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Kishtwar Cloudburst:

Ensure Reconstruction of Houses Damaged in Flash Floods: LG Sinha

Takes Stock of Rescue Relief Operations, Directs For Immediate Relief and Uninterrupted Essential Supplies



HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha spoke to senior Officials and took stock of the rescue and relief operations at Chashoti, Kishtwar.

In a social media post, the Lieutenant Governor said that he will ensure the reconstruction of homes damaged in flash floods. He also directed the senior officials for

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PM Monitoring Rescue Operations In Cloudburst-Hit Kishtwar: Jitendra Singh

HT News Network

JAMMU, AUG 16: Union minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday reached out to people admitted in the Government Medical College here with injuries from the cloudburst and flash floods that struck a remote village in Kishtwar district two days ago.

Singh said the search and rescue operations are continuing round the clock and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is personally monitoring the situation.

He said 53 bodies have been recovered so far.

“Prime Minister Modi is personally monitoring the rescue and relief operations. On the very first day, he held a review meeting. On Friday, he spoke to the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister and received a briefing. He continues to assess the situation from time to time,” Singh told

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Assure Immediate Assistance, Long-Term Support To Affected Families: CM Omar Abdullah

Visits Cloudburst Hit Chashoti Village, Announces Major Relief, Rehabilitation Measures on The Spot



HT News Network

KISHTWAR, AUG 16: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today visited the flood-hit Chashoti village in Kishtwar to take first-hand stock of the devastation caused by the recent cloudburst.

Upon his arrival, he was briefed by Indian Army personnel and used a virtual reality headset to assess the scale of destruction.

The Chief Minister, who reached Kishtwar on Friday evening, traveled by road to the affected village early Saturday morning.

He was accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Chairman District Development Council Pooja Thakur, MLA Inderwal Pyarelal Sharma, MLA Ramban Arjun Singh Raju, former minister Sajjad Ahmad Kitchloo, besides Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Inspector General of Police

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On day 3, rescuers use explosive, 82 still missing

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Two days after a cloudburst hit Chasoti village in Kishtwar district, rescuers

on Saturday used explosives to break massive boulders that were blocking access to the worst-hit sites, as anxious relatives clung to fading hope on the third day of the search for the missing.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) 82 people, including 81 pilgrims and a CISF personnel, remain untraced, while 60 persons among them three CISF personnel and a

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Anxious Relatives Cling To Hope As Search For Missing Enters Third Day

HT News Network

JAMMU, AUG 16: Two days after a devastating

cloudburst struck Chisoti village in Jammu and Kashmir’s Kishtwar district, anxious relatives of the missing are clinging to fading hope.

With rescue operations continuing on the third day, the grief-stricken relatives said they are hoping against hope, as every passing hour dims the chances of the victims’ survival.

So far, 82 people — 81 pilgrims and one CISF

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Story of Survival Rekindles Hope, Udhampur Man Rescued After 30 Hours

HT News Network

KISHTWAR, AUG 16: Two days after a devastating cloudburst hit Chasoti village in Kishtwar district, a story of survival has rekindled hope in the grieving region.

Subhash Chandra, a langar sevak from Udhampur, was rescued alive after being trapped under debris for nearly 30 hours, igniting fresh optimism among search teams and anxious relatives.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Subhash had been running a community

kitchen (langar) for Machail Mata Yatra pilgrims, a voluntary service he had undertaken for years.

Every pilgrimage season, he would join fellow sevaks in feeding thousands of devotees who trek the rugged path to the shrine. “For him, serving pilgrims wasn’t just social work, it was spiritual service,” said one of his colleagues, still helping with relief efforts.

On August 14, at around 12:25 PM, a cloudburst-triggered flash flood swept through Chasoti, flattening homes, shops, temples, and the langar site. Logs, mud, and boulders

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CS Visits Chisoti, Assures Relief & Rehabilitation Measures

HT News Desk

KISHTWAR, AUG 16: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today visited Chisoti village of Paddar in Kishtwar district to take stock of the situation in the aftermath of the recent cloudburst.

Senior officers including the Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; IGP, Jammu; DC, Kishtwar; SSP, Kishtwar and other concerned officers accompanied the Chief Secretary during this visit.

During the visit, the Chief Secretary reviewed the extent of damage to

habitations and infrastructure, besides interacting with affected families, local officials, and rescue teams engaged in relief and restoration efforts.

He held intense deliberations with the rescue teams of NDRF, SDRF, local police and security forces there about the kind of measures taken so far. He also took this occasion to talk to local people about the relief operations, health facilities and others being extended to them post this disaster.

The Chief Secretary issued instant instructions for ensuring immediate

relief measures, proper rehabilitation of affected families, and early restoration of essential services in the area. He called upon all line departments to work in close coordination to ensure timely response and minimize inconvenience to the public. He impressed upon the Divisional and district administrations to closely monitor the progress and simultaneously inform him about the same on daily basis.

Reassuring the local population, the Chief Secretary affirmed that the

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Rotten Meat Scare Slashes Restaurant Sales Across Kashmir By Up To 80%

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Restaurants and cafes across Kashmir are witnessing a sharp decline in business after authorities seized 1,200 kilograms of rotten and unfit meat from various locations in the Kashmir Valley in the last couple of weeks.

Restaurant owners report up to an 80 per cent drop in customers, leaving dining halls nearly empty, as people avoid eating outside.

Sharing details about the losses, Babar Chowdhary, head of the Jammu and Kashmir Hotel and Restaurant Association, told the news agency—

Kashmir News Observer (KNO), that the industry has lost more than half its market in recent weeks.

He said over 80 per cent of restaurant sales have been affected across the Kashmir Valley, with Srinagar city being the most impacted. “The restaurants, cafeterias and other eateries in Srinagar are empty these days and people avoid eating outside,” he said.

Chowdhary added that the rotten meat and unbranded, unlabelled frozen food seizure has caused this situation and that the government must act tough against the culprits.

He demanded stricter inspections of meat entering

the Union Territory and the establishment of a food-testing laboratory at Lakhanpur. “The rotten meat scandal has affected everyone in the business and damaged public confidence,” he said.

Similarly, shops and restaurants, including the longstanding Khayam Food Court, have reported the same losses, saying they have been hit hard by the ongoing scare.

One shop owner said their sales have dropped by nearly 50 per cent over the past two weeks. “Even regular customers are hesitant to eat here, and new customers are avoiding the shop entirely,” he said.

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12,000 kgs of unsafe meat seized in week-long crackdown

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: In the ongoing crackdown against unsafe food practices, authorities have seized and destroyed nearly 12,000 kilograms of unsafe and decomposed frozen meat across Jammu and Kashmir over the past few weeks.

According to officials of the Food Safety Department, who spoke to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that the seized

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J&K procures nearly 40-50% electricity from power markets during lean season

HT News Network

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: With the minimal power generation availability, Jammu and Kashmir is procuring approximately 40-50 percent of electricity from the imported power markets during lean season.

The official documents available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal, “From the total imported power, it is seen that the power procurement by Jammu and Kashmir from the market is approximately 40-50 per cent during lean season.”

The documents further said that due to non-availability of internal generation during winter months, Jammu and Kashmir imports power from the interstate network.

“This over-dependence on day ahead and intraday market for purchase of power is indicating that measures for ensuring resource adequacy are required at Jammu and Kashmir end,” it reads.

The Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) has accordingly urged Jammu and Kashmir to take necessary measures for improvement in transmission and distribution system so that power shortages Jammu and Kashmir grid can be avoided and also take measures for resource adequacy minimising dependence on day ahead market and real-time market purchases.

Pertinently KNO has already reported that Jammu and Kashmir temporarily reduces electricity demand by disconnecting power to certain areas or customers if unavailability of additional quantum under unallocated quantum from Ministry of Power (MoP).

Authorities from Jammu and Kashmir has informed CERC that, “J&K SLDC submitted that J&K manages the shortage through Term Ahead Market (TAM), Day Ahead Market (DAM) and Real-Time Market (RTM) banking, Un-Requisitioned Surplus (URS) and additional quantum

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Rana praises Maulana Ghulam Qadir’s role in socio-educational reforms across Pir Panjal

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

POONCH, AUG 16: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today praised and acknowledged the services of Maulana Ghulam Qadir Bandy, a towering figure of Pir Panjal region who contributed immensely in socio-educational reforms.

Addressing a distinguished gathering of civil society members, educationists and religious scholars at the Jamia Zia Ul Uloom Group of Institutions in Poonch, the Minister described Maulana Bandy as a visionary reformer and spiritual guide whose transformative contributions to education have left an indelible mark on generations.



“Maulana Ghulam Qadir Bandy Sahib is not just a religious scholar; he is the Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Pir Panjal,” said Rana, invoking the revered 19th-century Indian reformer. Rana said that Maulana Bandy foresaw the need for harmonizing Islamic learning with modern education. He added that his initiatives lit the lamp of knowledge in a region

once gripped by isolation and educational backwardness.

“His commitment to girls’ education, at a time when it was often neglected, demonstrated his progressive ideals and a deep understanding of societal reform. His efforts empowered not just individuals, but families and communities,” Rana stated.

The Minister further said that the Jamia Zia Ul Uloom, founded by Maulana Bandy, has over the years emerged as a beacon of learning in the Pir Panjal region. He added that under his guidance, the institute produced scholars, civil servants, teachers and professionals who continue to contribute meaningfully in diverse spheres across Jammu & Kashmir and beyond.

Tarigami Raises Alarm Over Chisoti Cloudburst, Seeks Accountability & Climate Justice

■ Farooq Rather

SRINAGAR, AUG 16: Chairman, Committee on Environment, M.Y.Tarigami has expressed grave concern over the recent cloudburst in Chisoti Padder, which has claimed number of precious lives, more are still missing and left a trail of devastation. The deadly cloud burst has once again brought into sharp focus the vulnerability of Jammu and Kashmir’s Himalayan region to extreme weather events like flash floods, landslides, avalanches etc. The tragic incident underscores the existential threat posed by climate change to the fragile environment of Himalayan range and its ecological balance.

Most of the area happens to be the abode of shrines where thousands of devotees/yatris throng annually, as such, measures need to be taken to safeguard the human lives. Whether any survey and assessment of the whole area has been made by involving the department of environment and other organisations and suggestions recommended for prevention of cloud bursts and safety of people?

Solidarity in Struggle: Communal Harmony as a Beacon of Hope:

He lauded the heroic efforts of volunteers, youth, and local communities who displayed exemplary solidarity and communal cohesion in rescue and relief operations.

Demand for Time-Bound Probe: Fixing the Responsibility.

He demanded an urgent, time-bound probe into the tragic incident, questioning why precautionary measures were not taken despite early warnings from the Meteorological Department about severe rainfall, cloudbursts and flash floods in high altitudes of Jammu region. “Why were these alerts ignored and preventive measures not taken? It amounts to criminal negligence.

The bureaucratic inertia and lack of concern must be accounted for.

Such disasters are not merely “natural” but are exacerbated by the reckless exploitation of resources, deforestation, unabated and unauthorised use of stone crushers and the commodification of land under the neoliberal paradigm. The working-class and marginalized people of Jammu and Kashmir cannot continue to be sacrificial lambs at the altar of profit-driven environmental degradation.

A Pattern of Climate Catastrophe: From Pahalgam to Ladakh He highlighted the alarming frequency of cloudbursts and extreme weather events across the region, including Pahalgam, Bandipora, Shangus, and Ladakh, where infrastructure and livelihoods have been severely impacted.

“The hills mourn, the birds wait in despair, the winds howl warnings, and the rivers weep—nature is screaming for justice. Yet, the ruling elites remain deaf to these cries,” he lamented.

Climate Justice for Jammu and Kashmir: Given J&K’s unique topography, rapidly depleting glacial ice, and rampant deforestation, he demanded: -

1. Participatory Role for Common People in Climate Policy: Various departments and agencies of the government including activists working on environment protection and NGOs must co-ordinate their efforts to ensure the decisive say in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

2. Climate Compensation and Justice: The Union and UT administrations must institutionalize mechanisms for climate reparations, ensuring that affected communities are rehabilitated and compensated.

3. Ecological Restoration: A mass movement must be launched to combat deforestation, regulate unsustainable construction, and protect fragile ecosystems from corporate loot.

4. Early warning systems like deploying of advanced Doppler radars and weather satellites for real-time detection of intense rainfall and issuing of timely warnings via mobile alerts (SMS, push notifications) local broadcasters and loudspeakers in vulnerable areas top reach all residents swiftly.

DC Kathua inspects projects and amenities during Basohli tour

■ HT News Desk

KATHUA, AUG 16: Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, today conducted an extensive tour of Basohli to review developmental works, civic infrastructure and tourism-related projects.

He was accompanied by ADC Basohli Pankaj Bhgotra, ADC Kathua Vishavjeet Singh, CPO Ranjit Thakur, XEN PWD Basohli Rajesh Kumar and other district officers.

During the tour, the Deputy Commissioner visited the historic Mint site near Bus Stand Basohli and directed the Executive Engineer PWD to immediately commence development work sanctioned by the Archaeology Department at a cost of ₹82.34 lakh. The project includes construction of a protection wall and development of a park to preserve and showcase the heritage site.

He later visited Ward No. 11, a landslide-affected area, and instructed the Executive Engineer PWD and ACD Kathua to prepare a convergence plan for initiating protection measures.

At Kulthi Morh, Rehan Panchayat, he inspected the Solid Waste Treatment Plant where compost pits have been completed. He directed PWD to expedite approach road and chain-link fencing works



and stressed on community participation in maintaining cleanliness.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the progress of residential huts of the Tourism Department being constructed at an estimated cost of ₹79 lakh and instructed the executing agency to complete the work by October. He further inspected the boating point near TRC where CEO BBDA informed that 5,800 tourists had availed boating facilities in Ranjit Sagar Dam Lake till July 31, 2025.

During his visit to Purthu (Mini Goa), a popular tourist destination, he reviewed the pending river-front development proposal from Atal Setu to Purthu aimed at creating amenities and assets.

Later, he chaired a meeting of district officers at the ADC Office Basohli and reviewed progress of ongoing development works, with focus on road conditions during monsoon. He directed officers to address public grievances on priority and instructed Agriculture and allied departments to intensify awareness about government-sponsored schemes, promote adoption of new farming practices and encourage mixed farming for financial upliftment of farmers. The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the status of Jal Jeevan Mission works and healthcare facilities in Basohli and directed concerned officers to ensure timely delivery of services.

He also interacted with DDC Chairman Col (Retd) Mahan Singh and MLA Basohli Darshan Singh, who welcomed him to the district and apprised him of issues being faced in the hilly sub-division.

