



# MONTHLY THEME

## CREATIVE VISIONARIES - INSPIRING STORIES FROM NAYA KASHMIR

VOL. 1 | No. 35

GLIMPSSES OF MONTHLY THEME  
MAY 2024





# CREATIVE VISIONARIES

## INSPIRING STORIES FROM NAYA KASHMIR

The transformation of Jammu and Kashmir, often referred to as the 'Paradise on Earth,' has been nothing short of remarkable in recent years. The concept of 'Naya Kashmir,' or 'New Kashmir,' has emerged as a symbol of hope and development in the region, which has long been marred by disturbance and strife. <sup>[1][3][4]</sup> The burgeoning industries, particularly tourism, apple farming and saffron production, are powering economic growth and job creation. The annual tourist influx has reached record levels and the export of saffron has crossed 700 crore rupees, showcasing the region's economic potential. <sup>[1][2][5]</sup>

Women in Naya Kashmir are rising to embrace empowerment, with the government implementing programs like Saath, Umeed, Mumkin, Hausla and Tejaswani to foster economic and social independence. These initiatives have led to inspiring success stories of female entrepreneurs, redefining the region's narrative and setting an example for the world to follow. <sup>[1][4]</sup> The participative grass-root level governance model has led to significant positive outcomes, such as increased execution efficiency, reduced corruption and growing public trust. Initiatives to preserve traditional crafts like the pashmina shawl have provided opportunities for women to showcase their skills and contribute to the region's cultural heritage. <sup>[1][4]</sup> Exemplary achievers from Kashmir, such as those in civil services like Shah Faesal and Athar Aamir, Rehman Rahi in literature and Sadia Tariq and Umran Malik in sports, showcase the potential of Kashmiri youth when exposed to the right opportunities. The people of Naya Kashmir are truly trailblazers, redefining the region's narrative and paving the way for others to follow in their footsteps. They are scripting a new chapter of growth, progress and self-determination by embracing empowerment. This remarkable journey towards peace and prosperity in valley is a testament to the power of steadfast leadership, unwavering commitment to public welfare and the unshakeable resilience of its inhabitants. <sup>[1][3][4]</sup> As the region continues to stride towards its full



Record Label : MAD RECORDS D.O.P : Umar Hamid  
Editing + Color Grading : KASHGRAPH PRODUCTIONS

Instagram : Saathir Mudawer

## Women in Naya Kashmir are rising to embrace empowerment, with the government implementing programs like Saath, Umeed, Mumkin, Hausla and Tejaswani to foster economic and social independence.

potential, it's poised to emerge as a shining beacon of hope, inspiring the rest of the country with its remarkable transformation. With the government's focus on welfare and the people's determination, Naya Kashmir is set to become a model of prosperity and peace. <sup>[1][2][5]</sup>

### NAYA KASHMIR: CONCEPT AND VISION

The 'Naya Kashmir' (New Kashmir) vision, was first introduced in 1944 and it continues to be relevant in contemporary times as a blueprint for the comprehensive development and transformation of Jammu and Kashmir. While the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 has significantly altered the political landscape, however, it has also opened up the vast avenues for investment, grass root level democracy and socio-economic progress that align with the 'Naya Kashmir' goals of economic growth, social equity and enhanced security. There have been a streak of challenges from inimical elements to sow seeds of distress and give rise to concerns regarding the alteration of cultural identity of the region, however it is a foreign sponsored propaganda to undermine the development in the region which has been rejected by the Kashmiri people. As the region navigates the challenges and opportunities of the new political context, the 'Naya Kashmir' vision remains a guiding principle for progressive, democratic and inclusive development in Jammu and Kashmir.

## As the region navigates the challenges and opportunities of the new political context, the 'Naya Kashmir' vision remains a guiding principle for progressive, democratic and inclusive development in Jammu and Kashmir.

[1] Naya Jammu and Kashmir in Modi Era - Daily Excelsior.

[2] Commitment to Fulfill Dreams of J&K, Ladakh People Remains Unwavering - Daily Excelsior.

[3] Jammu & Kashmir: Modi Ushers in a Transformative New Era - Global Kashmir.

[4] Naya Jammu & Kashmir Symbolises Hope: Rana - JK Monitor.

[5] PM Modi on SC upholding abrogation of Article 370 - The Indian Express.

[6] Naya Kashmir: Ideas for Peace and Development - Academics 4 Namu.

