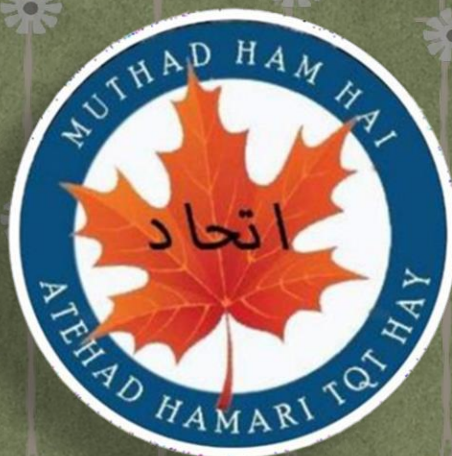




ISSUE XXI | SEPTEMBER 2025



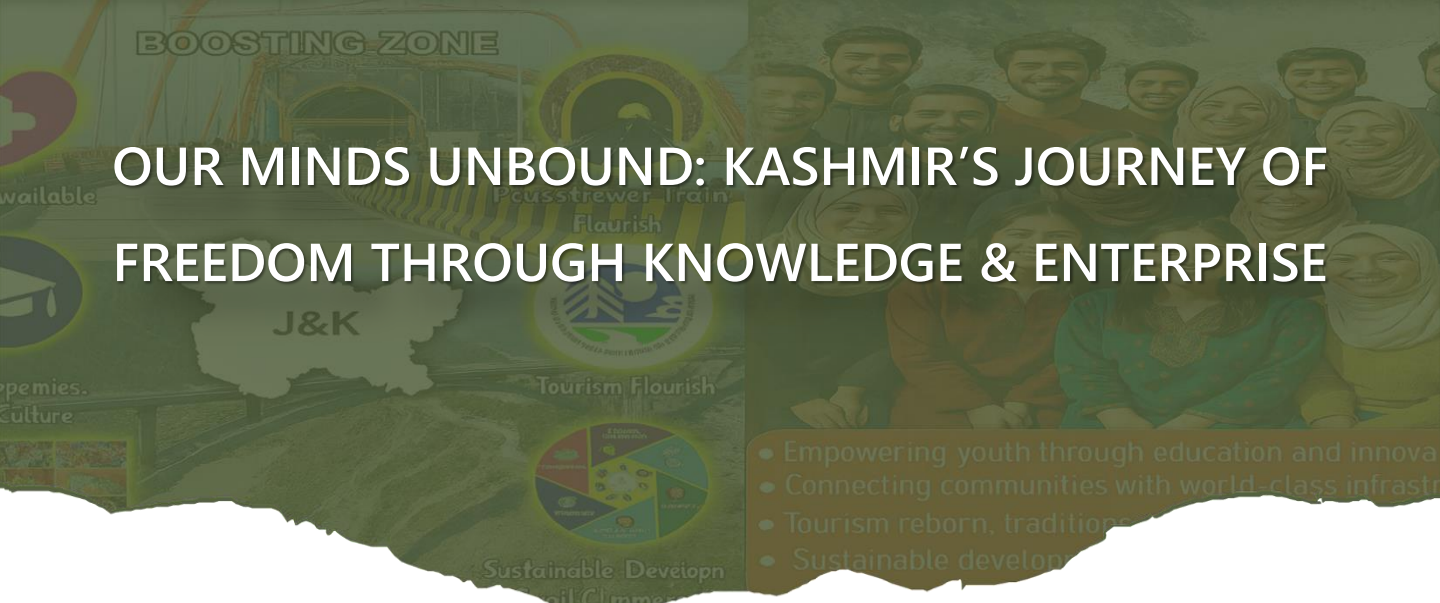
**AMAN SE
TARAQQI TAK**





INDEX	PAGE
I. OUR MINDS UNBOUND: KASHMIR'S JOURNEY OF FREEDOM THROUGH KNOWLEDGE & ENTERPRISE	1-3
II. FROM VALLEY TO WORLD: KASHMIR STUDENTS SHAPING GLOBAL INNOVATION	4-5
III. THE UNSPOKEN GAINS OF PEACE: KASHMIR'S ECONOMIC & CULTURAL RENAISSANCE	6-9
IV. JASHN JARI RAHEY: CELEBRATING LIFE, ART AND RENEWAL IN KASHMIR	10-14
V. AUTHORS NOTE	15





