store also serves as a hub for product demonstrations, service support, and subscriber engagement.

Speaking on the occasion, Dibyendu Aich said the store underscores Airtel’s commitment to bringing world-class digital services closer to its customers in Jammu and Kashmir. “The launch of our flagship store in Srinagar is a significant step in enhancing customer experience and expanding our retail footprint in the region,” he added.

Over the past few years, Airtel has steadily ramped up its offline presence across the Union Territory. With the addition of this flagship outlet, the company now operates 16 stores in Jammu and Kashmir, further reinforcing its service and support network for millions of users across the region.

The COCO model ensures a consistent brand experience for Airtel subscribers while offering a more personalized customer service environment.

## Indian Army Organises Tree Plantation Drive in Poonch

**POONCH:** Commemorating World Environment Day 2025, the Indian Army organized a tree plantation drive across Salani, Dak Bungalow Loran, and other locations in Poonch district, reaffirming its commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Convener, an official spokesperson said the drive saw the participation of Indian Army personnel, civil administration officials, schoolchildren, and local residents. The collaborative effort turned the event into a powerful symbol of unity and environmental consciousness in the border region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Approximately 100 saplings were planted at various Indian Army establishments and public spaces, with a focus on native species that support the region’s ecological balance. This initiative aligns with the global theme of World Environment Day 2025 – ecosystem restoration and climate action – and reflects the Army’s ongoing efforts under its “Mission Green” campaign.

“Trees have always been essential to human survival, providing food, oxygen, shelter, medicine, and tools. In today’s world, their importance has only grown as we combat climate change and environmental degradation,” said an Army official during the event.

By involving local communities and youth in this green mission, the Indian Army is fostering environmental stewardship and resilience in one of India’s most sensitive border districts. The event not only highlighted the Army’s ecological commitment but also served as a reminder that environmental protection is integral to nation-building.

Villagers welcomed the initiative and expressed gratitude to the Army, pledging to continue working together toward a cleaner and greener society.





# Javed Rana Seeks Assured Winter Power Supply

## Pushes for Infra Upgrade at Northern Power Meet

**Convener News Desk**

**CHANDIGARH:** Jammu & Kashmir Cabinet Minister, Javed Ahmed Rana today participated in the Regional Power Ministers' Conference, 2025, of Northern States/UTs held here in Chandigarh.

The conference provided a platform for deliberation on critical power sector issues affecting the region including resource adequacy, transmission capacity and cyber security.

During the conference, Javed Rana sought firm and assured power supply to Jammu and Kashmir from the Government of India during winters at reasonable prices. He highlighted the challenges facing the state due to its geographical location and the seasonal variation in power demand. He also stressed the importance of strengthening the transmission infrastructure in Jammu & Kashmir.

Furthermore, Rana emphasized the need for promoting sustainable energy in Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted the potential for small hydro projects in the UT and the importance of green corridor connectivity with Ladakh for solar energy evacuation.

The Minister underlined the imperative of ensuring cyber security in the power sector, recognizing the critical importance of protecting the UT's power infrastructure from potential threats.

Javed Rana assured that the Jammu and Kashmir government, led by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, is committed towards collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure a reliable, sustainable and secure power supply to the people of the region.

The conference provided a valuable opportunity for the JK Minister to engage with his counterparts from other northern states and UTs, as well as officials from the Ministry of Power, to discuss crucial issues and explore solutions to the challenges facing the power sector in J&K. (DIPR)



Javed Rana urged for upgradation of Kishenpur-Moga transmission line and completion of the 400 KVA Grid Station at Siot to ensure reliable power supply to the region.

## Sakeena Itoo greets people on auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha

**Convener News Desk**

**SRINAGAR:** Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has extended her heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

In her greetings, Minister Sakeena said that Eid-ul-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice, is not only a celebration of faith and devotion but also a time to reaffirm our commitment to compassion, humility, and unity. She added that Eid is a day that commemorates the unparalleled obedience and submission of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) to the will of Almighty Allah, a lesson that inspires us to lead lives of sincerity, selflessness and service to humanity.

"As we gather in prayer and offer our Qurbani (sacrifice), let us also remember the values this festival upholds – caring for the underprivileged, sharing our blessings, and strengthening the bonds of community and kinship. It is a time to embrace those in need with empathy and ensure that no one is left behind in our collective celebration", Sakeena said.

The Minister also called upon all to celebrate this Eid with a renewed sense of responsibility towards each other and with prayers for peace, prosperity, and harmony in our region and across the world. She also prayed for everyone contributing towards building a more inclusive, enlightened and resilient Jammu & Kashmir. (DIPR)

## DC Srinagar extends greetings to people on Eid-ul-Adha

**Convener News Desk**

**SRINAGAR JUNE 06:-** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat has conveyed warm wishes to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

An official spokesperson said the Deputy Commissioner, in his message, has extended his best wishes to the people on Eid-ul-Azha, the occasion for sharing happiness, especially with the poor and needy.