Several initiatives have been launched under the banner of Naya Kashmir which focus on infrastructural developments, social welfare and economic empowerment. These policies are designed to foster inclusive growth and create opportunities for all sections of Kashmiri society. With a fresh vision to lead the transformation in Jammu and Kashmir, the 'Naya Kashmir' initiative has spearheaded a transformative journey for valley, focusing on infrastructural development, economic growth and social integration. A massive financial package of INR 800 billion from the central government in 2015 has catalyzed progress, with a five-fold increase in completed projects from 2018-19 to 2021-22.<sup>[6]</sup> Key infrastructure developments include new roads, highways, bridges, railways and over 100 ropeway projects to enhance connectivity and mobility.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The establishment of IITs, IIMs and AIIMS has boosted human capital development, while upgrades to airports and electrification of railway lines have improved transportation.<sup>[6]</sup> Ambitious plans for the country's longest transportation tunnel, T-50 (12.77 km) and the Jammu to Baramulla railway link aim to revolutionize regional connectivity. [6][8] These initiatives, coupled with a focus on IT, real estate, manufacturing, tourism and social welfare are transforming J&K into a 'Modern, Prosperous and Progressive Region.'<sup>[2][7]</sup>

## ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The economic transformation of Naya Kashmir is a multifaceted endeavor, addressing infrastructure, tourism, agriculture and traditional industries to unlock the region's vast potential and create a more prosperous future for its people marked by significant progress across several key sectors.

- 1. Infrastructure Development:** Over past three years, the government has invested Rs 50,000 crore in building new roads, bridges and tunnels, improving connectivity within the region and with the rest of India. The construction of the Zojila Tunnel, a strategic 14.2 km-long tunnel, has reduced the travel time between Srinagar and Leh by three hours. 95% of households in Naya Kashmir now have access to reliable electricity, up from 82% in 2020. One of the cornerstones of Naya Kashmir is the significant investment in infrastructure. New roads, bridges and tunnels are being constructed to improve connectivity within the region and with rest of India. The development of modern amenities and public utilities is also a priority, aiming to enhance the quality of life for residents.
- 2. Tourism Revival:** Tourism, a vital sector for Kashmir's economy is being revitalized through targeted campaigns and improved facilities. The region's natural beauty, combined with cultural and adventure tourism, is attracting visitors around the world. Efforts are being made to ensure sustainable and responsible tourism practices. Tourist arrivals in Naya Kashmir reached a record of 2.5 million in 2023 marking 40% increase as compared to 2020. The occupancy rate of hotels and resorts in popular destinations like Gulmarg and Pahalgam averaged 85% in 2023, up from 68% in 2020. The government has approved the construction of 10 new ski resorts and adventure tourism hubs to cater the growing demand.
- 3. Agricultural Reforms:** Agriculture remains a critical livelihood source for many Kashmiris. Reforms in this sector include the introduction of modern farming techniques, better irrigation facilities, and support for high-value crops like saffron and apples. These initiatives aim to boost productivity and income for farmers. The productivity of saffron cultivation has increased by 25% since the introduction of modern farming techniques and better irrigation facilities. Apple production in Naya Kashmir reached 2.2 million metric tons in 2023 with 15% increase from 2020. 80% of farmers in Naya Kashmir have now adopted high-efficiency irrigation systems, up from 55% in 2020.
- 4. Handicrafts and Small Industries:** Kashmir's traditional crafts, such as Pashmina shawls, carpets, and papier-mâché, are renowned globally. Support for artisans and small industries is being enhanced through training programs, financial assistance, and market access. This sector is pivotal for preserving cultural heritage and generating employment. Exports of Pashmina shawls from Naya Kashmir increased by 30% in 2023 as compared to 2020. The government has provided financial assistance and training to over 25,000 artisans and small-scale entrepreneurs in past three years. The number of registered small and medium enterprises in the handicrafts sector has grown by 18% since 2020.

**A massive financial package of INR 800 billion from the central government in 2015 has catalyzed progress, with a five-fold increase in completed projects from 2018-19 to 2021-22.**

## SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

- 1. Educational Initiatives:** The education sector in Kashmir has witnessed remarkable advancements under the 'Naya Kashmir' initiative, particularly through the establishment of over 50 new schools and colleges, which have significantly increased access to quality education for underprivileged children. These institutions are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and technology, designed to enhance the learning experience. Moreover, the implementation of scholarships and special programs for girls and underprivileged children has been pivotal in promoting inclusivity and reducing educational disparities. The Kashmir Education Initiative (KEI), for instance, has supported over 100 scholars annually, providing essential financial and material assistance to empower financially challenged students. Additionally, the introduction of vocational training centers has been instrumental in equipping students with practical skills, preparing them for the workforce. These centers offer courses in areas such as IT, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, thereby enhancing the employability of graduates.

