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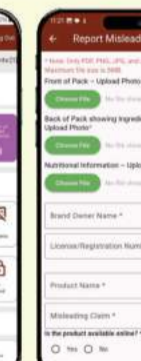




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## DC Discusses Arrangements For Upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In order to re-view the arrangements for upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2025, a meeting of senior Officers of Police and Civil Administration was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here today at Meeting Hall of DC Office.

During the meeting, DC took a comprehensive review of the arrangements to be put in place to ensure smooth and seamless conduct of the upcoming annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2025.

The DC discussed threadbare the arrangements to be made at yatra transit camp at Panthachowk with regard to the supply of Power & Water, setting up of cleanliness & sanitation, disaster mitigation & fire safety measures, transportation & parking facilities, access control gates, issuance of RFID cards, medical facility and other aspects to extend better facilities to the visiting yatries.

In addition, DC emphasized the need for formulating a supplementary contingency to augment the

accommodation for temporary halt of the yatries in wake of expected huge foot-fall as the yatries may travel through train service this year to pay obeisance at holy cave via Srinagar route.

On the occasion, Dr Biall asked the concerned to take necessary measures to ensure all basic amenities at the transit camps so that yatries may not face any difficulty.

With regard to sanitation, SMC authorities were directed to ensure proper sanitation in and around the transit camp, beside, adequate arrangements for mobile public convenience facilities at the camp. They were also asked to keep sufficient staff at the camp to maintain sanitation and proper cleanliness.

Additionally they were asked to ensure measures to combat water logging issues, if any caused due to inclement weather.

DC was informed that an adequate number of mobile toilets, bath stations and urinals are being made available at yatra transit camp Panthachowk and near Nowgam railway station to facilitate the yatries during SANJY-2025.

## Srinagar Gets New Welfare Pharmacy With Flat 18% Discount



Observer News Desk

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant community welfare initiative, Qadri Haq Medicate, a new pharmacy offering affordable medicines, was formally inaugurated today in Baghat, Srinagar. The pharmacy, owned and operated by local volunteer Sheikh Tassaduk Amin, promises an 18% discount on all medicines, aiming to ease the growing financial burden on patients, especially those suffering from chronic and life-threatening ailments.

The inauguration was attended by reputed civil society members, including Farooq Ahmad Ashai, Head of Human Resources at Kashmir Observer, Ali Mohammad Lone, Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, and Mohammad Amin Sheikh, who lauded the effort as a timely and impactful intervention.

"This is not just a commercial venture – it's a community need," said Farooq Ahmad Ashai. "In times when

healthcare costs are rising sharply, such compassionate models provide tangible support to families struggling with illness."

Sheikh Tassaduk Amin, known for his voluntary service in Srinagar hospitals since the 2016 unrest, said the pharmacy is a natural extension of his commitment to public welfare. "I've seen firsthand how patients suffer – not just from disease, but from the inability to afford treatment. Qadri Haq Medicate is my response to that pain," he said.

Though life-saving drugs are not yet in stock, Amin is collaborating with local welfare bodies to arrange essential medicines for the most vulnerable. The store plans to expand its inventory soon to include critical care and high-cost drugs at discounted rates.


Community members hailed the initiative as a "pharmacy with a conscience," offering not just prescriptions, but dignity and hope to those who need it most.

## آہ! غلام نبی بٹ نہ رہے

یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ غلام نبی بٹ ولد غلام محمد بٹ ساکنہ مائسد گاؤ کدل نزدیک جامع مسجد الجھٹ گاؤ کدل سرینگر مورخہ 16 اپریل 2025ء اپریل بروز بدھوار اس دارفانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس نصیب کرے۔ اس سلسلے میں تعزیت پڑی تین یوم تک مائسد گاؤ کدل میرتج ہال میں ہوگی اس کے علاوہ کوئی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی نہ ہوگی۔

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7006086324



# Gridlocks Continue To Choke City; Commuters Question Management



Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Despite restrictions on public cabs and limited operation of public transport in Srinagar, the city continues to witness severe traffic gridlocks, especially during peak hours, as locals continue to raise questions about the effectiveness of traffic management.

Locals from parts of Srinagar city said that traffic congestion has become a daily struggle, particularly in areas like Lal Chowk, Dalgate, Jahan-gir Chowk, Hyderpora, Panthachowk and especially on Boulevard Road.

They said, "Even with fewer cabs on the roads, we are stuck in jams for hours. It doesn't make sense," said a commuter from Rajbagh.

Others said the problem lies in poor road discipline, frequent roadside parking, and inadequate deployment of traffic personnel during crucial hours. "The government restricted cabs claiming it would ease traffic, but there is no visible difference," said Numan, a university student.

Officials from the Traffic Department Srinagar, when contacted said that despite heavy traffic flow, they manage to make the traffic ply on the busiest Boulevard Road and other roads.

He said, "In earlier days, about 80,000 people rushed to Tulip Garden on a single day and other places like the famous Mughal Gardens, and as a result, huge volumes of traffic were seen on roads. We have deployed

## Locals Hail SSCL Bus Service On Pahroo-Nowgam Route

The Srinagar Smart City Limited's bus service is now plying on the Pahroo-Nowgam route, drawing appreciation from locals, who have long awaited public transport on the stretch.