The DC highlighted that Eid-ul-Azha fosters sincerity, truthfulness, love, compassion, and affection among people. He reminded the people of the profound sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and his son Hazrat Ismail (AS), symbolizing faith and loyalty to Almighty.

The DC urged society to remember marginalized communities and ensure their inclusion in the celebrations.



## Twin Sports Events in Tangmarg Inspire Youth Against Drug Abuse

**Convener News Desk**

**BARAMULLA, JUNE 06:** Youth Services and Sports (YSS) Zones Tangmarg and Kunzer today participating enthusiastically, carrying forward the message of a drug-free and disciplined lifestyle.

with teams demonstrating skill, agility, and sportsmanship.

The Kho-Kho event was presided over by MLA Farooq Ahmad Shah. In a special gesture, local cricket national-level player Mir Khushboo from Mamooosa Kunzer and other national level athletes from the previous year were felicitated with appreciation certificates, celebrating their achievements and encouraging their peers.

Speaking on both occasions, MLA stated, "We are witnessing the power of youth and sports as a weapon against drug addiction. Events like these bring purpose, discipline, and hope to our younger generation."

I deeply appreciate the efforts of the Youth Services and Sports for mobilizing such positive energies across Baramulla district under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan."

These back-to-back events highlight the unwavering commitment of the Youth Services and Sports, Baramulla, in fostering awareness, fitness, and community resilience through inclusive sporting events.

The Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan continues across all zones of Baramulla, aiming to eliminate the menace of drug abuse by empowering youth through education and sports.



jointly organized two impactful events – a Mini Marathon for sub-division Tangmarg and a Girls Kho-Kho competition at playground Kunzer, under the banner of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA).

According to an official statement, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Farooq Ahmad Shah flagged-off the Mini Marathon from Hospital Crossing, Tangmarg, and later presided over the Kho-Kho competition.

The marathon concluded at Higher Secondary School (HSS) Chandilora, with 310 boys

Mini Marathon was attended by SDM Gulmarg, DYSSO Baramulla, and other officers and officials from various departments. Top performers were felicitated with appreciation certificates by the MLA during the award ceremony, who praised the youth for their proactive participation.

Later in the day, focus shifted to YSS Zone Kunzer, where a Girls Kho-Kho competition was held at playground Kunzer under the same campaign.

The event witnessed participation from over 300 girls,

## Fisheries deptt Anantnag organises awareness workshop on PMFME scheme at Shangus

**Convener News Desk**

**ANANTNAG:** To inform and empower local entrepreneurs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and small-scale food processors about the wide-ranging benefits of the PMFME scheme, Department of Fisheries Anantnag today organized an awareness workshop under the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme here.

In a statement issued to Kashmir Convener, an official spokesperson said Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Shangus Anantnag East, Riyaz Khan, graced the occasion as chief guest. In his address, he emphasized the government's commitment to promoting entrepreneurship in the fisheries and allied sectors. "With focused initiatives in areas such as fish processing, bakery production, pickle making, and fruit and vegetable processing, we aim to create sustainable employment avenues for the youth and rural communities," he stated.

The workshop witnessed an encouraging response, with over 100 participants registering on the spot. Many expressed keen interest in setting up or upgrading their micro food processing units under the scheme.

PMFME offers a 35% credit-linked capital subsidy (up to Rs.10 lakh) for individual enterprises, and up to Rs.3 crore for common infrastructure projects by SHGs, fish production statistics, number of private fish farms supported by the department, and the upcoming schedule for similar awareness and capacity-building programs.

Horticulture Development



Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and cooperatives. The scheme also provides crucial support in the form of Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation, bank loan facilitation, branding, packaging and marketing assistance.

Deputy Director Fisheries Anantnag, Shabir Ahmad Shabir highlighted the department's ongoing efforts and schemes operational in the district. He provided insights into annual

Officer Shangus, Peerzada Farhat on the occasion spoke about the schemes including High Density Apple Cultivation etc.

Likewise representatives from the line departments spoke about their schemes during the programme. The workshop concluded with an interactive session, where participants engaged with departmental officials and experts on scheme guidelines, eligibility criteria, and business development strategies.

## Div Com Kashmir Greet People on Eid-ul-Adha

**Convener News Desk**

**Srinagar:** The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri today extended his heartiest greetings to the people of valley on the auspicious occasion of Eid ul Adha festival.

Div Com said that Eid-ul-Adha encapsulates the message of sharing happiness & joy, and promotes spirit of equality and brotherhood among the people.