**KASHMIRI HANDICRAFTS HAVE GAINED MARKETS IN GULF & EUROPEAN COUNTRIES BOOSTING PROFITABILITY, DUE TO ITS QUALITY & AUTHENTICITY. EXPORTS SOAR TO 1,162 CRORE IN 2023-2024 WITH GI TAGGING BOOST**

[6] Naya Kashmir: Ideas for Peace and Development - Academics 4 Namu.

[7] Naya Kashmir to Have Flyovers, Expressways, 100 Ropeway Projects - Kashmir Observer.

[8] From Reforms to Revival: Naya Kashmir's Path to Progress in 2024 - Global Kashmir.



**2. Healthcare Improvements:** The healthcare sector in Kashmir has seen significant improvements under the 'Naya Kashmir' initiative, marked by the establishment of over 20 new hospitals and clinics, which have dramatically increased access to healthcare services for the population. These institutions boast modern facilities and technology aimed at enhancing the quality of care. Furthermore, the introduction of telemedicine services has been a game-changer, particularly for reaching remote areas and improving healthcare outcomes. This initiative has alleviated the burden on healthcare facilities and improved access to medical care for rural populations. In tandem with these advancements, health awareness campaigns have been launched to educate the population on various health issues, including disease prevention and management. These campaigns have been crucial in reducing the incidence of preventable diseases and improving overall health outcomes.

**3. Women's Empowerment:** Empowering women stands as a central aspect of the 'Naya Kashmir' initiative, with various key programs aimed at equipping women with practical skills and enhancing their employability. Skill development programs focus on areas such as IT, entrepreneurship and vocational training. Additionally, the introduction of microfinance schemes has been a significant step towards supporting women entrepreneurs and helping them establish their own businesses, thereby reducing poverty and improving economic stability for women. To create a more equitable society, legal and social initiatives are crucial in protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality. This includes implementing laws that prevent gender-based violence and launching social programs that encourage women's participation in society. By doing so, we can empower women to reach their full potential and foster a more inclusive community.

**4. Youth Engagement Programs:** Engaging the youth is essential for the long-term stability and growth of Kashmir, and the 'Naya Kashmir' initiative has focused on creating positive outlets and opportunities for young people. The establishment of sports facilities, including stadiums, gyms and recreational centers, provides young people with healthy and constructive activities while promoting physical fitness. Additionally, cultural programs have been introduced to celebrate cultural diversity and encourage artistic expression through music, dance and theater performances. To further support the development of young leaders, leadership development initiatives have been established, offering training programs, mentorship schemes and leadership workshops, all aimed at equipping young people with the skills and knowledge needed to become effective leaders.

## **SECURITY AND PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS**

**1. Enhanced Security Measures:** To ensure a safe and secure environment, the administration has significantly strengthened security measures. The integration of modern technology, such as advanced surveillance systems and data analytics, has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of security patrols. Additionally, the coordination among security agencies has been improved through regular meetings and joint operations, leading to a notable decrease in violent incidents. This enhanced security posture has not only reduced the risk of attacks but also boosted public confidence in the ability of the authorities to protect them.

**2. Counter-Terrorism Strategies:** Comprehensive counter-terrorism strategies are being implemented to combat insurgency and terrorism in the region. These strategies involve intelligence-driven operations to identify and disrupt terrorist networks, as well as rehabilitation programs for former militants to reintegrate them into society. Furthermore, community engagement initiatives are being undertaken to address the root causes of radicalization, such as poverty and lack of education. By addressing these underlying issues, the administration aims to prevent the spread of extremist ideologies and promote a culture of peace and tolerance.

**3. Community Policing and Confidence-Building:** Community policing initiatives are fostering trust between the security forces and local communities. This is achieved through dialogue forums where community members can engage with security personnel and express their concerns and suggestions. Joint activities, such as community service projects and cultural events, are also being organized to promote mutual understanding and build bridges between the two groups. These confidence-building measures have led to a significant improvement in public perception of the security forces, with many residents reporting increased cooperation and support.

**4. Inspiring Stories of Resilience and Progress:** Personal accounts of change are spreading hope and inspiration across Kashmir. Women are starting successful businesses, and youths are excelling in education and sports. These stories highlight the transformative impact of Naya Kashmir, demonstrating that even in the face of adversity, individuals can overcome challenges and achieve their goals. The entrepreneurial spirit and determination of Kashmiris are driving economic change, with local entrepreneurs establishing new businesses and creating jobs. These success stories serve as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the people of Kashmir.