All JK Shia Association Observes Arbaeen with Majlis E Chelum Imam Hussain (AS) at Imam Bargah Zadibal

■ HT New Desk

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: The All JK Shia Association today held a deeply moving Arbaeen program at Imam Bargah Zadibal, marking the Majlis E Chelum of Imam Hussain (AS). The day began at 9 AM with Zakireen reciting soulful Marsiya, which continued until 12:30 PM, immersing the congregation in remembrance of Karbala. After a short break, the recitations resumed from 1:30 to 3:30 PM, creating an atmosphere of devotion and reflection.

At 3:30 PM, the Association’s President, Molvi Imran Ansari, delivered the Majlis E Aza, focusing on the wilayah of Imam Ali (AS) and the life of Hazrat Abu Talib (AS). He spoke about Hazrat Abu Talib’s unwavering protection of Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) during the most challenging years of his mission, recalling how he raised the Prophet as his own son, shielded him from harm, and stood firmly beside him despite intense opposition from Quraysh. Molvi Imran noted that the Prophet himself acknowledged, “So long as my uncle Abu Talib lived, the people could do me no harm,” underlining Abu Talib’s pivotal role in safeguarding Islam in its earliest days.

He also paid rich tribute to the courage of Bibi Zainab (AS) in the court of Yazid in Sham, where, even



in captivity, she became the fearless voice of Karbala, delivering eloquent speeches that exposed tyranny and preserved the message of Imam Hussain (AS) for generations to come. Her steadfastness, he said, was a continuation of the same spirit of sacrifice that her brother embodied on the plains of Karbala.

Later, at 5:30 PM, the Zuljanah Sharief procession was taken out under the leadership of AJKSA General Secretary Abid Ansari. The program was attended by prominent AJKSA leaders, including Vice Presidents Irfan Ansari and , District President Srinagar Haji Firduas Mirza, Vice President Munshi Bashir, Secretary Yaseen Mustafa, and Joint Secretary Nisar Sultan, who all participated in the proceedings with reverence.

In his concluding remarks, Molvi Imran Ansari extended heartfelt gratitude to the administration for their support, particularly acknowledging SSP Srinagar, SP Hazratbal, dynamic SDPO Zadibal, SHO Zadibal, CMO Srinagar, ZMO Zadibal, ExN PHE Srinagar, KPDCL AEE BAMK, the Chief Sanitation Officer of SMC, and the Ward Officer Zadibal, all the volunteers for ensuring the smooth and peaceful conduct of the day. He ended with a solemn prayer, invoking the blessings of Imam Hussain (AS) for the entire community, asking Allah to grant peace, unity, and spiritual strength to all, and to keep the message of Karbala alive in hearts forever.

JD(S) Leaders Rally Behind Kishtwar Cloudburst Victims

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

BHADARWAH, AUG 16: Janata Dal (Secular) President for Jammu and Kashmir and Socio-Political leader Mast Nath Yogi has expressed grief and sorrow over the tragic incident of cloudburst in Chishoti Padder on Thursday.

Expressing deep sympathy with the families shattered by the deadly cloudburst and flash floods that tore through the remote Chasoti village of Kishtwar

district, Yogi has demanded immediate relief and rehabilitation of the victims of natural disaster.

Calling it a “monumental tragedy,” Yogi extended his “deep sympathies and heartfelt condolences” to the bereaved and urged the LG administration as well as former chief minister Omar Abdullah to step in with timely relief and rehabilitation, medical care etc. “This is a moment of collective grief. My thoughts and

prayers are with the families of those who have lost their lives or are missing,” he said while appealing for coordinated rescue and rehabilitation efforts.

Former prime minister and JD(S) national president H.D. Deve Gowda also phoned Yogi to take stock of the disaster’s aftermath. Expressing sorrow over the devastation, Gowda voiced solidarity with those hit hardest and assured that every possible assistance

would be extended to help the victims get back on their feet.

It may be recalled that at least 60 people including two CISF personnel were swept away when a massive cloudburst set off a torrent of water and debris on Thursday. Relief and rescue operations are going on the war footings in the affected hamlets at the foothills of Himalayas straddling with climatically mighty Zanskar Sub-division of Ladakh.

90 Bn CRPF Celebrates ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ with Schoolchildren in Anantnag

■ Farooq Rather

ANANTNAG, AUG 16: As part of the nationwide Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, the Commandant and all ranks of the 90 Battalion, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), visited Government Middle School Uranhall and Saint Xian’s International School, Uranhall, in Anantnag district of Jammu & Kashmir to celebrate the spirit of patriotism and national unity.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and staff. The Commandant distributed National Flags and sweets among the students, fostering a warm and festive environment.



In an interactive and inspiring

address, students were educated about the historical significance

of the Indian National Flag, the sacrifices made by India’s free-

dom fighters, and the crucial role young citizens play in nation-building.

The tiranga is not just a piece of cloth but a symbol of our sovereignty, unity and pride. It is our duty to respect and safeguard it, the commandant said.

The students expressed their patriotism by waving the Tricolour with pride, singing patriotic songs, and pledging to uphold the values enshrined in the Constitution of India.

The event served to further strengthen the bond between the CRPF and the local community, reinforcing the collective message of unity, pride, and responsibility towards the nation.

HT EDITORIAL

Reopen remaining closed tourist places for revival of tourism

Almost four months have passed ever since the Baisaran-Pahalgam tragedy took place leaving behind 26 civilians dead. The situation has improved a lot since the tragic episode and things are moving in the right direction. Following the incident around 50 tourist places were shut down by the government. As the situation improved many of these tourist places were reopened but the majority of the tourist places continue to be shut down.

In the central Kashmir's Budgam district there are many tourist places and these places continue to be closed for both the local and domestic tourists. The Budgam district has been relatively peaceful during the militancy period and keeping the tourist places closed for a long period of time does not augur well for the future of tourism in Kashmir. Tourist places like Doodhpathri, Yusmarg, Nilnag, Tosamaidan and others continue to be closed for the tourists.

The people as a whole believe that these tourist places should be reopened as early as possible so that the people could visit them and enjoy their beauty as well as magnificence. Even though the Pahalgam area has been thrown open for tourism purposes, an all important tourist area falling in its vicinity continues to be closed for the tourists. The Aru valley, known for its beautiful landscapes, is visited by people in huge numbers especially on Sundays and other holidays.

At the same time some of the parks at Pahalgam also continue to be closed for the public and as such the people who visit this tourist place feel disappointed as well as dejected. This puts pressure on some of the parks and also on the Betaab valley that have been thrown open for the locals as well as non-locals for tourism purposes. One fails to understand the logic behind keeping closed the parks located in the Pahalgam area and also the Aru valley.

People who intend to visit the Aru valley and the other parks have to return or look for other options. As both the central and union territory governments want the revival of tourism in Kashmir it is important that all the confidence building measures are taken in this regard. The biggest step in this regard would be the reopening of the closed tourist places and the people at helm should devote their attention to the same. This would go a long way in reviving tourism and bringing back the tourists.

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Pollution



Muneeb Shafi

Pollution — the introduction of harmful substances into the environment — is a major factor affecting human health and ecosystems. It takes various forms, such as air, water, and soil pollution, and is often caused by human activities like industrialisation, urbanisation, and poor waste management. Its consequences range from respiratory illnesses and cardiovascular diseases to severe ecosystem damage and climate change.