He prayed for good health to the people, and communal harmony, peace and prosperity in the region.

## DC Srinagar visits Hazratbal, oversees arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha

**Convener News Desk**

**SRINAGAR JUNE 06:-** Ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Friday visited Hazratbal Shrine to take stock of arrangements made by various Departments with regard to celebration of the festivities of Eid-ul-Azha.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by senior Officers of District Administration, Police, other Departments and Administrator Waqf Board.

Reviewing the arrangements on spot, the DC directed the concerned Officers to ensure all facilities for the devotees expected to offer Eid prayers at the Shrine especially on account of water supply, electricity, healthcare, cleanliness and illumination in and around the shrine, besides proper transportation, parking facility, deployment of fire tenders and establishing emergency control rooms. The DC also took stock of the arrangements being made by the Waqf Administration at the Shrine for the people on Eid-ul-Azha. The DC enjoined upon the Traffic Police Department to make fool-proof traffic plan for devotees and also directed SMC officials to ensure proper sanitation in and around the Shrine premises and repair all street lights before Eid-ul-Azha.

The DC further stressed the Officers to maintain close coordination to ensure smooth conduct of the Eid-ul-Azha, the religious festival at Hazratbal Shrine. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner has directed the all concerned authorities to ensure such arrangements at all other places across the City particularly at prominent Masjids and Shrines.

## Shopian Admin kicks-off Dharti Aaba Janbhagidari Abhiyan

**Convener News Desk**

**SHOPIAN:** As part of the nationwide Dharti Aaba Janbhagidari Abhiyan under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, district administration Shopian initiated the team formation process for the upcoming awareness and benefit saturation camps scheduled from June 15 to June 30, 2025. An official spokesperson said a district-level orientation programme was convened today under the chairmanship of Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian.

The programme aimed to sensitise the teams constituted at district, block and GP/Village levels about the objectives and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) of the campaign. During the session, field teams were briefed on conducting baseline surveys to identify critical gaps in service delivery and promote evidence-based planning. Emphasis was placed on achieving saturation of key welfare schemes including Aadhaar enrolment, Ayushman Bharat, PM-KISAN, and PMAY-G for tribal communities.

## A Greener tomorrow begins today: J&K schools unite to ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’

**Convener News Desk**

**SRINAGAR:** In a profound celebration of environmental responsibility, School Education Department (SED), Jammu and Kashmir, observed World Environment Day 2025 with resounding enthusiasm and heartfelt commitment across all districts of the Union Territory.

The theme for this year, "Beat Plastic Pollution," became a rallying call for students, teachers and communities to rise in defense of the Earth.

The main event was held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Ganderbal, where Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK), Dr. G.N. Itoo led the proceedings as chief guest. He was joined by Additional Secretary, SED, G.N. Bhat, who attended as guest of honour.

In his inspiring address, Dr. Itoo emphasized that the real change begins at home. "When families, schools, and communities commit to giving up plastic, only then we can truly protect our planet for future generations."

environmental care an integral part of student's daily experience.

The event was also attended by Chief Education

Dr. Itoo announced that all the schools would be declared plastic-free zones. He also called for rejuvenation of eco-clubs, expanding their work beyond school boundaries to encompass nearby water bodies and tourist areas, making

Officer Ganderbal, Oneel Kumar Bhat, Deputy CEO Ganderbal, Rumysa Sangeen and several other officials from the Education Department.

Beyond these flagship events, World Environment Day 2025 was celebrated across



Dr. Itoo announced that all the schools would be declared plastic-free zones. He also called for rejuvenation of eco-clubs, expanding their work beyond school boundaries to encompass nearby water bodies and tourist areas, making

## JKReTTF Chairman Condemns ZEO Sumbal's Unparliamentary Behaviour Towards Teachers

**Convener News Desk**

**Srinagar:** The Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Rehbar-e-Taleem Teachers Forum (JKReTTF), Khalid Rafeeq Bhat, has strongly condemned the reported use of unparliamentary language by the Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) Sumbal during an official visit to Government Primary School (GPS) Check Shadipora.

According to the JKReTTF, the ZEO allegedly used disrespectful and inappropriate language while addressing both male and female teaching staff at the school, sparking outrage within the teaching community.

An official spokesperson of the organisation said the incident has raised serious concerns about the treatment of educators by officials in the education department.

"This is not just about inappropriate words—it reflects a dangerous pattern of growing disrespect towards our teaching community," said Mr. Bhat in a statement. "Teachers are the backbone of our education system, and such behavior is both unprofessional and unacceptable."