OUR MINDS UNBOUND: KASHMIR'S JOURNEY OF FREEDOM THROUGH KNOWLEDGE & ENTERPRISE

Kashmir stands today as a landscape of ideas and ambition, where knowledge is power and enterprise is freedom. From smart classrooms in Kupwara to women-led start-ups in Pulwama and serene homestays on the banks of the Jhelum, the Valley pulses with creativity and purpose - a place where young minds are unbound and a new destiny is being written every day.

Education as True Liberation

Learning is the most powerful form of freedom—freedom from ignorance and barriers to opportunity and freedom from the limitations that hold back potential. In today's Kashmir, this freedom is being claimed every day.

- **Rising Literacy:** The Union Territory has achieved a literacy rate of 82% among individuals aged seven years and above, surpassing the national average of 80.9%, according to the Annual Report 2023–24 of the Periodic Labour Force Survey.
- **Focused Drive:** The government aims to bring 3.5 lakh adults into literacy during 2024–25 under the New India Literacy Programme.
- **Girls Leading the Way:** Remote districts tell a new story. Nearly 67% female literacy in Baramulla's Kulhama and 59% in Kupwara's Wavoor—figures that show barriers are being broken.
- **Digital Classrooms:** Thousands of schools now use smart boards and high-speed internet, connecting the Valley's students to global knowledge streams.

These numbers are not just statistics—they are signs of a society embracing the freedom to think, to learn and to create, empowering every individual to shape their own future.



Enterprise and Innovation

Young Kashmiris are proving that ideas, not limits, shape the future.

- **Start-up Surge:** Recognised start-ups have grown by nearly 287 % in four years—from about 237 in 2020 to over 940 by early 2025.
- **Jobs Created:** These ventures already provide around 5,000 direct jobs across the Union Territory.
- **Women at the Helm:** More than 330 start-ups are women-led, from artisanal fashion houses to cutting-edge agri-tech firms.
- **Policy Push:** The **J&K Start-up Policy 2024–27** plans **2,000 new start-ups** and 20+ district incubation centres, with **seed funding up to ₹20 lakh** and patent-filing support.

This is an economy in motion—a declaration of dignity and self-reliance, a future **authored by Kashmiris themselves**.

This new economy is not just creating income—it is creating dignity, ownership and a future written by Kashmiris themselves.

Culture: The Living Heart



Perhaps the strongest proof that Kashmiri minds remain free is the cultural renaissance all around. Literary festivals brim with young poets; Sufi shrines echo with music and artisans blend tradition with modern design to reach global markets.

This creativity is the heartbeat of a people who refuse to be defined by conflict.

Kashmir's present is not about cages—real or imagined—but about classrooms, enterprises, and unyielding creativity.

Every graduating student, every new start-up, every poem recited in Lal Chowk is a quiet declaration:

“Our minds are unbound and our destiny is our own.”



FROM VALLEY TO WORLD: KASHMIRI STUDENTS SHAPING GLOBAL INNOVATION

Every valley has its rivers and every river finds its way to the ocean. The youth of Kashmir are no different. Born in a land known for its beauty and resilience, Kashmiri students are now carrying the spirit of the Valley into classrooms, laboratories and boardrooms across the globe. Their stories are not about limitation, but about limitless possibility.

Today's Kashmiri student is no longer confined by geography. From Srinagar to Silicon Valley, from Baramulla to Berlin, young minds are shaping ideas that resonate far beyond the mountains of their homeland. They are coding solutions for the digital future, conducting research in world-class universities, leading startups and contributing to medicine, arts and global diplomacy.

This journey from Valley to world is not accidental—it is the result of courage, determination and the pursuit of knowledge. Education has become the bridge that connects Kashmir's timeless traditions with the demands of the modern world. While holding firmly to their identity, these students are also becoming citizens of the world, fluent in both heritage and innovation.