In Kashmir, the primary drivers of pollution are a mix of human activities and natural factors. Biomass burning, vehicular emissions, and industrial activities are among the main contributors to air and water pollution. During winter, temperature inversions trap pollutants near the ground, worsening the situation.

Although Kashmir does not have extensive industrial areas, it still ranks among the most polluted regions. The root cause lies largely in the lifestyle and actions of the people. In recent years, Kashmiri youth have increasingly suffered from cardiac arrests — a tragic reality, especially considering that Kashmir was once a place of pure air, clean water, and unspoiled nature.

In the past, Kashmir was famously known as Heaven on Earth. Today, however, human neglect is depleting its beauty and purity.

The year 2025 set alarming climate records, with temperatures ranging from 30°C to 38°C. This extreme weather led to floods in some areas, unusual rainfall patterns, landslides, and prolonged dry spells. These changes have brought immense hard-



ships to farmers, with some even driven to suicidal thoughts. In South Kashmir, reports indicate that crores worth of apple orchards were destroyed by falling stones.

Adding to these challenges, there have been disturbing reports of large quantities of rotten beef, chicken, and mutton being consumed — a clear failure on the part of the Food Corporation Department (FCD) of Kashmir, whose officials seem more comfortable in their air-conditioned offices than addressing these critical issues.

Equally concerning is the discovery of hundreds of liquor bottles in South Kashmir. The responsibility

for such incidents falls not only on the authorities but also on society, particularly the youth, who are increasingly being drawn toward harmful and destructive paths.

A common citizen may not have the power to stop all these activities, but I make a humble appeal to our brave armed forces, especially the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Shopian, to keep a vigilant eye on these pressing matters and take strict action where needed.

Written by: Young Author Muneeb Shafi
Instagram: @young_author13

FICTION

Gulla Qasai

Dr Reyaz Tawheedi Kashmiri

(Translated by: Dr Basharat Khan)

As soon as the cursed face appeared, Gullah the butcher would feel a burning anger rise in his veins, and his hands would instinctively grab the sharp knife to start chopping the meat on the wooden board in front of him. This strange, almost automatic action had been going on for several months. Whether there were customers or not, as soon as he laid eyes on that cursed face, his hands would begin slicing the meat recklessly. His eyes would turn red and yellow with a hateful fury, and his cheeks would flush. Occasionally, a customer would be slightly taken aback by the butcher's strange change in demeanor.

Gullah's shop was located right in front of the main gate of the government hospital. From his youth to his middle age, he worked quickly and efficiently. His polite manner and honesty had won over his customers. He treated everyone with great respect but showed a particular reverence for doctors. Whenever a doctor's car passed the gate, his hand would automatically rise in a salute. If a doctor came to buy meat, Gullah would often add one or two extra pieces of meat into the packet.

When doctors praised Gullah for his generosity, he would smile and say, "A doctor's profession is one of healing. You not only serve the people but also relieve their pain, giving them a life free of suffering." And while saying this, he would share a personal story about the time when his wife had been admitted to the same hospital in labor. Dr. Mushtaq had stayed up all night working on her treatment, and in the morning, he performed a surgery and placed a beautiful little girl in Gullah's arms. When Gullah tried to thank him with a small tip, the doctor had rejected it, saying, "I am a government employee. I am paid by the government to serve people. Go, buy some clothes for your baby with this money."

As time passed, people's thinking began to change, and with it, the values of humanity were gradually replaced by materialism. Gullah's daughter was unwell one afternoon while he was at work in his shop. His



Translator
Dr Basharat Khan

younger son rushed to the shop and told him that his sister was feeling sick and that he should come home quickly. Gullah closed his shop and hurried home, bringing his daughter to the hospital for treatment. She was in great pain, but Gullah was reassured, as he believed that, being a doctor, Dr. Mushtaq would take care of his daughter. However, things did not go as expected. After some time, the nurse handed Gullah a prescription, and he rushed to the pharmacy to get the medicine. The pharmacist, who was an acquaintance of Gullah, looked at the prescription and said, "Tell the doctor to prescribe medicine from a different company." But Gullah did not understand the context and hurriedly bought the medicine and rushed back to the hospital. As Gullah walked back and forth outside the ward, his heart was torn by the sound of his daughter's agonized cries. He kept praying silently, asking for mercy from Allah. Soon, the nurse told him that despite the doctor's efforts, his daughter was not improving. The nurse explained that the doctor's shift was over and that he had to go to his private clinic. Gullah was left with two options: either take his daughter to the city hospital or to the doctor's private clinic. After con-

sulting with his wife, they decided to take her to the clinic. The nurse handed him another prescription and said that his daughter needed major surgery, which would cost around twenty thousand rupees. The mention of such a large sum of money left Gullah in shock. He thought, "How will I arrange such a huge amount?"

He had saved a few thousand rupees for emergencies, but most of it had already been spent. He shared this with his wife, and both of them felt the pressure. As they were pondering, Gullah noticed the gold bangle on his daughter's wrist. He felt a wave of guilt as if he was robbing his own home. As the market was closing, Gullah went to a jeweler with the bangle, where the jeweler, after weighing it, told him that due to the falling gold price and the fact that it was second-hand, he could only give him fifteen thousand rupees. After some negotiation, the jeweler gave Gullah sixteen thousand, and Gullah rushed to the clinic.

After gathering the money and taking it to the doctor, as Gullah entered the room, he heard his daughter's last words: "Papa...!" It felt as though the sky had fallen on him.

The voices of crying and screaming around him seemed to drown him out.

After spending days in mourning, Gullah returned to his shop with a heart full of stone. He now looked at the government hospital with disdain. His hand no longer rose in salute when doctors passed by, nor did he share the story of Dr. Mushtaq's kindness.

It was the festival of Eid-ul-Adha, and the market was bustling with excitement. Gullah's shop was crowded with customers. As he was chopping meat, a familiar voice made him freeze. The cursed face appeared again. Gullah's eyes turned red with fury as he trembled.

The doctors smiled and said, "I need one kilogram of mutton because my daughter is due for delivery." As he handed over the money, he added, "I will pick up the meat after I finish my work at the hospital." The words "My daughter is due for delivery" kept ringing in Gullah's ears, stirring a strange feeling inside him. Once he finished his work at the shop, he went to the pharmacist to buy a bottle of medicine. He mixed the medicine in water and soaked the meat in it. His mind was filled with strange thoughts as he impatiently awaited the doctor's return. Half an hour later, the doctor came to pick up the meat. With a smile, Gullah handed him the packet. The doctor went towards his car. Gullah took a deep breath of relief, but his mind was troubled, torn between good and evil.

As the doctor started his car, Gullah's conscience grew uneasy. This was the cursed face, the one that had destroyed Gullah's sense of humanity. By handing over the meat, Gullah felt a fleeting sense of calm. But then, the call of "Allahu Akbar" from the mosque broke through his thoughts like a jolt of electricity. His conscience began to tip towards the good side. Gullah heard his daughter's voice again, calling "Papa," not in vengeance, but in a plea for her life. Gullah rushed barefoot to the car, opened the door, and shouted, "This is goat meat, not mutton."

Translated from urdu short story
Gulla Qasai By Dr Basharat Khan
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Education and Technology: Empowering Tribal Girls for a Brighter Future



■ **Sahil Manzoor Bhatti**

In a world increasingly connected by cutting-edge technology, true education rises above barriers of caste, colour, creed, and gender. Educated individuals champion humanity, advocate for equality, and promote progress. Technology has today unveiled the mysteries of the world, offering unprecedented opportunities for growth and empowerment. For tribal girls in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, education and technology hold the key to breaking cycles of marginalisation and building a brighter future.

