

Dry Spell expected from May 31 with isolated showers in early June

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar has forecast rain and thundershowers at scattered places across Jammu and Kashmir on May 29 and 30, with the possibility of hail, lightning and gusty winds reaching speeds of 40 to 50 kilometers per hour. According to the latest weather update issued by the MeT Department, prevailing atmospheric conditions are likely to keep weather activity active over the next two days, prompting caution in vulnerable areas.

The forecast warned of intermittent rain and thundershowers at scattered locations, while hailstorms and lightning could occur in some areas accompanied by strong gusty winds.

The advisory assumes significance for travelers, farmers and residents in weather-sensitive regions, particularly in view of possible localized disruption



caused by strong winds and storm activity. The MeT Department said weather conditions are expected to improve from May 31 onwards. Between May 31 and June 3, the region is likely to remain mostly dry, although isolated afternoon showers cannot be

ruled out. Another brief spell of weather activity is expected from June 4 to June 5, with partly cloudy skies and scattered showers forecast during the period. Thereafter, from June 6 to June 8, weather conditions are expected to remain

largely dry across Jammu and Kashmir. Authorities generally advise people to remain alert during periods of lightning and gusty winds and avoid unnecessary movement in vulnerable areas during intense weather activity.

Arrest warrant issued in Gurez Musk Deer Poaching case, hunt on for others

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife Department has issued an arrest warrant against one identified hunter and launched a manhunt to trace others involved in the killing of an endangered male musk deer in the forests of Gurez in north Kashmir's Bandipora district. Wildlife officials said the animal was allegedly killed for extraction of its musk pod, which is illegally traded in the black market.

Wildlife Warden North Kashmir, Intesar Suhail, said one of the accused has been identified and further legal action is underway. "So far one person has been identified. He is a tribal from Rajouri. An arrest warrant has been issued and further action will follow," Suhail



said. Officials said efforts are underway to identify and arrest two more persons believed to be involved in the incident. The case surfaced after photographs and videos showing the hunters with the slain animal circulated on social media, prompting the Wildlife Department to initiate an investigation. According to officials, the incident is believed

to have taken place about a week ago in the Doudhpathi Kissar area of Gurez forests.

Visuals purportedly linked to the incident show three hunters cutting the carcass of the endangered Kashmir musk deer, scientifically known as *Moschus cupreus*, with a firearm seen nearby.

Officials said a wildlife team, including range officers and field personnel, has been deputed to Gurez to investigate the killing and collect evidence.

The musk deer is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and hunting of the species is prohibited. Wildlife officials said poachers often target the animal for meat, skin and particularly the musk pod, which carries high black-market value.

Cyber Crime wing warns public against rising online fraud cases

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Amid growing incidents of online fraud and digital scams, the Jammu and Kashmir Cyber Crime Department has issued a public advisory urging citizens to remain vigilant against cyber criminals using fake calls, phishing links, OTP fraud and suspicious online requests to target unsuspecting users. The advisory comes as cyber-related complaints continue to emerge across the region, with fraudsters increasingly employing deceptive digital tactics to gain unauthorized access to personal information, financial details and social media accounts.

Officials said members of the public should avoid clicking on unknown or suspicious links, refrain from sharing one-time passwords (OTPs), and carefully verify unfamiliar numbers or online requests before responding. The Cyber Crime Department also advised users to strengthen the security of messaging applications, particularly WhatsApp, by enabling Two-Step Verification as an additional safeguard against unauthorized account access and impersonation attempts.

Officials warned that scammers often pose as bank representatives, government officials, customer care agents or acquaintances to deceive victims into sharing confidential details or transferring money.

The department stressed that early reporting remains critical in cyber fraud cases, particularly in incidents involving financial transactions, as prompt intervention may improve chances of blocking suspicious transfers and facilitating recovery.

Citizens have been urged to immediately report cyber fraud cases to the police or through the National Cyber Crime Portal and seek assistance through the dedicated cyber helpline number 1930.

The advisory forms part of ongoing awareness efforts by the Cyber Crime Department aimed at improving digital safety and encouraging responsible online behavior amid rising dependence on internet-based services and communication platforms.