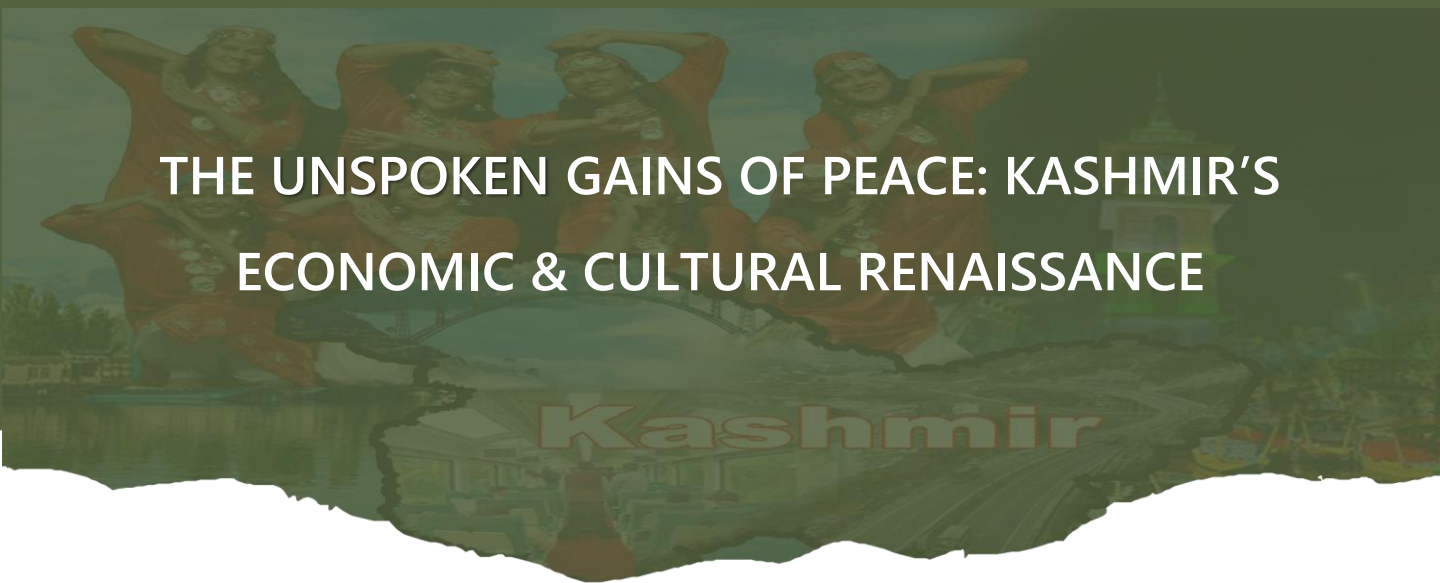
What sets Kashmiri youth apart is not only their intelligence but also their resilience. Having grown up amidst challenges, they bring to global platforms a unique perspective: the ability to transform adversity into creativity. In every Kashmiri student studying abroad or excelling in India's leading institutions, there is a quiet story of persistence—proof that the Valley's children are not just inheriting history but also shaping the future.

The task ahead is simple but vital: to encourage this spirit, to give Kashmiri youth the confidence that their ideas matter and to ensure they are provided with opportunities to grow. Parents, teachers and communities all have a role in nurturing this new generation of innovators who will carry the fragrance of the Valley wherever they go.

The world is listening. The question is no longer whether Kashmiri students can compete, but how far they will go in leading innovation. From the Valley to the world, their journey is not just one of personal achievement—it is a testament to what education, resilience and vision can achieve.

Kashmir's beauty has always drawn the eye of the world. Today, its youth are drawing the world's admiration for a different reason—their brilliance.





THE UNSPOKEN GAINS OF PEACE: KASHMIR'S ECONOMIC & CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

At daybreak, when sunlight spills over the Pir Panjal peaks, Kashmir greets the world with a promise of renewal and strength. Markets wake with the scent of kahwa and warm bread, artisans lift their chisels and looms and children hurry to schools that open windows to the wider world.