The Role of Technology in Uplifting the Marginalised

The internet has revolutionised access to knowledge, providing insights into global development and opportunities. It serves as a powerful tool for the underprivileged by offering resources on entrepreneurship, higher education, and skill enhancement. Platforms like YouTube and Google have become virtual classrooms, enabling students to acquire qualifications that were once out of reach. Unlike previous generations, which relied solely on teachers and struggled to access education, today's learners can access vast amounts of information from the comfort of their homes. This accessibility empowers individuals to learn advanced strategies and elevate their societal standing.

Education is now universally recognised as a cornerstone of success, regardless of age. It fosters peace, reduces violence, dispels ignorance, and opens doors to financial independence and social respect.

Educational Institutions as Catalysts for Change

India's educational landscape has expanded significantly, with primary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) stretching even into remote areas. These institutions have transformed mindsets and enabled social mobility. Among tribal communities, particularly the Gujjar and Bakarwal of Jammu and Kashmir, educational awareness is gradually increasing. Education is not only a means to secure high-ranking jobs — it also broadens horizons, promotes independence, and equips individuals to create opportunities for others. As the saying goes, true success lies in giving, not in receiving.

Focusing on Tribal Girls — A National Priority

This article highlights the plight of tribal girls, especially from the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, and the urgent need to uplift them for the nation's progress. India has made commendable strides in promoting gender equality, offering women equal rights across various sectors. Yet tribal communities, despite their rich cultural heritage, remain economically and educationally disadvantaged.

According to the 2011 Census, around 12% of Jammu and Kashmir's population comprises tribal groups, with Gujjars and Bakarwals being predominant. These communities, known for rearing livestock, migrate seasonally between the plains of Jammu in winter and the forests of Pir Panjal in summer. Their deep relationship with nature makes them excellent stewards of the environment, yet they face major hurdles in accessing education and economic opportunities.

Why Are Tribal Communities Lagging?

Despite their patriotism and contributions, the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities remain marginalised. Their dependence on shrinking forest resources limits their economic prospects. Geographic isolation, lack of awareness about government schemes, and poor infrastructure hinder access to education. As a result, tribal girls are unable to realise their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the nation.

Solutions for Upliftment

- To empower tribal girls and strengthen their communities, the following strategies must be urgently implemented:
- **Compulsory Education and Scholarships:** Education up to the graduate



level should be made compulsory for girls, with full scholarships for professional courses like medicine and engineering. A 100% rebate on tuition fees up to the postgraduate level would remove financial barriers.

- **Local Skill Development Centres:** ITIs currently located only at district headquarters must be extended to villages. Local branches will enable tribal girls to acquire technical skills, enhancing their employability.
- **Awareness and Support Campaigns:** Many tribal communities remain unaware of centrally sponsored schemes. Awareness drives should be conducted to inform them about scholarships, livelihood schemes, and healthcare support. Free transport facilities for women in remote areas will improve access to educational institutions.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Granting special forest rights will enable tribal communities to expand livestock rearing and dairy production. Supporting their traditional occupations will boost their economic prospects and acknowledge their role in environmental protection.
- **Local Employment Opportunities:** District-level recruitment drives for government jobs will encourage tribal youths to pursue education, knowing that job opportunities are available close to home.
- **Women's Safety and Rights Education:** Awareness programs should educate

girls about their rights and safety measures, empowering them to protect themselves and claim their rightful place in society.

A Vision of Inclusive Progress

The Gujjar and Bakarwal communities are patriotic citizens, woven into the rich fabric of India's cultural diversity. By prioritising the education and empowerment of tribal girls, India can uplift entire communities, strengthen the nation's foundation, and foster peace, prosperity, and unity.

It is time to eradicate discrimination and embrace humanity in its truest form. By investing in the education of tribal girls today, we pave the way for a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous India tomorrow. Let us act now so that every tribal girl shines — uplifting not only her community but the entire nation.

sahilmanzor411990@gmail.com

Oh, her face....

■ **Aasir Jaffer**

*a fragment of the moon itself,
spilling silver light,
turning my darkness into dawn,
showing me the way,
guiding me to heights I never
dreamed of.*

*And her eyes.....
oh, her eyes,
those black oceans,
those honey drizzled eyes,
when they meet mine,
the world slows,
time stops,
and in that stillness,
I kneel, I surrender,
I die a thousand gentle deaths.*

*Her lashes.....
those soft curtains,
each blink worth the price
of my soul.*

*And when their shadows
falls on her cheeks,
ah, they chop me,
tear me apart.*

*the curve of her lips,
the dimple it makes,
as if spring is on her face.
my heart aches, craves,
just to see that smile,
for that smile is my peace,
that nourishes my
miserable soul.*

*The way she walks,
the music in her voice,
her words,
everything, everything
about her is art.*

*Oh, I wish she knew
how beautiful she is,
I wish she knew
how my heart bows to her
every moment.
I wish, I wish,
she could see how my heart
speaks to her.*

aasirjaffer15@gmail.com

Am I

■ **Mehraj ud Din**

*Afraid of happiness I am, am I?
In human am monster, am I?*

*Look after look, looked
everywhere
Found myself nowhere,
somewhere am I?*

*Right is thee, right all the time
Wrong am I, in me wrong the
rest, right am I?*

*Moms wombs full of fears, fears
buried with tears
Murdered son Or murderer
am I?*

*Pink blood met black both
searching for name
Human! Someone whispered
and I wondered am I?*

*Lost in His services oh
benevolent angels
Do inform Him Or tell me ; who
the hell am I*

*Dangerpora sopore
mehrajdin38269@gmail.com*

No One Writes for the Colonel's Wife



■ **Sidharth P K**

*I am here,
I can give you a rose
Don't wret over the silent fog
I like you to be still
And the meeting of my night
As the moon's dress falls
Down upon the cool world
I take a step into you,
Where the blush leaves me
Into meaningful time
I care you when he finds you
In fault
In extreme anger
I am still the youth,
My glow is my moon
And the music all feather
To our anguish.*

My Days In Teetwal

■ Dr. Umar Nazir Munshi

In July 2019, I received my posting order. A friend, Dr Suhail, mentioned that Dr Mir Najib had also been posted to SDH Tangdhar. I called Dr Mir Najib, and we decided to travel together. On the morning of 3 July, we left Srinagar at 5 a.m. We stopped at Nachian for breakfast, sharing the food Dr Mir Najib had thoughtfully brought from home. That journey marked the beginning of a close friendship. When I submitted my joining report, however, the in-charge clerk informed me that both Medical Officer posts at Teetwal were already occupied.

The BMO wasted no time in writing to the higher authorities, requesting that I be accommodated at SDH Tangdhar. Soon after, I was informed that one of the doctors at PHC Teetwal had been relieved, and I would be posted there instead.

I finally joined in September 2019. I remember that morning vividly; driving along the rough mountain road and reaching the PHC around eleven. The building stood proud and neat, a two-storey structure with facilities for laboratory testing, X-ray, ECC, gynaecology, an ISM pharmacy, and even an Eeco ambulance. Yet when I arrived, there was no pharmacist, no technician, no supporting staff: only a lady ANM and an elderly Nursing Orderly who greeted me warmly.

