

SAFEGUARD DIGITAL PRIVACY

In an age where our lives are increasingly dependent on digital technologies-from communication and banking to healthcare and education-the concept of digital privacy is no longer a luxury but a fundamental right. Yet, as digital footprints expand, so do the threats to personal privacy. Data breaches, surveillance, targeted advertising, and misuse of personal information have become alarmingly common, raising urgent questions about how well our digital lives are protected.

At the heart of the debate lies the tension between innovation and regulation. On one hand, digital platforms and tech companies continue to innovate at breakneck speed, offering conveniences and services that have transformed society. On the other, they collect and analyze vast amounts of personal data-often with minimal transparency and user consent. This unchecked data harvesting can lead to manipulation, identity theft, discrimination, and erosion of civil liberties.

India, with one of the largest internet user bases in the world, finds itself particularly vulnerable. The absence of a robust, enforceable data protection law for many years left users exposed to various privacy violations. However, the recent enactment of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 marks a significant step forward. The Act emphasizes consent-based data collection, lays out duties for data fiduciaries (those who handle data), and imposes penalties for non-compliance. While this legal framework is welcome, effective implementation and public awareness remain key challenges.

Beyond legislation, the role of individuals, corporations, and governments is equally crucial. Users must be educated about their digital rights and empowered to make informed choices. Simple practices like using strong passwords, being cautious with app permissions, and enabling two-factor authentication can significantly reduce vulnerabilities. At the same time, companies must adopt privacy by design-a principle that ensures privacy safeguards are built into products from the outset, not added later as an afterthought.

Governments too must strike a delicate balance. While national security and law enforcement are valid concerns, blanket surveillance programs without adequate oversight risk undermining democratic values. Transparency, accountability, and judicial oversight are essential when it comes to monitoring citizens, even in the name of security.

The international dimension of digital privacy also cannot be ignored. In an interconnected world, data often crosses borders. Global cooperation and harmonized standards-like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)-are necessary to ensure users' privacy is respected regardless of where data is processed or stored.

Ultimately, digital privacy is about trust-trust in institutions, platforms, and the technologies we use every day. Losing that trust can have deep consequences, including reduced civic participation, chilling of free speech, and increased social fragmentation.

As we move deeper into the digital era, privacy must be treated not merely as a technical or legal issue, but as a core societal value. Upholding it requires constant vigilance, thoughtful regulation, ethical innovation, and an informed citizenry.

Tawi Riverfront-Jammu's Flood Shield

A Journey of Planning, Innovation, and Resilience



The Tawi Riverfront stands as one of the most transformative projects under the Jammu Smart City Mission, envisioned to turn the Tawi's banks into a well-protected and visually appealing space. The project was not just about beautification-it was designed with the primary purpose of defending Jammu from recurring floods while upgrading its urban landscape. The devastating floods of 2014, which left vast areas of Jammu waterlogged and caused extensive erosion along the riverbanks, served as a critical turning point. It became evident that the city needed a lasting solution rather than temporary patchwork measures. The riverfront project was thus conceptualized as a blend of disaster management infrastructure and urban development.

As part of this mission, the riverbanks were reconstructed with modern reinforcements, pedestrian pathways, concrete steps, landscaped zones, well-lit public spaces, and most importantly, diaphragm walls-arguably the backbone of the project's flood protection strategy. This robust infrastructure recently faced its toughest trial when heavy rains hit the region and the Tawi swelled dangerously. The collapse of a section of the Bhagwati

Nagar bridge created alarm and raised fears about potential damage to the riverfront. Yet, the entire one-kilometer stretch of the project near the barrage stood unscathed. The retaining structures stayed firm, preventing erosion and resisting the surge of water even at peak flow levels.

The execution of the Tawi Riverfront was completed in several stages, with the strengthening of embankments taking top priority. The diaphragm walls form the core of this strengthening. Extending 10 to 12 meters deep and roughly two feet in thickness, these walls are designed to withstand massive hydraulic pressure while stabilizing the surrounding soil. Their watertight nature is critical, as it blocks underground seepage that could weaken the banks during floods. This precise feature allowed the riverfront to endure the recent flooding without any structural compromise. Similar techniques have proven their reliability in other major projects such as the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Lucknow Riverfront, and riverbank protection systems in Bhutan-demonstrating their global credibility in flood management.

Once the floodwaters receded, engineers and

officials from the Jammu Smart City Mission carried out a detailed inspection of the entire stretch. Each segment was scrutinized for cracks, leaks, or erosion, but none were found. This successful performance reassured planners and engineers alike, proving that the investment and technology deployed had achieved their intended purpose. It further established the Tawi Riverfront as a strong line of defense for Jammu against natural calamities.