This is a Kashmir alive with possibility—where calm is no longer a dream but a daily reality and where hope moves as steadily as the Jhelum.

A Valley in Motion

The past few years of sustained peace have turned once-tentative plans into bold ventures. Apple growers now pack crisp harvests for international market. Saffron farmers in Pampore have shifted to high-tech drying and grading units, commanding premium global prices. Young coders in Srinagar design applications for clients in Europe, while a growing IT park near Budgam offers hundreds of new jobs.

- **Tourism:** In 2024, over 2.1 crore visitors arrived—the highest ever - reviving houseboats, handicrafts and hospitality. Winter sports in Gulmarg and summer treks in Sonamarg are creating thousands of jobs.
- **Investment Surge:** Post-2020 reforms unlocked **₹90,000** crore in private and industrial proposals, from IT parks in Srinagar to agri-processing units in Pulwama, creating opportunities that once seemed unimaginable.

- **Entrepreneurship Wave:** More than 330 women-led start-ups now thrive in e-commerce, crafts, agri-tech and wellness, transforming local talent into global brands.

Yet the deeper change shows in the faces of families planning for the future with confidence instead of fear. These gains are not imposed from outside, they are driven by Kashmiri entrepreneurs and artisans who can finally work without the shadow of violence.

Culture Reclaimed, Heritage Restored

Peace has given space for heritage to breathe again.

- **Revival of Arts:** Papier-mâché artisans and carpet weavers report record exports. Kashmiri saffron now holds GI-tag status, fetching premium prices in Europe and the Gulf.
- **Festivals & Music:** Sufi concerts at Shalimar Bagh and literary festivals in Baramulla are once again crowds of celebration, not caution.
- **Youth at the Helm:** Young filmmakers, poets and designers showcase Kashmiri stories at national and international platforms - proving culture is thriving, not constrained.

Every loom threaded in a village home, every verse shared online, proves that Kashmir's soul—once threatened by turmoil—is shining brighter than ever.

Environment: Healing with Modern Stewardship

The Valley is witnessing scientific conservation and climate action:

- **Wetland Protection:** Dal Lake's clean-up and the revival of Hokersar wetland have reduced seasonal flooding and brought migratory birds back in record numbers.
- **Green Energy Push:** Small hydro projects and new solar parks are expanding clean power while respecting fragile Himalayan ecology.

- **Smart Infrastructure:** The upgraded Jammu–Srinagar highway and world-class Z-Mughal Road tunnelling follow strict seismic and environmental codes—safer for travellers, lighter on the land.

These projects are guided by environmental assessments and implemented with local oversight, countering the myth of reckless exploitation.

Yes, the Himalayas remain ecologically sensitive. Yes, floods and landslides demand vigilance.

But to call every road, every pilgrimage, every investment a weapon of occupation is to deny the agency of Kashmiris who are shaping their own future.

The truth is simpler and stronger: **peace empowers protection.**

Only when violence ebbs can sustainable tourism, scientific conservation and thoughtful development take root.

Voices of Renewal

“I used to dream of studying abroad, I never thought it can be possible,” says a young physics student in Pulwama who recently earned a research fellowship in Germany. “Now the world feels open.”

Across the Valley, the testimony is personal and powerful:

“For the first time, I can invest in my orchard without worrying that unrest will ruin the season,” says Shabir, a second-generation apple grower in Kashmir.

“I stitch carpets my grandmother once feared no one would buy. Now orders come from Paris and Toronto,” smiles Rafiq, a master weaver in Baramulla.

“My students can join global science competitions online. They dream bigger because they see the world,” adds Farooq, a schoolteacher in Kupwara.

Their words are threads of the same tapestry: the assurance that peace is not abstract - it is lived, earned and celebrated every day.

Peace here is not passive. It is the deliberate work of farmers who prune orchards, entrepreneurs who pitch ideas and teachers who stay late after class to help a child chase a dream.

Every orchard revived, every classroom wired, every song sung at a Sufi shrine tells the same truth: peace is power.

Walk the bustling markets of Srinagar, watch entrepreneurs pitch Kashmiri walnut oil to European buyers, listen to a young poet recite in Lal Chowk—this is the new Kashmir.