Farooq Abdullah Links Social Decline to Erosion of Moral Values, Urges Course Correction

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Friday called for moral introspection and renewed emphasis on faith and values, while also seeking a thorough investigation into the NEET paper leak and reiterating that dialogue remains the only way to resolve longstanding problems. Speaking to reporters at Dargah Hazratbal in Srinagar, Dr. Abdullah reacted to the Budgam incident, the controversy surrounding the NEET examination, and the prevailing security and political situation.

In remarks carrying both social and political undertones, the former Chief Minister said society was witnessing moral decline and urged people to reconnect with spiritual and ethical principles.

"We have lost our way and forgotten Allah and the Quran. We have to mend ourselves," he said, adding that society had drifted away from moral values.

His comments appeared to stress self-correction and social responsibility amid growing concerns over social discord, and erosion of ethical standards.

Turning to the controversy surrounding the NEET examination, Dr. Abdullah demanded a comprehensive and transparent probe into allegations of paper leakage, saying



the issue had shaken public confidence and affected the future of students.

He said the matter required serious investigation and accountability. Without elaborating in detail, the National Conference leader also referred to reported examination controversies emerging from BJP-ruled states and said such incidents deserved impartial scrutiny to ensure credibility of competitive examinations.

Dr. Abdullah further maintained that dialogue remained the only practical route to resolve disputes and enduring challenges.

While making the remarks in the context of regional tensions and broader political concerns, he did not name any country directly but emphasized engagement and communication over confrontation. "Dialogue is the only way to settle problems," he said.

Darbagh Shopian residents await vital bridge over nallah Tongri

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SHOPIAN: Residents of Darbagh village in the Zainapora subdivision of south Kashmir's Shopian district have expressed concern over the delay in the construction of a long-promised bridge over Nallah Tongri, despite the project already receiving official sanction. The proposed bridge is meant to replace an old and damaged structure that suffered severe damage during the devastating floods of 2014. Since then, the bridge has continued to remain in a fragile and unsafe condition, while serving as a crucial link for Darbagh and several neighbouring villages.

Locals told that the condition of the existing bridge has deteriorated significantly over the years, making it risky for commuters and vehicles. They said the structure has tilted and developed visible weaknesses, forcing heavy vehicles to avoid the route altogether. "The bridge is in a dangerous condition and can collapse at any time. Small vehicles cross with difficulty, while larger vehicles cannot use it at all," said Aamir Ahmad, a resident. He said the fear intensifies during rainy weather when the water level in the stream rises sharply. "Whenever there is heavy rainfall, people remain worried throughout the day. If the bridge gives way, several

households could lose connectivity," Ahmad added.

Locals said they have repeatedly raised the issue with the concerned authorities over the years through public grievance meetings and during election campaigns, but the project has yet to take off on the ground. "We have been hearing promises for years, but practically nothing has happened so far," another resident said.

Residents said the absence of a proper bridge has hampered overall development in the area, adding that the improved connectivity would help students, patients, traders and commuters, besides ensuring safer movement for the public.

This is not only a matter of connectivity, but also of public safety and basic infrastructure, they said, adding that a proper bridge is the need of the hour.

Residents have appealed to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, MLA Showkat Hussain Ganaie, and district authorities to expedite the execution of the sanctioned project and ensure that construction work begins without any further delay. An official said the bridge project has already been sanctioned and is presently under the tendering process. "The bridge has been approved, and the construction work is expected to start soon," he said.

PDP leaders extend Eid greetings to Mehbooba Mufti

SRINAGAR: Senior leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) visited the Khimber residence of party president Mehbooba Mufti Sahiba to greet her on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

According to a press release issued here, The PDP delegation was led by senior spokesperson Iqbal Trambo and included former MLA Noor Mohammad Sheikh, spokesperson Zuhair Mir, former State Secretary Arif Laigroo, District Coordinator Dr Ali Mohammad, Constituency Incharge Zaidal Sheikh Gowher, Advocate Abdul Majid Dar and others. The leaders exchanged Eid greetings with Mehbooba Mufti Sahiba and prayed for peace, prosperity, communal harmony and wellbeing of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, the PDP leaders also visited the residence of party General Secretary Khursheed Alam and extended Eid greetings to him and his family.