Bhat urged the Education Minister, Sakina Itoo, and Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK) Dr. G.N. Itoo to take immediate action. He demanded the transfer of the

ZEO in question, asserting that such steps are necessary to safeguard the dignity of educators and to send a strong message that misconduct will not be tolerated.

"We expect the administration to treat our teachers with the dignity and respect they rightfully deserve," Mr. Bhat added. "Any attempt to humiliate or demoralize them must be confronted head-on."

The JKReTTF reiterated its commitment to protecting the rights and welfare of teachers across Jammu and Kashmir and vowed to continue voicing concerns against any actions that undermine the honour and professionalism of the teaching community.

## SWD Budgam organises week-long sports activities

**Convener News Desk**

**BUDGAM:** Social Welfare Department in Budgam Friday organised a week-long series of sports and wellness activities under the banner of Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan.

The programme commenced with great enthusiasm through a Marathon/Run against Drugs, where scores of students, youth, and civil society members participated to spread the message of saying 'No to Drugs and Yes to Life,' witnessing encouraging participation.

On the second day, momentum continued with a variety of sports tournaments including volleyball, cricket, kabaddi, and several traditional and recreational games. These activities were aimed at channelising the energy of youth towards positive, healthy engagements while raising awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

The third day was dedicated to Yoga and Meditation sessions, conducted in collaboration with the Youth Services & Sports Office and School Education department. Participants, especially school and college students actively took part in practicing various asanas and breathing exercises, reinforcing the importance of mental well-being in the fight against addiction.

The week-long campaign culminated with a vibrant Cycle Marathon and Paidal March against Drugs, which saw impressive participation from across the district. The concluding event sent out a strong and united message against drug abuse, underlining the community's commitment to building a healthier, drug-free society.

This programme under Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan marked yet another step forward in the district's ongoing fight against substance abuse, promoting health, fitness, and social responsibility among the youth. (DIPR)



Continued From P1...

PM Modi connects

commemorative coins and stamps to celebrate this engineering feat.

Following the Chenab Bridge event, the Prime Minister proceeded to inaugurate India's first cable-stayed Anji Khad Bridge, another critical component of the USBRL project. This bridge enhances connectivity between Katra and Srinagar, facilitating smoother rail operations in the region's challenging terrain.

At noon, the Prime Minister flagged off two Vande Bharat Express trains from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Railway Station to Srinagar and back. These trains, designed for cold climate adaptability with advanced heating systems and anti-spall layers, will operate six days a week, covering the 190 km journey in approximately 3 hours.

The trains are expected to significantly boost tourism and connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir. Stops include key stations such as Reasi and Banihal.

At Katra, the Prime Minister dedicated multiple development projects worth over Rs 46,000 crore to the nation. These included critical road infrastructure, flyovers in Srinagar, and the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence, the first medical college in Reasi district, valued at over Rs 350 crore. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for additional projects aimed at enhancing healthcare, education, and economic growth in the region.

After concluding the events in Katra, the Prime Minister departed by helicopter from the Katra helipad at approximately 2:30 returning to Delhi (KNO)

J&K witnessing

during his visit, including the Chenab Rail Bridge, the Anji Khad Bridge, and the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL). The USBRL project is 272 km long and has been completed at a cost of over Rs 11,000 crore.

Officials said the Chenab Bridge is the tallest railway bridge in the world, standing at 359 metres above the riverbed. The Anji Khad Bridge is India's first cable-stayed railway bridge. These projects are part of a fully integrated all-weather railway route linking the Kashmir Valley with the rest of India.

Modi also laid the foundation stone for new road projects worth 1,952 crore. These include the widening of the Rafiabad-Kupwara section of NH-701 and the construction of the Shopian bypass on NH-444. Two flyovers were also inaugurated in Srinagar—one at Sangrama Junction (NH-1) and another at Bemina Junction (NH-44)—to help reduce traffic pressure.

In the health sector, the foundation stone was laid for the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence at Katra. The Rs 350 crore facility will be the first medical college in Reasi district. (KNO)

J&K Hails

saying even though the train won't reach here directly, they feel more connected now. "Our students, traders and patients will have better access to cities. It brings us closer to the rest of India," said Abdul Qayoom, a teacher.

In south Kashmir's Anantnag district, hotel owner Imran Sheikh said that with better and faster rail connectivity, they will now get more queries for bookings from travellers. "It gives a fresh hope to our struggling tourism sector," he said.

Similarly, in the Jammu region, the development was welcomed with joy and happiness.

In Katra, Sunita Devi, who runs a small eatery, said this development will increase the number of Vaishno Devi pilgrims who may now also plan visits to Kashmir. "We expect more footfall and better business," she said.