**5. Success Stories of Local Entrepreneurs:** Local entrepreneurs are playing a crucial role in driving economic change in Kashmir. They are establishing new businesses, creating jobs, and contributing to the local economy. These success stories demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit and determination of Kashmiris to build a better future for themselves and their communities. The administration is supporting these entrepreneurs through various initiatives, such as business incubators and mentorship programs, to help them grow and thrive.

**6. Revival of Cultural Heritage:** Efforts to revive and promote Kashmir's rich cultural heritage are yielding positive results. Festivals, art exhibitions, and cultural exchange programs are celebrating the region's unique traditions and fostering a sense of pride





and identity among its people. These initiatives are not only preserving the cultural heritage but also promoting tourism and economic growth. The revival of cultural heritage is a key aspect of Naya Kashmir, as it helps to strengthen community bonds and promote a sense of shared identity and belonging.


### **INSPIRING STORIES OF RESILIENCE AND PROGRESS**

The people of Kashmir have displayed remarkable resilience and progress in the face of adversity.

**1. Success Stories of Local Entrepreneurs:** Local entrepreneurs are driving economic change in Kashmir. According to government data, over 25,000 new businesses have been established in the region since 2019, creating more than 100,000 jobs.<sup>[10][11]</sup> The entrepreneurial spirit of the youth in Kashmir is exemplified by the success stories of several young entrepreneurs who have overcome challenges and created thriving businesses in the region. These success stories not only inspire others, but also showcase the immense potential of Kashmir as a land of opportunities. One such success story is that of Mehvish Mushtaq, the founder of the popular mobile application 'Dial Kashmir.' Mehvish, a computer science graduate, recognized the need for a comprehensive directory of essential services in Kashmir and developed an app that provides contact information for various businesses and services in the region. Dial Kashmir has become a go-to resource for locals and tourists alike, and Mehvish's innovative approach has earned her recognition and accolades.<sup>[12]</sup> Another young entrepreneur making waves in the valley is Basit Bilal Khan, the founder of 'Kashmirica.' Basit, a fashion enthusiast, recognized the potential of Kashmiri craftsmanship and launched a sustainable fashion brand that showcases the traditional artistry of the valley. Through his brand, Basit not only promotes the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir, but also provides employment opportunities to local artisans, empowering them to preserve and pass on their craft to future generations.

The success stories of young entrepreneurs in the Jammu and Kashmir region are not limited to these examples. The government's support and the availability of funding and mentorship programs have encouraged more startups to emerge in diverse sectors, contributing to job creation and economic growth.<sup>[12]</sup> One successful entrepreneur in Srinagar is Iram Saba Malik, a Commerce graduate who had dreams of starting a business. In 2018, she launched a boutique called 'Iram's Creations' that specializes in designer ethnic wear and western wear.<sup>[13]</sup> Nazia Bano, a woman from Pulwama, launched a handicraft export business that has helped revive traditional Kashmiri crafts and provided income for over 500 local artisans.<sup>[11]</sup> Najmulnisa Showkat Ali, a self-made woman entrepreneur from Srinagar, started her business as a professional Mehndi and Makeup Artist. She faced difficulties initially but soon expanded her business to Baderwah city and other places in Kashmir, becoming the first professional Mehndi and Makeup Artist in Chennab Valley Baderwah Kishtwar District Doda.<sup>[13]</sup> Mahreen Kapra, founder of 'Extensions Beauty Studio' in Srinagar, ventured into the beauty business with her sister Janat. After completing her graduation in Computer Engineering and Masters in Business Administration, she set up her own business venture, which is the first ever nail, hair, lash, permanent makeup and spa studio in Kashmir Valley.<sup>[13]</sup> Sehrish Chowdhary, founder of 'Zoyish Store,' is into production of designer ethnic wear and western wear, specializing in wedding outfits. Her business grew with the help of social media and her mother's support, and they soon shifted base to their own building, giving a boost to the business.<sup>[13]</sup> Asra Qureshi, founder of 'Kehzabr,' started her venture with the idea of promoting traditional Kashmiri crafts and embroidery.<sup>[13]</sup> The government's initiatives, such as the establishment of a women's industrial estate in Udhampur district and schemes like Digi-Pay, Krishi, Pashu Sakhi, Hausla, Tejaswini, UMEED and Rise Together,

**2. Revival of Cultural Heritage:** Efforts to revive and promote Kashmir's rich cultural heritage are yielding positive results. The annual Srinagar Festival, which showcases Kashmiri music, dance and cuisine, has seen a 50% increase in attendance since 2020.<sup>[9]</sup> Additionally, the government has supported the restoration of historic sites, such as Shankaracharya Temple and Pari Mahal, attracting tourists and instilling a sense of pride among the local population.<sup>[11]</sup> **"Our culture is the foundation of our identity,"** says Aisha Bhat, a student from Srinagar. **"Preserving and celebrating it is crucial for our collective progress."**<sup>[9]</sup>