It was only then that I realised the hospital stood right on the edge of the Line of Control. Across the Kishanganga River, clearly visible from the compound, lay the other side. The stillness around me was unsettling. Occasionally I could hear the faint hum of vehicles from across the border, but on our side there was almost no movement.

That evening I drove back to Tangdhar. Determined to manage like everyone else, I travelled by Sumo the next day. After finishing work, I waited more than an hour for transport, but no vehicle came. Hungry, tired, and cut off from my family because there was no mobile connectivity, I walked back to the PHC; only to find it locked.

In desperation I knocked at a nearby Darul Uloom, hoping to spend the night, but it was only a day school with no lodging facilities. Finally, I went to the police station. The officer in charge, speaking warmly in Kashmiri, welcomed me like an old friend, served me steaming kahwa, and calmed my worries. He guided me to a local pharmacist who kindly offered me a place to sleep.

The next morning, I told the PHC staff about my ordeal. They advised me either I have to leave Teetwal by two o'clock each day or arrange accommodation locally. Within a day they found me a modest single room. Living alone made me uneasy, so I asked Mr Jameel, one of the staff, to help me find a paying guest arrangement. When none was available, I decided to stay in the hospital itself, arranging for a helper to keep me company at night.

Patients came rarely during the day, but often turned up at odd hours. There were no chemist shops outside the PHC, and once my helper was delayed, leaving me completely alone in the dark building. I remember sitting by the window, heart pounding, waiting until he returned around ten at night. Winter came early to Teetwal. Though it did not snow, biting winds swept down from the surrounding snow-clad mountains. Supplies were scarce; there was only a single shop with basic goods. Over time, I became acquainted with the locals and learned to live with less.

Then, one afternoon, I heard sharp metallic sounds outside. People were running in panic. Someone shouted, "It's shelling!" I saw streaks of fire cutting through the air and froze in fear. With no phone network to call for help, I crouched under the hospital staircase, waiting for it to stop. Later, the villagers told me about community bunkers where I should take shelter. In time, the firing became a weekly occurrence, and I learned to live with its constant shadow.

Every evening after four, I walked a kilometre toward Tangdar to reach a spot called Teetwal Baila, where Airtel phones caught a faint signal. This place, at the confluence of



the Nala Qazi-Naq and the Kishanganga, became a gathering point for employees posted in Teetwal. We called our families, exchanged stories, and drew strength from each other. The historic Teetwal Bridge stood nearby—a silent witness to our shared isolation.

When winter vacations came, schools and colleges shut down, and most employees left for home. Teetwal grew quieter still. The Sumo service from Tangdar became erratic, sometimes not arriving at all.

With time, things improved. One day I

received a call from Mudasir Ahmad, an ISM pharmacist, telling me he is joining back to Teetwal. I welcomed him warmly. Slowly my loneliness lifted. A year later, more employees joined us, and the PHC finally felt alive with conversation and shared effort.

I remember wandering to a playground built by the Army for the villagers. Every local event took place there. Watching boys and girls play, carefree and happy, brought me unexpected joy. That simple sight eased the monotony of my days.

When the government opened the region for border tourism and allowed residents to host travellers, Teetwal stirred with new life. Tourists arrived from across India, and pilgrims came in large numbers to pay obeisance at the revered Sharda Temple. Roads improved, shops and dhabas appeared, and there was constant talk that mobile towers would soon be installed, ending our long isolation.

Finally, on 24 April 2023, the day arrived: Teetwal got its first Jio tower. For the first time, we could call our families without walking to distant hills. The silence had been broken at last. Then came Sunday, 9 March 2024. I was sitting with Jameel Chacha, making preparations for the coming month of Ramzan, when my friend Amir called. "You've been transferred," he said simply.

After five years of service in Teetwal, I had begun to feel at home. The news filled me with mixed emotions: happiness to start a new chapter, and sadness at leaving a place that had become part of me. Word spread quickly. Friends, colleagues, and villagers came to meet me. The staff of PHC Teetwal gathered around, and we talked for hours, revisiting the memories we had shared; some joyous, some bitter, all unforgettable.

On 10 March 2024, I left Teetwal, carrying heart-wrenching memories etched into my soul forever.

Excerpt from the forthcoming book "My Days in Teetwal" by Dr. Umar Nazir Munshi. He can be reached at janumar2023@yahoo.co.in.

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India, SKorea agree to work together in AI, semi-conductors, shipbuilding, defence

United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: India and South Korea today agreed to set new industrial ambitions, in high-tech sectors such as AI, semiconductors, clean energy, shipbuilding and defence industry, following talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his visiting Korean counterpart Cho Hyun. EAM Jaishankar, during their meeting here today, expressed thanks for Seoul's condemnation of the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack as well as for FM Cho Hyun's meeting with the Indian parliamentary delegation that visited ROK as part of India's global outreach on Operation Sindoor.

EAM Jaishankar also expressed happiness in welcoming Cho Hyun back to India as "an old friend and a new colleague" – as Cho Hyun was Ambassador to New Delhi from 2015-17. He was appointed foreign minister on July 19, 2025. In a post on X, the EAM said he was delighted to meet the South Korean FM and that the two "held productive discussions on advancing our bilateral cooperation in trade, manufacturing, maritime & people to people exchanges as well as new opportunities in AI, semiconductors, clean energy and defence". They also exchanged perspectives on the Indo-Pacific and on contemporary global developments. The EAM, in his speech, also

referred to the meeting between PM Modi and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, in Canada on the sidelines of the G7 in Kananaskis, last month. "It was, by the way, a very good meeting I must tell you, they had very strong bonding," he remarked. The South Korean FM, in a long post on X, said he appreciates "the deepening convergences and growing engagement as our Special Strategic Partnership completes 10 years. On my first visit to New Delhi since taking office, I held a constructive meeting with Foreign Minister @DrSJaishankar. "I aim to further deepen cooperation with India, a key regional partner in diversifying our diplomacy. In particular, we



agreed to take the 10th anniversary of our 'Special Strategic Partnership' this year as an opportunity to leap forward in new areas of cooperation. "We committed to expanding

collaboration in various fields such as supply chains, critical technologies, defense and security, and cultural exchanges, while also strengthening communication at the summit and

high-level meetings.

"On my first visit to New Delhi since taking office, I had a constructive meeting with FM @DrSJaishankar.

"I highlighted our vision of broadening Korea's diplomatic horizons and the central role of the ROK-India partnership in this effort. Marking the 10th anniversary of our Special Strategic Partnership, we agreed to further strengthen cooperation across supply chains, critical technologies, defense, and cultural exchanges, while enhancing communication at the leadership level," he wrote. A statement said the two Foreign Ministers held wide-ranging and productive discussions today. "During the meeting, the

Ministers reaffirmed the strong and growing Special Strategic Partnership between India and the ROK, rooted in shared democratic values, mutual trust, shared economic interests, and commitment to regional and global peace and stability. "The Ministers took stock of bilateral cooperation, including in the political, security, trade and economy, technological, and people-to-people domains. They agreed to set new industrial ambitions, especially in high-tech sectors such as AI, semiconductors, clean energy, shipbuilding and defense industry. The Ministers also shared their assessment on regional and global issues of common interest." UNI RN GNK

Zelenskyy hopes India will contribute to efforts aimed at ending war in Ukraine

United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has expressed hope that India will contribute to the efforts aimed at ending the war so that freedom and sovereignty of Ukrainians are truly secure.