The leaders said that Eid teaches values of sacrifice, compassion and unity and expressed hope that the festival would bring happiness and prosperity to the people across Jammu and Kashmir.

Irrigation facilities need of the hour in anantnag west: MLA Abdul Majid Larmi

ANANTNAG: MLA Anantnag West, Abdul Majid Larmi, visited several areas of the constituency and expressed concern over the growing need for irrigation facilities due to prevailing drought-like conditions in many parts of the region.

During his visit, the MLA interacted with local residents and farmers to take stock of the situation on the ground. After receiving feedback from the public, he urged the concerned authorities and the government to take the matter seriously and immediately begin the desilting process of canals to ensure smooth flow of water for irrigation purposes. Speaking to the media, Abdul Majid Larmi said that his priority is to provide better facilities to the people of the constituency and fulfill all promises made in the party manifesto. He assured the public that every possible step would be taken to address their genuine concerns and improve basic facilities in the area. The MLA also appealed to farmers to remain in close contact with agriculture and irrigation department officials and seek proper guidance to tackle the drought-like situation effectively.

National Conference pay rich tributes to Hakim Habibullah on death anniversary

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Vice President and Honourable Chief Minister Omar Abdullah paid glowing tributes to the late Jenab Hakim Habibullah on his death anniversary, remembering him as a towering statesman, a man of unwavering integrity, and a lifelong servant of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The duo described Hakim

Habibullah as one of the most distinguished political personalities in the history of Jammu and Kashmir whose life embodied conviction, sacrifice, and dedication to public service.

Recalling his immense contributions, they said that as a Cabinet Minister, Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, and later Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council, Hakim Sahab carried out his responsibilities with exceptional wisdom, dignity, and grace. They further noted that Hakim Habibullah remained a steadfast loyalist and close associate of Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and stood firmly at the forefront of the democratic struggle for the rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. They said his unwavering commitment to his principles was most evident during the decade-long imprisonment he endured alongside Sheikh Ab-

dullah, a sacrifice that cemented his legacy as one of the pillars of the political movement in Kashmir. Remembering him as a statesman of profound character and vision, the leaders said that his contributions and ideals continue to inspire generations of political workers and public representatives across Jammu and Kashmir. They prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and expressed solidarity with the bereaved family members.

at his Gupkar residence to extend Eid greetings for the third consecutive day.

Dr. Farooq says public support drives National Conference Government

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah Friday said that the unwavering trust and continued support of the people of Jammu and Kashmir remain the driving force behind the National Conference government.

Dr. Farooq made these remarks while interacting with members of the public and several individual delegations who called on him

at his Gupkar residence to extend Eid greetings for the third consecutive day.

Highlighting the party's enduring bond with the people, Dr. Farooq said that the National Conference derives its strength from the masses and has deep-rooted footprints across Jammu and Kashmir. He reiterated that the party remains committed to serving the people and addressing their aspirations with sincerity and dedication.

On the occasion, Dr. Farooq also urged the people to pray for lasting peace, harmony, and prosperity in the Muslim world and across the globe. He emphasized the need for unity, compassion, and collective efforts to foster peace and brotherhood among all sections and nations of people.

Several delegations and individuals conveyed Eid greetings to Dr. Farooq and wished peace, progress, and prosperity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

'Invisible illness': Fibromyalgia emerging as silent health crisis in Kashmir

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: In Kashmir, where harsh winters, prolonged stress, and mental health challenges shape everyday life, many people continue to silently suffer from a chronic pain condition that often goes unnoticed, undiagnosed, and misunderstood. That condition is fibromyalgia — commonly referred to as the "invisible illness".

Unlike fractures or infections, fibromyalgia does not appear on routine blood tests or X-rays. Yet, for patients living with it, the condition can be physically exhausting, emotionally draining, and deeply disabling.