In Udhampur, college students have commended the move, saying they often travel to Srinagar for exams or jobs. "With this kind of infrastructure in place, we feel travel will be easier and more affordable. It will also help bring people from both regions closer," said Aditya, a college student. (KNO)

Vande Bharat

Zubair, a hotel owner from Srinagar, said the launch of the Vande Bharat trains and the completion of key railway bridges is a game-changer for Kashmir's hospitality industry.

"Improved connectivity means more tourists can visit comfortably and quickly, which will directly increase hotel bookings and occupancy rates. It not only helps revive tourism but also encourages investment in new facilities and services," he said.

Bilal Ahmad, a tour operator, said the Vande Bharat trains, as well as the completion of the rail link, are a milestone for Kashmir's tourism industry. "These trains offer speed and comfort, which are very important for travellers," he said.

"It will open up new opportunities for adventure tourism, pilgrimages to Vaishno Devi and recreational travel. Tourists can now plan shorter trips without worrying about long or difficult journeys," Ahmad added.

Gowhar, a houseboat owner from Srinagar, said the arrival of these modern trains and better rail links is excellent news for the tourism sector here in Kashmir. "More convenient and faster travel will encourage more tourists, especially families and solo travellers visiting Srinagar and surrounding areas," he said.

He added that for houseboat owners, this means more guests and "a chance to revive our livelihoods, which have been hit hard in recent years" (KNO)

Traders, horticulturists

(KNO), Chairman of Kashmir Economic Alliance (KEA), Mohammad Yaseen Khan said that enhanced rail connectivity is a much-needed boost for Jammu and Kashmir's economy. "It will greatly benefit fruit growers, especially those dealing in apples and cherries, by enabling faster and more efficient transport of their produce to markets across India," he said.

Besides horticulture, the rail link will also help artisans, traders and small-scale manufacturers by improving access to broader markets, he added.

Khan said the infrastructure boost would not only reduce travel time but also open new avenues in trade and overall economic activity in the region.

The Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers Cum Dealers

Union, the elected apex body of fruit growers across the valley—including areas like Srinagar, Sopore, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Handwara, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama, and Kulgam—termed the new railway link a "historic and transformative movement" for J&K's connectivity.

"This is more than just infrastructure; it is a bridge of opportunity," said Bashir Ahmad Basheer, Chairman of the union and president of the New Kashmir Fruit Association. "With better accessibility, Kashmir will witness a major influx of tourists. The railway network is expected to significantly reduce travel time, enhance all-weather connectivity, and provide a safe, economical mode of transport for both locals and tourists."

Basheer said the new rail link will serve as a lifeline for the horticulture industry, especially during off-season months. It will help decongest roads, lower transport costs, and make Kashmir more accessible to domestic travellers, he said.

"We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for this visionary step," Basheer added.

The union also urged the central government to launch direct rail connectivity between Delhi and the Kashmir Valley, along with a dedicated goods train service, to ease logistics for fruit traders and other local businesses.

Such steps, it said, would not only enhance trade but also create new revenue streams for the railway authorities and significantly bolster J&K's economy.

Meanwhile, noted Kashmiri artisan Ghulam Rasool stressed the need for the revival of the handicrafts sector, which he said stands to gain substantially from improved connectivity.

"Better transportation can help Kashmiri artisans access wider markets and rejuvenate a sector that is an integral part of our cultural heritage," he said.

Khan, who has also received Padma Shree in Handicrafts, however, said the government should give more importance to the revival of handicrafts in Kashmir as it is on its deathbed with no youth interested in it due to several reasons.

"With the death of elder people who are currently associated with handicrafts, there will be no one doing this," Khan said (KNO)

Pak enemy

Katra after dedicating the Kashmir rail project to the nation, PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) while referring to April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, said, "Pakistan tried to target Kashmir's economy and trigger communal clashes in India, but failed in the face of people's unity and resolve."

"Tourism connects people, but our neighbouring country has always tried to disconnect humanity. Pakistan attacked the soul of Kashmir and humanity on April 22 by targeting innocent civilians. They wanted to incite communal violence, destroy livelihoods, and derail the region's peace," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister blamed Pakistan for trying to damage the social fabric of the Valley and for directly targeting the growing tourism economy that has become a lifeline for thousands of Kashmiris. "A poor worker Adil, who resisted the terrorists, was also shot dead. He was there to earn his living," he added.

"Pakistan didn't just attack the innocent people—it attacked Kashmiriyat, Insaniyat, and gareeb ki roti (the poor man's bread). But the people of Jammu and Kashmir have risen. They have sent a loud and clear message to Pakistan: we reject terror, and we stand united," PM Modi said.

He lauded the courage of the people of J&K, especially the youth, for choosing progress over fear. "Once terrorism had burned our schools and hospitals. Even holding elections was a challenge. People had stopped dreaming. But today, youth in Jammu and Kashmir are not just dreaming—they are turning those dreams into reality."