Economic revival and cultural pride are no longer whispered dreams; they are living proof that peace brings prosperity and dignity.

Kashmir’s renaissance is not the “cost of occupation.”

It is the **unspoken gain of peace**, earned by the courage and creativity of its own people.



JASHN JARI RAHEY: CELEBRATING LIFE, ART AND RENEWAL IN KASHMIR

At sunrise, the mountains of Kashmir blaze gold and the streets fill with the sounds of work and song. **Jashn Jari Rahey** —the festival that never ends—is our pledge that no shadow of terror will ever silence this rhythm of progress and love. From classrooms glowing with ideas to markets alive with trade, the people of Kashmir carry forward a celebration of growth and unity that no threat can dim and no violence can undo.



ہر صبح یہاں خوابوں کی روشنی کے ساتھ شروع ہوتا ہے، اور ہر شام کامیابی کے گیت گاتی ہے۔
("Every morning here begins with the light of dreams and every evening sings the songs of achievement.")

"یہ جشنِ محبت، یہ جشنِ ترقی، ہمیشہ قائم رہے گا"
(This celebration of love and development will endure forever)

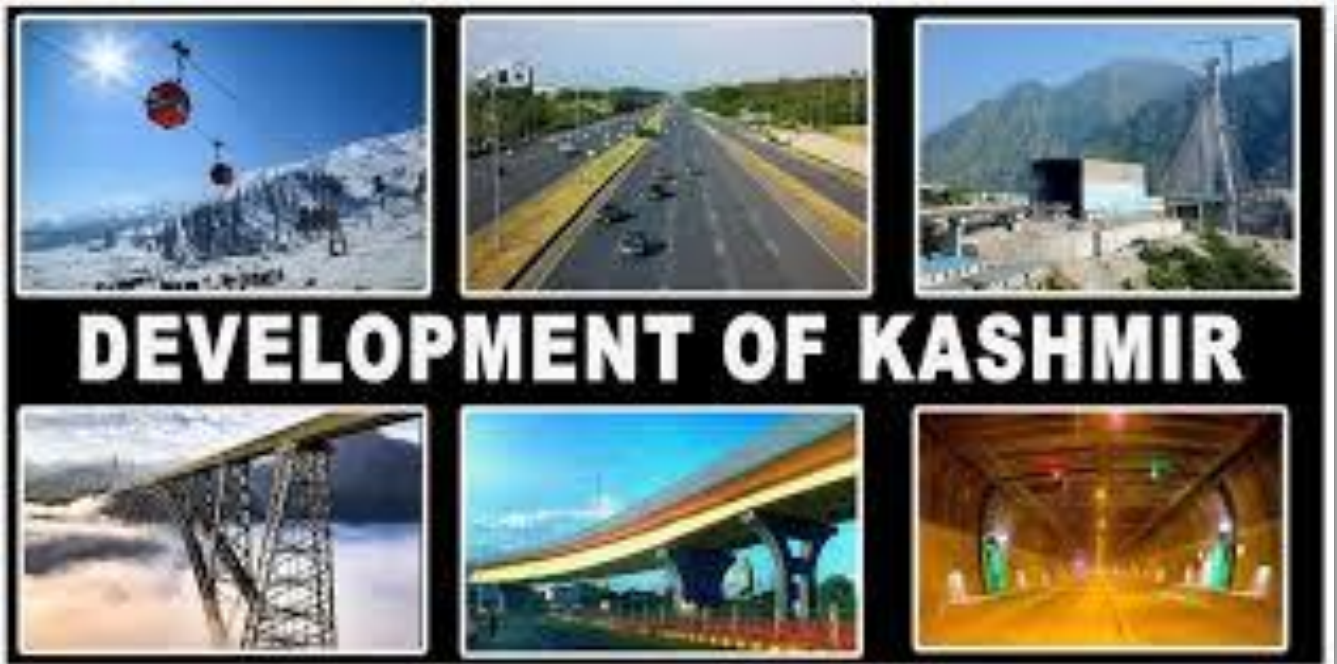
A Valley that Refuses to Pause

Every day in Kashmir begins with creation. Bakers slide warm bread from clay ovens before dawn; farmers walk into saffron fields touched with dew; students open laptops to join global classrooms. From the pulsing heart of Srinagar to the quiet apple orchards of Shopian, life moves with a confidence that defies every attempt to break it.