**EFFORTS TO REVIVE AND PROMOTE KASHMIR'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE ARE YIELDING POSITIVE RESULTS. THE ANNUAL SRINAGAR FESTIVAL, WHICH SHOWCASES KASHMIRI MUSIC, DANCE AND CUISINE, HAS SEEN A 50% INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE SINCE 2020.**

Citations:  
[9] Kashmir's Resilience: A Path Towards Lasting Peace Amidst Adversity - The Rising Kashmir.  
[10] Kashmir's Resilience and Transformative Journey - Buzz Bytes.  
[11] J&K shines as beacon of resilience & prosperity; LG - Rising Kashmir.  
[12] Success Stories of young Entrepreneurs in Kashmir - Global Kashmir.  
[13] Women Entrepreneurs from Jammu & Kashmir - SheAtWork.





**THE GOVERNMENT  
HAS INTRODUCED  
DOMICILE LEGISLATION  
AND OTHER INITIATIVES  
TO PROTECT THE  
RIGHTS AND INTERESTS  
OF THE LOCAL POPULATION.**

### **OBSTACLES AND WAY AHEAD**

Despite the progress made in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370, several challenges remain that need to be addressed for the successful implementation of the 'Naya Kashmir' vision. The concerns regarding the dilution of identity in Jammu and Kashmir are largely propaganda spread by inimical elements who cannot tolerate the rapid pace of ongoing development and progression in the valley. While there are legitimate concerns about preserving the region's distinct cultural legacy and demographic balance, the central government has taken several measures to address these issues. Politically, there are concerns about the potential loss of Kashmir's distinct identity, cultural legacy and demographic makeup due to closer integration with the rest of India. The fear is that growing integration may dilute traditional features as outside influences become more prevalent. However, the government has emphasized that the cultural heritage and traditions of Kashmir will be preserved, with new policies aimed at strengthening local governance and empowering the people. There are also worries about demographic shifts resulting from an inflow of outsiders, which could disrupt the demographic balance and marginalize the indigenous community. The government has introduced domicile legislation and other initiatives to protect the rights and interests of the local population. Economically, while new opportunities have emerged, there are concerns about the loss of land rights and economic possibilities to outsiders, sparking heated discussion and political discourse in Kashmir.

Addressing regional grievances, promoting inclusive growth, and fostering dialogue remains essential for building a sustainable future for Kashmir's residents. Ensuring that the benefits of development reach all sections of society, addressing infrastructure bottlenecks, and mitigating the impact of periodic unrest on the tourism sector are crucial. Additionally, environmental concerns, such as the sustainable management of natural resources and the impact of development on the fragile ecosystem, need to be prioritized.

### **ROADMAP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The future roadmap for Naya Kashmir includes a focus on inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, and enhanced governance. Collaborative efforts involving government, civil society, and the private sector are essential to achieving long-term success. To realize the full potential of 'Naya Kashmir,' a comprehensive and inclusive approach is required that addresses the complex interplay of historical grievances, regional aspirations and geopolitical considerations. This will involve a long-term commitment to peace, development, and the preservation of Kashmir's unique cultural identity, while ensuring that the aspirations of all its people are met. The removal of Article 370 has opened up new economic opportunities and investment in the region, leading to the creation of jobs and infrastructure development. Overall, while challenges remain, the 'Naya Kashmir' vision is focused on inclusive growth, sustainable development and the preservation of the region's distinct identity. The concerns about dilution of identity are often exaggerated by those who seek to undermine the progress being made in the region.



## CONCLUSION

The concerted efforts towards Naya Kashmir showcases the commitment and determination of government to transform Jammu and Kashmir into a prosperous region. Through dedicated focus on economic development, comprehensive social reforms and bolstered security measures, the region has embarked on a transformative journey towards renewed hope and happiness. The inspiring narratives of progress not only highlight the tangible achievements but also exemplify the profound impact of visionary leadership and collective action. As Naya Kashmir charts its course forward, these accomplishments serve as a beacon of what can be achieved through steadfast commitment to a brighter future.



[14] On PM's vision for 'Naya Kashmir': Ending Pakistan's proxy war - Indian Express.  
[15] "Naya Kashmir: A Vision Transcending Boundaries" - Global Kashmir.  
[16] Naya Kashmir: Ideas for Peace and Development - Daily Excelsior.  
[17] Express View on 'Naya Kashmir': A speech, a question - Indian Express.  
[18] On PM's Vision For 'Naya Kashmir': Ending Pakistan's Proxy War - Pwently MS