Experts reviewing the Bhagwati Nagar bridge collapse observed that the absence of a diaphragm wall or equivalent structural protection likely contributed to its failure. This incident has reinforced the importance of integrating such features into all future bridges and riverbank structures. Directions have already been issued to include diaphragm walls in the reconstruction work of the collapsed bridge section to avoid similar failures in the future.

Beyond its technical strength, the Tawi Riverfront has redefined the city's relationship with its river. The walkways, viewing platforms, and open seating areas have given residents a new recreational hub while also enhancing Jammu's tourism appeal.

But its greatest achievement remains its role in protecting thousands of homes and commercial areas along the river from flooding. What was once a recurring menace causing frequent waterlogging has now been contained, even during extreme weather events, thanks to the riverfront's design.

The Tawi Riverfront is a prime example of how modern urban planning, backed by strong engineering solutions, can create cities that are not only more beautiful but also more resilient. For Jammu, a rapidly growing urban center, the project is a critical component of its disaster preparedness plan. It serves as a blueprint for other cities on how to balance environmental responsibility with robust infrastructure and public utility.

The recent flood event was a real-world test that proved the riverfront's worth and sent a clear message: infrastructure must prioritize safety and risk reduction, not just aesthetics. The Tawi Riverfront is now more than just a civic project-it is a symbol of Jammu's forward-looking vision, engineering capability, and determination to protect its citizens. In every sense, it acts as both the physical and metaphorical shield of the city.

Vandalizing National Emblem at Hazratbal?

An Act of Distaste

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While as the J&K Waqf Board was adorning the holy Shrine of Hazratbal, with some construction works etc, being a pious gesture towards this historic holy religious shrine of decades, when it could not be digested by some religious fanatics calling it as an anti Islamic act as the National Emblem engraved on a plaque, exhibiting this good will gesture of the J & K Waqf Board, was not acceptable to them, to be clubbed with the holy shrine of Hazratbal. Those opposing the plaque say that idol worship is strictly forbidden in Islam.

The Muttahida Majlis Ulema (MMU), an umbrella body of over two dozen religious organizations in Jammu and Kashmir, called it a "dangerous and unnecessary precedent". "Hazratbal is not merely a structure; it is the spiritual heart of the Muslims of Jammu & Kashmir; bound to our faith and identity through centuries of devotion. Any alteration that undermines its sanctity deeply pains the devotional sentiments attached to it," MMU said. "Islam is explicit in its teachings: no plaques, emblems, figures, or symbols are permitted in mosques or shrines." In Islam, idol worship is strictly forbidden. Placing a sculpted figure at the revered Hazratbal Dargah goes against this very belief," one of the NC leader and MLA said.

What an un Islamic observation full of contempt and radical approach to pulverize the atmosphere of Sofi character of this holy shrine, when the Emblem has nothing to do with the religious sentiments or faith of this holy shrine Muslims around, or anyone else of different religious faiths.

A mob of fanatics vandalized the National Emblem engraved on a plaque during a protest at the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar on September 5, 2025, which looked as a brutal act not in conformity with the any sense of sanity. Presuming though not accepting that the Emblem should not have been installed anywhere inside the shrine, yet, a civilized protest in this regard could be lodged with the concerned authorities to have it removed, if needed, when this Emblem has nothing to do with the religious or the spiritual essence of this holy shrine and its existence and essence which is very much dear to every human soul of Kashmir irrespective of religion, cast, color or creed.

It is unfortunate that even the tall leaders of National Conference including the chief minister made adverse remarks in this regard, thus clapping and seconding this barbaric act of vandalism of desecrating the National Emblem engraved on a plaque during a protest at the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar on September 5, 2025.

This speaks of the cognitive misconduct of such people from Kashmir including some prominent political parties of Kashmir who are hell bent to continue to radicalize the political and the social

environ of Kashmir with Islamic phobia and ensure to continue to distance Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India to radicalize Kashmir and its people with Pan Islamic culture and thinking. This has adversely been abetted by the various political parties of Kashmir since decades, to remain in power at the cost of maintaining of perpetual peace in Kashmir. In these situations the predominant role is of the dynasty based political parties of Kashmir who have no essence or regard for the general masses of Jammu & Kashmir, for their malicious intentions of ruling Jammu & Kashmir by hook or crook through their generations.