PM Modi also referred to the huge participation of devotees in the recently held Mela Kheer Bhawani in Kashmir.

Recalling the recent Indian retaliation, he said, "Just a month ago, terrorists in Pakistan saw their doomsday. Operation Sindoor was a befitting reply. Pakistan never imagined that India would penetrate deep into their territory and destroy their terror infrastructure. Now, every time they remember Operation Sindoor, they will remember their humiliation and defeat."

He also highlighted Pakistan's desperation, saying, "Their frustration was clear when they targeted civilians, religious places, temples, mosques, gurdwaras, and churches in border areas like Poonch. The nation stands with the 2,000 families affected by Pakistan's shelling. The Centre Government will provide Rs 2 lakh for houses completely damaged and Rs 1 lakh for those partially damaged. This compensation is in addition to the aid that has been provided to them."

Underscoring his government's commitment to border communities, PM Modi said, "We consider border residents as our first-line citizens. The bunkers we built have saved many lives. Two men and two women battalions have been formed, and more infrastructure is coming up in these areas."

Calling upon the youth of J&K and the rest of India, he said, "Operation Sindoor has shown the power of India's armed forces and the success of 'Make in India'. I urge the youth to become innovators in the defence sector. Help India become one of the top defence exporters in the world. This will not only protect the nation but create employment for lakhs."

PM Modi reaffirmed his promise: "No power in the world can stop the development of Jammu and Kashmir. I will not let vikas (development) slow down—not today, not tomorrow. If anyone tries to disrupt J&K progress will have to face Modi first."—(KNO)

PM Modi has

the Lieutenant Governor expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi for dedicating the historic railway projects to the people of Jammu Kashmir and the nation.

"Kashmir to Kanyakumari is no longer a slogan. Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi has turned this decade-long dream into reality. He has connected the hearts of millions of Indians, forging an unbreakable

bond from North to South.

With Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) and the launch of Vande Bharat trains to Kashmir Valley, Prime Minister has fulfilled the resolve of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who had dreamt of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat," the Lieutenant Governor said according to official spokesperson.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the world's tallest Chenab Railway Bridge and the country's first Cable-Stayed Anji Rail Bridge, inaugurated today, ensures that J&K gets connected with new aspirations of progress.

He said the skills of our engineers to build Chenab, Anji Bridge and hard work of our workers who carve through the mountains have eliminated the gaps that existed between crown Jewel of India and rest of the country, the Lieutenant Governor further said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed J&K UT in the last 6 years.

"It's holistic development is top priority for Hon'ble Prime Minister and his various policies, speedy implementation and industrialisation has brought the Union Territory to the focal point of growth.

The Prime Minister had lit a new torch of socio-economic revolution in J&K post August 2019. He built strong pillars of economic development in J&K & now laid new lines of destiny in the form of railway lines on it to transform J&K at a new pace.

Since April 2022, in the last three years, the PM has dedicated and laid the foundation stone of development projects worth over Rs 1.15 Lakh Crore to the people of Jammu Kashmir," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also expressed his gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for ensuring firm and decisive action against terrorism and its ecosystem.

"Operation Sindoor avenged the barbaric terrorist attack in Pahalgam, and has drawn a new red line. On one hand the unmatched power of our armed forces is ready to protect the integrity of the nation and the other creative power is dedicated for a developed India," the Lieutenant Governor said.

In a major boost to last mile connectivity especially in border areas, the Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various road projects. He laid the foundation stone of road widening project from Rafiabad to Kupwara on National Highway-701 and the construction of Shopian bypass road on NH-444 worth over Rs 1,952 crore.

He also inaugurated two flyover projects at Sangrama Junction on National Highway-1 in Srinagar and at Bemina Junction on National Highway-44. These projects will ease traffic congestion and enhance traffic flow for the commuters.

0The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence in Katra worth over Rs 350 crore. It will be the first medical college in Reasi district contributing substantially to the healthcare infrastructure in the region.

Kashmir to

"Eid-ul-Azha is not only a celebration of faith but also a reminder of the profound sacrifice and complete submission to the will of Almighty.

The unwavering trust shown by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and the willing obedience of Prophet Ismail (AS) teach us the essence of selflessness, devotion and steadfastness in the face of trials," Omar Abdullah said.

He expressed hope that this auspicious occasion will further strengthen the bonds of communal harmony, mutual brotherhood, amity and tranquility across the region.

The Chief Minister also prayed for sustained peace, harmony and progress in Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K Bank Fixes

Chatterjee told Kashmir News Service (KNS). "CIBIL scores will no longer be affected. This was a one-time issue, and it has been resolved."