In a message to President Draupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on India's 79th Independence Day he expressed confidence that the potential for mutually-beneficial India-Ukraine



cooperation in science, technology, trade and culture lies ahead.

Referring to his telephonic conversation with Prime Minister Modi before the Alaska Summit President Zelenskyy said they had a "good, candid conversation" when he had the opportunity to personally convey his best wishes on the occasion.

He said both nations share the experience of standing up for freedom and dignity as well as the pursuit of peace and development.

"We hope India will contribute to efforts aimed at ending the war, so that our freedom and sovereignty are truly secure," he added. UNI RB 1835

Manipur Governor given additional charge as Nagaland Governor

United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has been given additional charge of Nagaland Governor in addition to his own duties following the demise of the Nagaland Governor L. Ganesan in Chennai yesterday.

"Consequent upon the demise of Shri L. Ganesan, Governor of Nagaland, the President of India has appoint-



ed Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Governor of Manipur, to discharge the functions of the Governor of Nagaland, in addition to his own duties," a Rashtrapati Bhawan communique said here this evening.

Mr Ganesan had passed away in Chennai yesterday evening after a brief illness. He was 80. UNI RB

UER-II will contribute to 'Viksit Delhi,' reduce traffic & enhance connectivity: CM

United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has described the much awaited Urban Extension Road-II project as a "historic gift" for the city, and said that its commencement will not only move the national capital closer to becoming a traffic-free city, but will also strengthen connectivity across the NCR.

CM has expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the efforts and development of the national capital.

Gupta along with senior officials and party leaders on Saturday visited the site for the inauguration of UER- II and its surroundings to review the preparations and issued neces-

sary instructions ahead of its launch.

She added that the corridor will play a vital role in reducing congestion, lowering vehicular pollution and thereby contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment.

Gupta mentioned, "UER-II is not just an infrastructure project; it is an investment in the future of Delhi. It will improve traffic flow, cut travel time drastically, and uplift the quality of life for lakhs of people living in Delhi and NCR."

CM also informed that the PM will formally inaugurate UER-II on Sunday and will also be part of a road show.

Gupta said that the corridor will begin at National Highway-44 (Alipur), traverse through



Mundka, Bakkarwala, Najafgarh and Dwarka, and terminate at National Highway-48 near Mahipalpur.

Highlighting its utility, she said

that one of the most significant advantages of UER-II is the reduction in travel time from Singhu Border to IGI Airport, which will now take just 40 minutes, com-

pared to almost two hours earlier.

She added that the pressure on Inner and Outer Ring Roads will be substantially reduced, while major junctions such as Mukarba Chowk, Madhuban Chowk, Peeragarhi Chowk, Dhau-la Kuan and NH-9 will no longer face heavy congestion with UER-II's commencement.

She added that the improved connectivity with the project will also expand industrial and logistics opportunities in the national capital.

The route will also integrate with the Delhi-Jaipur National Highway, the KMP Expressway, the Gurugram-Rewari Highway, and the Gurugram-Sohna Highway. UNI APS GNK

Man on the run for 26 years after committing murder in Saudi Arabia, held by CBI

United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 16: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) today said they had arrested a man Mohammad Dilshad who had been absconding for 26 Years after committing murder in October, 1999, in Saudi Arabia.

Dilshad (52) is a mechanic of heavy vehicles and is presently employed in a company at Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

He has been sent to Judicial Custody. The CBI had registered a Local Prosecution Case in April, 2022, on the request of Saudi authorities.

Dilshad had committed murder of a person on the premises where he was working as a Heavy Motor Mechanic cum Security Guard in Riyadh. It was further alleged that after committing the murder he fled to India and since then he was untraceable.

After the registration of the case, CBI traced out the native village of



the accused in Distt. Bijnor (UP) and opened a Look Out Circular (LOC) against him. However, despite opening of LOC he remained elusive.

During investigation it was found out that Dilshad used to travel abroad i.e. Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on a different identity.

Developing various technical leads and human intelligence, the new

passport of the accused was detected and second LOC was opened against him.

He was arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, on August 11 when he was travelling from Madinah via Jeddah to New Delhi on a different passport.

Further investigation is on. UNI ATK RB

Eastern Europe reacts with scepticism post Trump-Putin summit in Alaska

United News of India

BRUSSELS, AUG 16: Post the Alaska summit between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, senior government officials in Eastern Europe have reacted with scepticism regarding the Russian leader's comments, reports CNN.

Putin had said that a path to peace could only be reached once the "root causes were eliminated," adding that the "situation in Ukraine" had to do with "fundamental threats to (Russia's) security."

In a post on X on Saturday morning local time, Lithuanian Defence Minister Dovile Sakaliene accused Putin of "more gaslighting and veiled threats," a reference to the Russian leader issuing a warning to Ukraine and Europe not to "sabotage" progress made at the summit.

Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky said in a statement that he welcomed US President Donald Trump's efforts but doubted Putin's interest in a deal, according to Reuters.

"If Putin were serious about negotiating peace, he would not have been attacking Ukraine all day today," he said. While neither leader elaborated much on the meeting, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told RIA Novosti that "Exhaustive statements were made" by both the Presidents. UNI

Trump's post-Anchorage summit call with Ukraine-NATO leaders 'was not easy'

United News of India

WASHINGTON, AUG 16: Post the Russia-US summit in Anchorage, US President Donald Trump held a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and other NATO leaders, which reportedly 'was not easy' according to Axios, as the cards were heavily in Russia's favour.

While the meeting's ultimate results were inconclusive, they nonetheless heavily leaned in Moscow's favour, as Trump told Zelensky and NATO leaders from Germany, Italy, Finland, France, the UK, and the European Commission, that the Kremlin was now seeking for a joint comprehensive peace treaty, instead of a ceasefire as previously called for by the Oval office.

Trump further informed Zel-

ensky and the other leaders that Putin had told the US President that the Russia forces were more than capable of capturing Donetsk alongside the other areas they are currently fighting in by force if they wanted, but was looking to end the war in exchange for territorial concessions.

US envoy Steve Witkoff, who was in-on the call along with Secretary of Defence Marco Rubio said "The impression was that in return for territory, Putin is willing to end the war and commit not to try and occupy more areas in Ukraine and to not attack other countries," as per a source of the agency.

The US President had also put the onus of reaching a peace agreement on Kyiv, telling Fox News that agreeing upon a settlement was now "up to President Zelensky."

"Ukraine reaffirms its readi-



ness to work with maximum effort to achieve peace. It is important that America's strength has an impact on the development of the situation. We support President Trump's proposal for a trilateral meeting between Ukraine, the USA, and Russia," Zelensky said after the call.

Urging for the further involvement of both Kyiv and Brussels in reaching a settlement, Zelensky said that he would call Trump on Monday to discuss "all of the details regarding ending the killing and the war."

"It is important that Europeans are involved at every stage to ensure reliable security guarantees together with America. We also discussed positive signals from the American side regarding participation in guaranteeing Ukraine's security," Zelensky said. UNI

'Rocket Raheja' prepares for IPL and Ranji lift-off

■ Deivarayan Muthu

LONDON: He has been dominating bowlers, including Varun Chakravarthy and R Ashwin, with his explosive batting over the past two seasons of the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL). Apart from opening the batting, he can also keep wicket, which makes him an exciting package, especially in T20 cricket. He has also had a brief stint with Tamil Nadu's white-ball sides and emerged on the IPL's radar. Meet Tushar Raheja, who has earned the sobriquet 'Rocket Raheja' in the TNPL circles. An aggressive left-hand batter, Raheja has a wide variety of shots in his repertoire. The 24-year-old has always been proficient against pace and in TNPL 2025 he levelled up, disrupting both Varun and Ashwin during Tiruppur Tamizhans' run to their maiden title. His franchise and state captain R Sai Kishore was so impressed with Raheja's takedown of spin that he came out publicly and said the wicket-keeper-batter was ready for the IPL.