It is this malicious and poisonous intent of communal and a radical base prevalent in Kashmir mostly since 1989-90, which made Kashmiri Pandits to flee from Kashmir in 1990 with barren hands, when they were driven out of Kashmir along with the heinous acts of genocides done upon them through the pro Islamic and fundamentalist groups of Kashmir and the borrowed militants across the border; nurtured by ISI of Pakistan. KP's are still living in exile as forcibly displaced persons since last about 35 years, in their own country elsewhere as refugees, but not in their homes and hearths of Kashmir; due to this Islamic radicalization in Kashmir, with ugly approaches of turning Kashmir into religious Islamic culture.

What has the national Emblem to do with the religious faiths and beliefs of any citizen of India? Certainly nothing, except being a feather representing the pride and honor for every citizen of India.

A national emblem is a unique insignia used as a symbol of a nation-state or multinational state, representing its sovereignty and constitutional values, often in the form of a seal for official government use. For India, the National Emblem is the State Emblem of India, which is an adaptation of the Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath. It features four lions on an abacus, with sculptures of a horse, a bull, and an elephant, and the words "Satyameva Jayate (?????? ????)" (Truth alone triumphs) at the bottom.

What does the National Emblem of India Represent:-

► **Symbol of Sovereignty:** It is a sign of power and the foundation of a country's constitutional philosophy.

► **Official Seal:** This is an emblem to be used as a formal seal for legal and official purposes.

► **National Pride:** It serves as a symbol of national identity and pride of India.

Components of the Indian National Emblem

► **The Lions:** Four lions are mounted on an abacus, symbolizing India's courage and power, confidence, and faith, while the Dharma Chakra represents the "wheel of the law" and the continuous progress of dharma of varied faiths in India.

► **The Abacus:** This is the circular base that supports the lions.

► **Dharma Chakras:** The outlines of Dharma Chakras (wheels of law) are present, with one in the center.

► **Symbolism:** Sculptures of a galloping horse,

a bull, an elephant, and a lion are on the frieze of the abacus.

► **The Motto "Satyameva Jayate":** Below the lion capital, with the words "Satyameva Jayate" inscribed in the Devnagari script, translating to "Truth alone Triumphs" to be serving as the National Motto.

Origin and Adoption

► The emblem is derived from the Lion Capital of Ashoka, originally erected in Sarnath.

► It was adopted on January 26, 1950, the same day India became a Republic.

With a logical study of the above aims and objectives of this national Emblem of India, it nowhere shows any intent of hurting the religious sentiments and faiths of any one including the people of Muslim faiths. It depicts the pride and the Gilroy of India, with a sermon that only truth and nothing beyond truth will prevail in India in delivering social justice in India, to its people.

So a nefarious breast beating by some Muslims about its presence in the holy shrine of Hazratbal has no sense or meaning. It is just to make the atmosphere volatile and hostile to convey that only Muslims can live in Kashmir. It shows that driving away Kashmiri Pandits the aboriginals of Kashmir under genocide of sorts, from Kashmir, was a well knit conspiracy under Islamic patronage. Is it this communal bias and culture prevailing in Kashmir presently stopping the rehabilitation of displaced KP's back in Kashmir even after 35 years of their exile. It is giving a wrong signal across this big country of India and its people. It can have adverse repercussions for the overall culture and development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ms. Darakshan Andrabi, chairperson of J&K Waqf Board, sought police action against the protesters and accused the National Conference (NC) of inciting the people. The chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board, Darakshan Andrabi, had earlier demanded strict legal action, including invoking the PSA, against those who removed the emblem. She asserted that the individuals responsible for breaking the plaque were attempting to disrupt peace and must be treated as offenders under the law. "This is not just damage to stone. This is damage to the Constitution," she said at a press conference in Hazratbal. She also questioned whether leaders who oppose the emblem reject its presence on currency notes, which carries this Emblem. Does this Emblem suit these fanatics as long as it is there in the Indian currency of sorts, for their living and upkeep o f sorts. Do these fanatics shun to carry such currency notes along with them when they enter the holy shrine of Hazratbal or any other sacred shrine or a mosque when they go for praying at such places.

The BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit condemned the vandalism and demanded action against those who damaged the plaque as well as those allegedly working "behind the scenes." "The Hazratbal incident, a very sensitive issue, is a cause of concern. The BJP put its weight behind Andrabi, saying that the defacement of the emblem was a "terrorist act". BJP spokesman Altaf Thakur said in a press conference in

Srinagar. "This is a national symbol. It is on your passport, on your Aadhaar card, on the currency notes. Why are your prayers not disapproved when you go in with currency?"

Let the fanatics who vandalized the national emblem know that Kashmir was not always having Islam in it. Islam came to Kashmir later. This Emblem has a visible link with the Ashoka the great king of his times. The present Srinagar is his creation way back centuries. Islam was not born then in Kashmir.