He admitted the issue could have been addressed earlier but assured that corrective measures have now been fully implemented. "We understand the concerns of our employees. What's important is that the right action has been taken now," he said.

In the meantime, various employees union delegations led by Aijaz Ahmad Khan, President JKEJCC, met with the top officials of the bank yesterday

and discussed the issue of double deductions of EMLs with them. Authorities assured the visiting delegations that the bank understands their issues and that appropriate measures are being taken to help the government employees overcome liquidity problems that have arisen due to the preponement of their EMLs.

Chatterjee also expressed optimism about the upcoming Amarnath Yatra, saying it is expected to boost tourism and help restore economic confidence in the region. (KNS)

Kashmir to

"Operation Sindoor"—a counter-terrorism operation launched in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people, mostly tourists.

PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Today's occasion is a festival of India's unity, strength, and integration."

He announced the operationalisation of two new Vande Bharat trains for Jammu and Kashmir, and laid the foundation for infrastructure projects worth over 46,000 crore, aiming to boost connectivity, tourism, and economic development in the Union Territory.

"From Kashmir to Kanyakumari is no longer a dream—it is now a reality for the Indian Railways. Stations like Udhampur and Baramulla are not just names on the map, they are part of the identity of a new Jammu and Kashmir," the Prime Minister said.

PM Modi also expressed pride in dedicating the iconic Chenab and Anji bridges to the nation.

Describing the Chenab Bridge as "taller than the Eiffel Tower," he called it a future "tourist hotspot" and a symbol of India's engineering prowess. "These bridges are not just made of steel and concrete. They represent the strength and resilience of New India," he said, while praising the determination of engineers who worked under extreme conditions.

Referring to the decades-old aspiration for railway connectivity in the region, PM Modi referred to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's speech, saying, "The CM said that he had been waiting for this project since his school days in class 7 or 8. Today, that dream of lakhs has come true."

He recalled comments from a student from Sangaldan, who had written that people in his village had never seen a real train and now they are looking forward towards economic and social transformation.

"A girl student wrote in a newspaper that now the weather will no longer dictate if roads remain open—this is the power of connectivity," PM Modi added.

The Prime Minister also spoke of the transformation Jammu and Kashmir has seen in education and healthcare. "We now have NITs, IITs, AIIMS, and central universities in Jammu and Kashmir. Seven new medical colleges have been set up, and the number of MBBS seats has increased to 1,300," he said,

announcing a new medical college for Reasi, funded in part by contributions from Mata Vaishno Devi devotees.

Reflecting on the 11-year journey of the BJP-led NDA government,

PM Modi highlighted its pro-poor governance model. "More than 25 crore Indians who once lived in poverty are now part of the growing middle class. These are not just statistics—these are lives transformed," he said.

He emphasized that for the first time since 1947, so much focused work has been done for the middle class and poor. "People who are caught up in needless debates should open their eyes and see who has actually benefitted," he asserted. (KNO)

CM Omar Abdullah

Tourism will receive a major boost, and the daily lives of our residents will improve," the Chief Minister said according to official spokesperson.

He highlighted the difficulties faced by people

during inclement weather when highway closures lead to exorbitant airfares.

"With this railway line operational, that hardship will be alleviated to a great extent, offering affordable and reliable transportation," he noted.

Speaking about the economic benefits, the Chief Minister emphasized the importance of better market access for the region's horticultural produce.

"Our apples, cherries, and other fruit will now find faster and more easy access to markets across the country and even globally. This will provide a significant economic benefit to our growers and traders," he said.

Lauding Prime Minister Modi's leadership, the Chief Minister said that the successful completion of this critical infrastructure project stands as a testament to the Centre's commitment to the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Under PM Modi's stewardship, yet another critical infrastructure project in Jammu & Kashmir has been completed. We are also witnessing rapid progress on other vital initiatives — the Jammu Ring Road, the Srinagar Ring Road, the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, the four-laning of the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, and the expansion of both the Jammu and Srinagar airports and the railway network," he said.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that with the Prime Minister's continued support, Jammu and Kashmir will soon regain its status as a full-fledged state.

"Today marks yet another momentous occasion. With your leadership and support, we look forward to Jammu & Kashmir regaining its status as a full-fledged state," he said.

Reflecting on his personal trust with key milestones in J&K's rail history, Omar Abdullah recalled his presence at the inauguration of the Anantnag Railway Station, the Banihal Railway Tunnel, and his government's final event at the same venue with PM Modi in 2014.

"You may call it fate, or perhaps destiny, but I have always had the good fortune of being present at key milestones in Jammu and Kashmir's railway journey," he said.

He also recalled that the dream of connecting Kashmir via railway dates back to colonial times.