"ہم چلتے ہیں، بڑھتے ہیں، ڈرتے نہیں"
(We walk forward, we grow, we do not fear)

Development as Celebration

The proof of this unbroken spirit is everywhere. New highways knit villages and towns together. High-speed internet powers start-ups in Budgam and Baramulla. Gulmarg hosts winter sports that draw visitors from across the world, while summer treks in Sonamarg create thousands of livelihoods. Kashmiri entrepreneurs export everything from paper-mâché art to organic walnuts to international market, carrying the Valley's creativity far beyond its borders.



”ترقی کا ہر قدم ہمارے حوصلے کا اعلان ہے“

(Every step of progress is a declaration of our courage)

In Shalimar Bagh, Sufi music drifts through evening air. Young poets recite verses that speak of love and renewal. Master weavers knot silk carpets whose patterns are stories of resilience. These aren't mere traditions; they are living testaments that culture thrives when fear is denied.

”ہماری ثقافت ہماری طاقت ہے“

(Our culture is our strength)

Today's Kashmiri students are no longer bound by geography. They compete in international science fairs, code applications for clients overseas and earn fellowships in top universities. They are innovators, thinkers and leaders—redefining what it means to be young in Kashmir.

”Where determination blooms, fear withers. Our children will inherit not despair, but possibility.”

Through education and enterprise, the next generation is crafting a future grounded in achievement, not conflict.



Women-led enterprises, tech start-ups and small businesses are transforming the Valley's economy. Every new venture tells the same story: resilience, courage and belief in a better future.

“ہماری محنت، ہمارا جذبہ، ہمارا فخر—یہاں ہر خواب حقیقت بن رہا ہے”

(“Our hard work, our passion, our pride—every dream here is becoming reality.”)

Kashmiri youth are not waiting - they are shaping the world. Competing in global forums, innovating in science and tech and redefining entrepreneurship, they prove that education, opportunity and ambition can outshine fear.

“Determination flows through their veins and hope guides every step.”

Voices of Renewal

“I never imagined my designs would reach Europe. Now my work carries Kashmir's story worldwide,” says Rafiq, a young designer in Baramulla.

“Our café hosts book clubs every week. We discuss ideas, dreams, poetry—not politics—and that feels like true freedom,” shares Nazia, a Srinagar entrepreneur.