Srinagar has a complex founding history. An older city named Srinagari was founded by Mauryan Emperor Ashoka around 250 BCE, located at the site of present-day Pandrethan. Later, around the 6th century CE, King Pravarasena II founded the modern city's location, naming it Parvarapura, which corresponds to today's Srinagar at the base of Hari Parbat Hill.

The Early "Srinagari" (circa 250 BCE)

Founder: Emperor Ashoka, the Mauryan ruler.

Location: The ancient city was situated at the site of the present-day village of Pandrethan, about a mile and a half east of Takht-i-Sulaiman Hill. It served as an important center of trade and commerce, linking India, Central Asia, and China along the Silk Route.

The Modern "Srinagar" (circa 6th Century CE)
Founder: King Pravarasena II. He built a new capital called Parvarapura, which later became the modern Srinagar, at its current location near the Hari Parbat Hill. This new capital became the main seat of power and has survived through various dynasties to become the city we know today.

Kashmiri's should gave enough credence to the Ashoka- the Great , who is the person who established Srinagar almost in the 3rd century, when Islam was nowhere in Kashmir. The Emblem which carries his name needs to be respected by every Kashmiri.

Thus it will be proper for the people and the local politicians of Kashmir who fan Islamic cult and fundamentalism in Kashmir, restrain themselves from it. Let them forget that they can go to any extent to make Kashmir an Islamic entity, by such skirmishes of vandalism. It has been done earlier as well through different modes. Such people need to be cautioned for their attempts to create unrest under the guise of religion or politics. It is unfortunate when such provocations are orchestrated to destabilize the region and give space to anti-national elements. Pakistan and other hostile forces may seek to exploit the situation to further their agenda. But it is expressed that the saner population of Kashmir , having seen past manipulations, will not fall prey to such tactics.

With the extreme influx of the of Islamic fundamentalist wave in Kashmir right from 1988, even though its deep roots were very much there in a section of the majority population, it resulted in the shaking of the foundations of the basic existence of the roots of Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, being the aboriginal dwellers of Kashmir. KP's were driven out from Kashmir at the gun point, naked and

barren, along with carrying of the deep scars of their genocide, loot, arson, rape and mass devastation with them. Since then the displaced KP's continue to live as refugees in their own country as a "Caged - Community", anticipating and expecting a fair treatment with them at the hands of the power corridors, when tall claims are being made about the same day in and day out. Nothing has matured on the ground, nor does it appear to happen. Displaced KP's lost everything under this communal fiasco of Islamic fundamentalism, which was more loaded with terrorism than any Islamic peeping of any sacred principles of even the tough Islamic teachings and preaching's, to be classified under any ism of reality or truth of a religious dogma or faith. History is privy to the fact that the role of the terrorist imported in Kashmir across the border with the aim to Islamize Kashmir fully under the umbrella of fundamentalism, almost turned the other way round, when they targeted Kashmiri Pandits first to cleanse the valley from their presence. It is almost like a last nail in their coffin to get extinct from the history of Kashmir and become a mystery and a history of past. Mass genocide and exodus of the KP's occurred, which is reverberating still on the fascia and the minds of the KP's and will continue to be so as long as humanity exists in this universe. Prominent leaders, intellectuals, politicians, individuals, government officers and the like amongst the KP's were brutally killed in broad day lights in thousands, along with the mass migration of this minuscule community to their destinations of devastations. It shows an extreme apathy of the various governments who have not doing anything tangible to save the KP's from extinction.

It reminds the KP's of their past periods of tyrannies of Muslim rulers like Moguls', Pathans, Chaks and the like. It is said that seven mounds (about 280 Kgs) of the sacred thread of the murdered Brahmins were burnt by Sikandar Butshikan and all of their sacred books were thrown into the Dal Lake. The KP's numbering over one lakh were drowned in the Lake and were burned at a spot in the vicinity of Rainawari in Srinagar City, known as Bhatta Mazar (The grave yard of the Bhattas, the KP's) beyond present day Jogilanker.

To continue to fan such a poisonous chorology of Islamic fundamentalism in Kashmir will ultimately ruin Kashmir, when Ladakh has already been taken away from erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is now a union territory. What pathos? Under such circumstances of cryptic radicalism and Islamic fundamentalism, the people of Jammu may seek separation from Jammu & Kashmir. In that case Kashmir may remain a paradise without any shine from "Khanabal" to "Khadanyar" or from "Mattan" to "Pattan". The choice is left to the Fanatic Fundamentalists, who vandalized the Emblem at Hazratbal for no cognitive reason.

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