"Even during British rule, plans were envisioned — such as the proposed Uri and Jhelum railway lines — but they remained unfulfilled. What the British could not achieve, you have made a reality. You have connected Kashmir with the rest of India and, through it, to the wider world. This is a historic accomplishment," he said.

Paying tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he credited him for being the first to recognize the rail-network to Kashmir as a project of national importance.

"This progress owes much to the vision of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, who declared this railway line a project of national importance. Since then, the project has seen consistent progress and budgetary prioritization," he said.

Reaffirming his government's commitment to development, the Chief Minister reiterated his resolve to fulfill the vision of a prosperous region.

"Our government remains committed to the vision of 'Viksit Jammu Kashmir, Viksit Bharat' — a developed Jammu & Kashmir, a developed India — and we are determined to realize this goal for the people of our region."

Concluding his remarks, the Chief Minister extended his gratitude to the Prime Minister on behalf of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

"On this historic day, on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, I extend my heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to you, Hon'ble Prime Minister. Thank you for your unwavering support and for helping turn decades-old dreams into reality."

Mata Kheer

Condemning the violence, the PM said the world saw how Pakistan bombed schools, hospitals, temples, mosques and gurdwaras in a show of desperation.

Praising the unwavering courage of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister asserted that the entire nation stands in solidarity with those affected. "Every Indian is with you, with full strength and unwavering support," he said. (KNO)

JK Cement Ltd. formalises Joint Venture with Saifco Cements Private Ltd.

JK Cement marks its entry as the first major cement manufacturer to invest directly in Jammu & Kashmir

JK Cement completes acquisition of 60% stake in Saifco Cements



**LEH:** In a major step towards accelerating infrastructural and employment growth in Jammu & Kashmir, JK Cement Ltd., one of the leading cement companies of India, announced the successful formalisation of its joint venture agreement with Saifco Cements Pvt. Ltd. of acquiring a 60% stake in the company. This landmark partnership establishes JKCement as the first major cement manufacturer to set up manufacturing operations in Srinagar, signalling a decisive step toward regional economic empowerment.

This strategic acquisition marks JKCement's commitment to contributing to the government's vision of robust infrastructure development and inclusive growth in the region of J&K. With this move, JKCement will not only enhance production capacity but also create significant local direct and indirect employment opportunities, thereby empowering the local communities in and around the region.

Speaking on this significant development, Dr. Raghavpat Singhania, Managing Director, JK Cement Ltd. said " We are pleased to welcome the Saifco Cements family into the JK Cement family. The Jammu & Kashmir market has untapped potential for local manufacturing, and with our combined expertise, we aim to transform the region and ensure benefits for the communities. We are deeply grateful to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir and the Hon'ble Lt. Governor for their unwavering support. Together with the Saifco Cement family, we are committed to driving sustainable growth, generating employment, and building a stronger, self-reliant infrastructure ecosystem in the region."

As part of the acquisition, JK Cement

is committed to driving sustainable industrial practices in Jammu & Kashmir. The company will invest in eco-friendly manufacturing processes, aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of cement production. This formalisation will significantly strengthen JKCement's enduring commitment to community empowerment, building on five decades of impactful social practices to uplift and support their long-term vision.

Sharing his views on the acquisition, Mr. Madhavkrishna Singhania, Joint MD and CEO, JK Cement Ltd. said "With this acquisition, we are strategically positioned to build a robust presence in Jammu and Kashmir. This acquisition represents a significant milestone for us, solidifying our presence in Northern India and reaffirming our commitment

to contributing to the nation's progress through sustainable and strategic investments. Through the course of the years we will implement some of our best sustainability practices in and around the plant. We also hope that this initiative will encourage further investments in the state and the region, contributing to its development."

Partnering with JKCement marks a significant milestone for Saifco Cements," said Mr. Suhail Manzoor Guna, Director, Saifco Cements Pvt. Ltd. "This alliance reflects our shared vision of advancing infrastructure in Kashmir while creating meaningful opportunities for its people.

JK Cement's strong legacy and commitment to inclusive growth perfectly align with our belief in building a stronger, self-reliant Valley. We look forward to this collaboration unlocking new potential, enhancing operational scale, and paving the way for long-term progress in the region." The acquisition heralds a new era poised to capitalize on the immense potential of the Kashmir Valley. Saifco Cements brings to the partnership a well-established manufacturing unit at Khunmoh, Srinagar, equipped with clinker and grinding capacities, along with substantial captive limestone reserves.





On Eid eve, **Kashmir Convener** organised a **Mehndi Art Competition** at AGS Bandipora, bringing together students, staff, and Kashmiri Pandit women in a shared celebration of tradition, expression, and cultural harmony — reviving the traditional way of celebration rooted in a shared culture.