Raheja had attended multiple trials before and during IPL 2025, including a mid-season one, but couldn't break into the big league. He's taken feedback and learnings from those trials and has strengthened his case for the upcoming auction with a chart-topping 488 runs in nine innings at an average of 61 and strike rate of 185.55, including 77 in the final against Ashwin's Dindigul Dragons.

"I thought I did well at the Delhi trials and then I was called again during the tournament as well," Raheja recalls, speaking to ESPNcricinfo. "That was again a

good experience and that helped me evolve as well. I was amongst people who got picked in this year's IPL like Priyansh Arya. After the auction, I tried to compare myself to them in terms of seeing what they are doing right and what I'm not.

"Seeing them at trials, going back and seeing their videos and seeing them in the IPL - that gave me a lot of learning. Being amongst Hemang Badani, Rahul Dravid and other Indian cricketers gives you a lot of confidence, which I've tried to carry into this season."

Raheja has IPL ambitions, but he doesn't want to look too far ahead. "I would like to focus on the Syed Mushtaq Ali (tournament), which would take me a step closer," Raheja says. "I'm trying not to think about it but obviously, it's human tendency again to start thinking about it. I will be lying if I say I've not thought about it." When he was younger, Raheja admits to being carried away by the "adrenaline rush" but now he's learnt to control his emotions and thoughts with help from Raymun Roy, a mental conditioning coach, who has also worked with India internationals Washington Sundar and B Sai Sudharsan.

"Roy has played a big role in this aspect, where basically you are controlling your heartbeat," Raheja says. "Like, when you are playing a match or when you are under pressure, what brings a lot of thoughts is your heartbeat and at the time, your mind will be running fast. So, I've tried to keep that in check and not have too many thoughts.

"We do a lot of quantum breathing exercises off the field and some of these are simple exercises that I can do while batting also. So, even when I'm batting in between balls, there are a lot of small exercises that I do, which help me not think, if that makes sense."

"From last year or even the year before that, after the powerplay, I was slowing down. Most of the time, it is spinners bowling to you after the powerplay. So, I did a lot of drills against spin, getting my bat swing a lot better against spin and trying to pick length a lot better."

Raheja has also expanded his range, and he credits his personal coach TV Ramkumar for it. While the slog-sweep comes naturally to him, he had to spend more time on hitting straight during the off-season in the lead-up to the TNPL.

"What I have put in a lot of work into is hitting straight, hitting over covers and mainly hitting straight," Raheja says, "because if you are able to hit straight, the other things will come with your bat swing. But the hardest thing to do is hit a bowler, especially a spinner, straight. I'm looking to hit them straight on the ground, over long-off and long-on."

"I've been training with Mr. Ramkumar for three years now and I've understood my game because of him. I feel from last year, every time after the powerplay or even the year before that, after the powerplay, I was slowing down. So, I tried to put in a lot of thought into how I can keep that momentum going. Most of the time, it's spinners bowling to you after the powerplay."

ESPNcricinfo



Liverpool strike late to beat Bournemouth as Jota remembered in Premier League opener



■ United News of India

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool struck twice in the final minutes through Federico Chiesa and Mohamed Salah to overcome a battling Bournemouth 4-2 in a thrilling start to the Premier League season on Friday.

Antoine Semenyo looked to have rescued a point for the Cherries by scoring twice, after he had reported an incident of racial abuse from a fan, to cancel out Hugo Ekitike and Cody Gakpo's strikes for the defending champions.

But on an emotive night as Anfield remembered Diogo Jota, Chiesa was the unlikely hero as the injury-hit Italian fired the home side back in front before Salah rounded off the scoring.

Liverpool's joy at celebrating a record-equalling 19th English top-flight title turned to tragedy during the off-season as forward Jota was killed alongside his brother Andre Silva in a car accident last month at the age of 28. Just 11 days prior to the accident, the Portuguese international had married Rute

Cardoso, the mother of his three children. A large banner at the front of The Kop stand read: "Rute, Dinis, Duarte, Mafalda - Anfield will always be your home. You'll Never Walk Alone."

During a minute's silence, fans held up a giant mosaic with the initials of Jota and Silva, who was also a footballer, and their shirt numbers in the Portuguese flag.

"The main emotion should be how emotive the tribute for Diogo was," said Liverpool boss Arne Slot. "It was all so impressive and powerful." Despite romping to the title with four games to spare last season, Liverpool have undergone a major transformation in the transfer market, spending close to £300 million (\$407 million).

Ekitike, Florian Wirtz, Milos Kerkez and Jeremie Frimpong made their first competitive starts for the Reds.

More could be yet to come with Liverpool linked with a British transfer record move for Newcastle's Alexander Isak and interested in Crystal Palace captain Marc Guehi.

Sabalenka and Gauff crash out in Cincinnati as Alcaraz survives to reach semis

■ United News of India

CINCINNATI: World number one Aryna Sabalenka and second-ranked Coco Gauff were sent crashing out of the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Open on Friday as Carlos Alcaraz fought off a fierce challenge from Andrey Rublev to reach the semi-finals.

Top seed and defending champion Sabalenka had no answer for Elena Rybakina, falling to the 2022 Wimbledon champion 6-1, 6-4.

Reigning French Open champion Gauff had 16 double faults in a 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 exit at the hands of seventh-seeded Italian Jasmine Paolini.

Spain's second-ranked Alcaraz had his difficulties, but he broke Rublev in the final game of a tense



duel to emerge a 6-3, 4-6, 7-5 winner and will face third-seeded Alexander Zverev, who brought fifth-seeded Toronto champion Ben Shelton's run to an end with a 6-2, 6-2 victory.

Zverev earned a 4-1 lead in the second set as Shelton angrily tossed

his racquet on the changeover, and the 2021 champion polished off the win on a second match point. He now has 24 hours to try to get fit.

"I'm not feeling too great now, but I have a day to get fresh," Zverev said. "I hope to be at 100%."

"I'm not sure what happened. I felt very well, but at the end of the first set, it got progressively worse. But I'll do all I can to give it a shot tomorrow."

Alcaraz was broken while serving for victory at 5-4 in the final set against 11th-ranked Rublev, but he found his focus and used his trademark grit to come through three games later.

He sealed the triumph as an emotional Rublev hit an eighth double-fault on match point.

"I maintained the positive thoughts even if I lost focus a bit in the second set," said Alcaraz, whose five titles so far this year include the French Open as well as Masters 1000 trophies in Monte Carlo and Rome.

Carlos Alcaraz of Spain celebrates his win against Andrey Rublev during the Cincinnati Open at Lindner Family Tennis Center on August 15, 2025 in Mason, Ohio.

Rybakina fired 11 aces en route to a fifth career victory over Sabalenka in 12 meetings.

She avenged a loss to the Belarusian in Berlin two months ago and booked a semi-final meeting with Wimbledon champion Iga Swiatek -- a 6-3, 6-4 winner over Anna Kalinskaya.

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