On the eve of International Fibromyalgia Awareness Day, pain specialists are urging greater awareness about the

disorder, which affects millions worldwide but remains significantly underdiagnosed in India, particularly in peripheral and resource-limited regions like Kashmir.

Dr Afaan Qazi, Clinical Fellow in Pain Medicine at Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, said that many patients spend years searching for answers while their suffering is repeatedly dismissed.

"As a pain physician, I increasingly encounter patients, predominantly women, who arrive after years of suffering, carrying thick files of normal investigations, yet living with debilitating pain, fatigue, poor sleep, and frustration. Being told 'it is all in your mind' has silenced patients far too long. It is time to change that narrative," Dr Qazi said. Fibromyalgia is a chronic noci-

plastic pain disorder in which the nervous system amplifies pain signals abnormally, a process medically known as "central sensitisation". In such cases, the brain and spinal cord become overly responsive, causing the body to experience pain even without visible tissue injury or inflammation. Patients commonly suffer from widespread body pain lasting more than three months, persistent fatigue, disturbed sleep, headaches, anxiety, mood disturbances, irritable bowel syndrome, and cognitive difficulties often referred to as "fibro fog".

According to global estimates, fibromyalgia affects nearly 2-4 per cent of the population, with women accounting for nearly 90-95 per cent of diagnosed cases. The female-to-male ratio can be as high as

14:1. Despite this, awareness around the illness remains low, leading many patients to move from one specialist to another without receiving proper treatment.

Medical experts believe Kashmir's unique socio-environmental conditions may increase vulnerability to chronic pain syndromes like fibromyalgia. Dr Qazi explained that prolonged psychosocial stress, trauma exposure, anxiety, depression, harsh winters, reduced physical activity, and widespread Vitamin D deficiency together create conditions that can worsen chronic pain disorders.

"Many Kashmiri patients spend years moving from orthopaedics to rheumatology to neurology, undergoing repeat-

ed MRIs and taking painkillers without relief because the core problem often remains unidentified," he said.

He further noted that social stigma around "unexplained illnesses" often discourages patients from seeking timely psychological and rehabilitative support.

Experts say one of the biggest misconceptions surrounding fibromyalgia is treating it like arthritis or muscle injury. Since the condition is linked to altered pain processing in the nervous system rather than inflammation, common painkillers and anti-inflammatory medicines often provide little relief.

"The problem is not tissue damage. It is pain amplification by the central nervous system," Dr Qazi explained. Doctors stress that fibro-

myalgia cannot be managed through a single medicine alone and requires a comprehensive, personalised treatment approach. Patient education, they say, is often the first and most important step.

"When patients understand that they are not imagining the pain, that they do not have a hidden cancer, and that recovery is possible, fear reduces and outcomes improve," Dr Qazi said.

Lifestyle modifications and physical rehabilitation also play a crucial role in treatment. Experts recommend graded aerobic exercises, stretching, walking, and aquatic therapy to improve symptoms gradually.

"In Kashmir, even simple indoor winter exercise programs can make a remarkable difference," he added.

Psychological therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), mindfulness, stress management, and proper sleep hygiene are also considered highly effective, particularly in stress-prone regions like Jammu and Kashmir.

While fibromyalgia itself is widespread and centrally mediated, some patients may also develop localised pain areas that can benefit from interventional pain procedures.

According to Dr Qazi, selected patients may benefit from trigger point injections, ultrasound-guided fascial plane blocks, IV lidocaine infusions, and ketamine infusions in resistant cases.

Advanced neuromodulation techniques such as Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) and Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS)

are also emerging as promising therapies in specialised centres.

Doctors say there is an urgent need for better physician awareness, dedicated chronic pain clinics, multidisciplinary care models, and reduced stigma surrounding invisible illnesses.

"Although fibromyalgia may not be life-threatening, it significantly affects quality of life, productivity, relationships, and mental well-being," Dr Qazi said.

He said fibromyalgia does not kill, but it steals quality of life, productivity, and hope. "As pain physicians, our responsibility is to validate suffering and restore function. Sometimes the deepest pain is the one nobody else can see — and in Kashmir, it is time we started seeing it," he said.