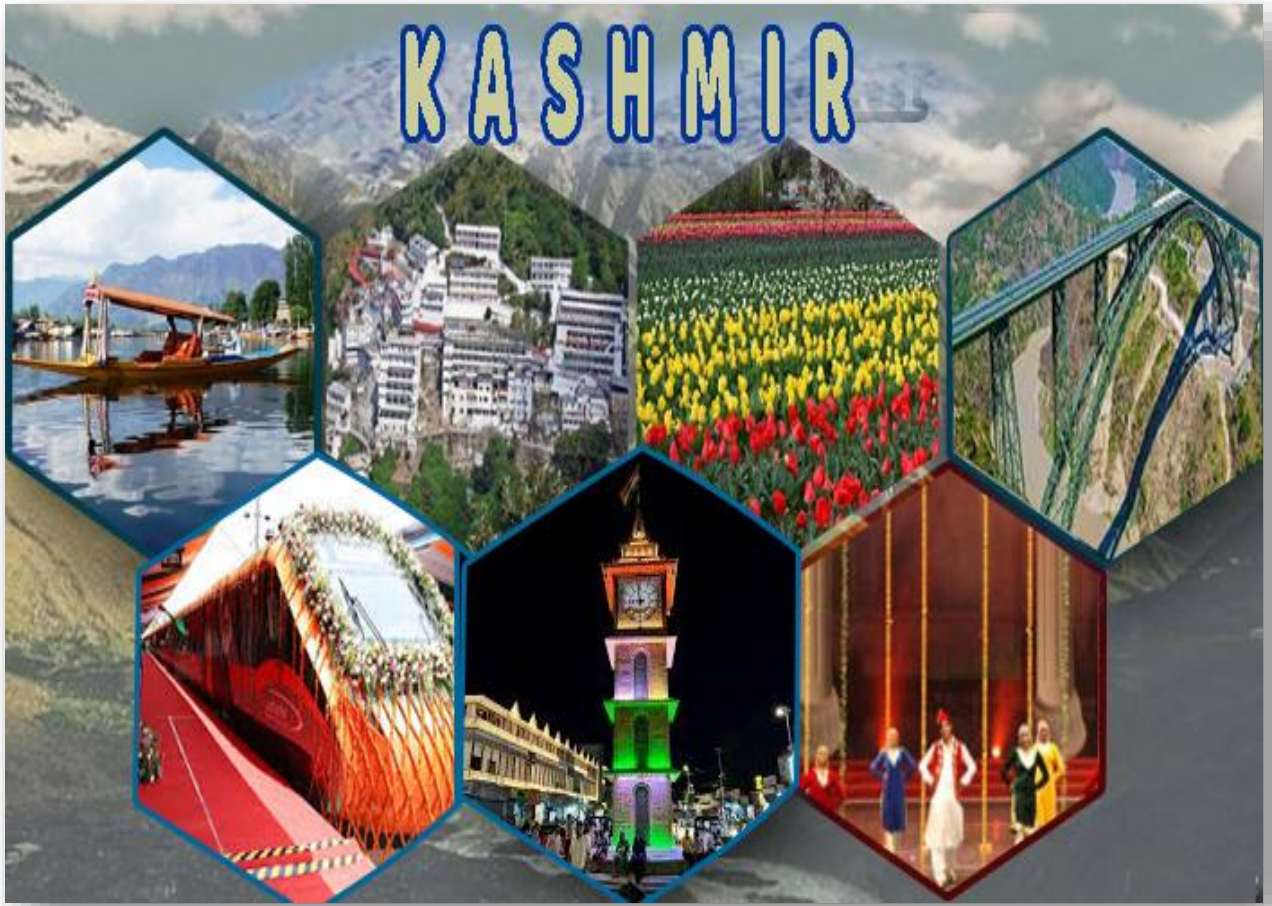
“Investing in my orchard no longer feels like gambling with fate. Peace allows us to plan, grow and thrive,” adds Shabir, an apple farmer.

Their words form a tapestry of resilience and celebration - a living proof that life, art and renewal flourish in Kashmir.

Every café, studio, classroom and street corner is a celebration of life. Every painting, every verse, every new business is proof that the people of Kashmir will never let violence dictate their future.

“محبت، محنت اور تخلیق کی روشنی میں—یہ جشن ہمیشہ جاری رہے گا”

(“This festival will continue forever—in the light of love, labor and creativity.”)



This is Kashmir’s unshakable promise: the Jashn of development, of success, of art and of life itself will go on, forever.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

As the sun warms the Pir Panjal peaks and the Valley awakens, life in Kashmir flows forward - undaunted, unstoppable. So too do its people: building, creating and dreaming, letting nothing dim their pursuit of hope and progress.

شام کی روشنی میں بھی امید باقی ہے
(In the evening light, hope still endures)

Every act of learning, artistry and enterprise is a quiet triumph - not over others, but over despair itself. From farmers tending orchards to students reaching for the world through knowledge, from poets giving voice to beauty to artisans shaping heritage, every effort writes a verse of lasting peace.

ہمسفر رہیں، خواب نہ چھوڑیں
(Stay steadfast, never abandon your dreams)

Kashmir's true heroes are those who keep moving towards development with peace. Their courage - silent yet unstoppable - fuels a Valley that celebrates life, creativity and renewal.

یہ زمین ہماری پہچان ہے، ہماری کہانی ہے
(This land is our identity, our story)

May every heartbeat of effort, every spark of imagination and every act of care continue to shape a Kashmir that chooses peace, development, hope, art and renewal - forever.



**AMAN SE
TARAQQI TAK**