While residents welcomed the initiative, they have urged authorities to increase the number of buses to meet the growing demand.

Locals from the area have expressed gratitude for the initiative. "This bus service has brought great relief. It is affordable and saves us from the trouble of relying on costly private transport," said a resident of Pahroo Nowgam.

Another commuter said, the service is a step in the right direc-

tion, but we request the authorities to deploy more buses, especially during peak hours when the rush is high.

Students and office-goers have echoed similar sentiments, saying that the service has improved connectivity but more frequency is needed. "Sometimes the buses are overcrowded. More buses on this route would help us a lot," said Mubashir, a college student.

Officials from Smart City when contacted said that the service is operational on the Pahroo-Nowgam route. "We are monitoring the route closely, and necessary improvements will be made as per the feedback," they said.

multiple checkpoints and are managing the traffic to keep it flowing." The official said additional measures are being taken to regulate the flow, including a revised deployment strategy and a crackdown on violators. "We are monitoring hotspots through CCTV and are working to improve signal timing and enforcement," he said.

Earlier, official data accessed reveals that the number of registered vehicles in Jammu and Kashmir has nearly doubled over the past seven years, rising from 14.88 lakh in 2017 to 27.29 lakh by December 2024. Meanwhile, the traffic movement has also increased due to heavy rush of people from outside the valley, who are suggested to be tourists and visitors, as on a daily basis the Srinagar International Airport receives over 50 flights on arrival and 50 on departure, with a total of expected visitors daily as 18,368 on about 100 flights—(KNO)



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- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153



### HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Open)



## HIJRI CALENDAR

19 Shawwal 1446

## PRAYERS

FAJR	4:30
ZUHR	12:32
ASR	5:12
Magrib	7:07
ISHA	8:33

## This Day In History

- 310 - St Eusebius begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 387 - Bishop Ambrosius of Milan baptizes Augustinus
- 1025 - Boleslaw Chrobry is crowned in Gniezno, becoming the first King of Poland
- 1506 - The cornerstone of the current St. Peter's Basilica is laid in the Vatican
- 1518 - Bona Sforza is crowned queen consort of Poland
- 1521 - Diet of Worms: Cardinal Alexander questions Martin Luther
- 1552 - Mauritius of Saksen occupies Linz
- 1663 - Osman declares war on Austria
- 1666 - Peace of Kleeef: Netherlands & bishop Von Galen of Munster
- 1676 - Sudbury, Massachusetts, attacked by Indians
- 1688 - "Germantown Quaker Petition Against Slavery": Francis Daniel Pastorius authors 1st formal written protest against African-American slavery in English colonies in Germantown, Pennsylvania
- 1738 - Real Academia de la Historia ("Royal Academy of History") founded in Madrid
- 1775 -Paul Revere and William Dawes ride from Charlestown to Lexington warning the "regulars are coming!"
- 1783 - Fighting ceases in the American Revolution, eight years to the day when it began
- 1797 -France & Austria sign ceasefire
- 1809 - First run of 2,000 guineas horse race at Newmarket, England
- 1848 - American victory at the battle of Cerro Gordo opens the way for invasion of Mexico.
- 1861 - Battle of Harpers Ferry, Virginia, part of the Maryland Campaign (US Civil War)
- 1869 - 1st international cricket match, held in SF, wins by Californian
- 1902 - Denmark is first country to adopt fingerprinting to identify criminals
- 1906 - San Francisco earthquake and fire kills nearly 4,000 while destroying 75% of the city

## From KO Archives

## And A Golden Era Comes To An End Admirers Bid Tearful Farewell To Nazki

Observer News service

**SRINAGAR-** Mir Ghulam Rasool Nazki, a legend of Persian, Urdu and Kashmiri, besides being well versed with Arabic and English, who bid adieu to this world yesterday evening, was laid to rest at his final abode in Malakkeh grounds, amidst recitation of verses from holy Quran.

Large number of people from different walks of life were present when the body of Nazki, draped in white shroud, was lowered inside the grave. Many of them, were seen sobbing, some with swollen red eyes, wiping their tears.

Almost all the sections of the society were present at the funeral. There were poets, scholars, writers, critics, religious leaders, activists of different political parties, journalists, media personnel and last but not the least the poor and ordinary people of Khatidarwaza locality, where Nazki spent most of his lifetime. "We have been orphaned" said Mohammad Is-mail, around 60, adding that "Baday Nazki sahib hamari her tarah say madad kiya kartay thay" (The elder Nazki would always help us).

The funeral procession started this morning from Nazki's Shivpora house and jenaza was offered at Syed Sahib's shrine at Sonawar. From theme the funeral procession left for Mal-akah cemetery, but not before another jenaza being offered at Kathidarwaza, with Nazki's old neighbours insisting on that.

The burial took place well before Friday prayers and thus came an end to an era which in! Kashmir literature will be written in golden letters, not be forgotten ever.

Hardly few minutes before his end came, Nazki, who had written epitaph of thousands of men of letters, politicians and friends, penned his own epitaph down, in Kashmiri and handed it over to his poet son Farooq Nazki. The epitaph not only communicates his date of death but also of his infinite love for Prophet Mohammed (SAW) as he begged of His mercy. "The end is nearing, and this sweating on my body, this is the last time you will see it" Nazki is said to have told one of close friends Qazi Ghulam Rasool, who happened to be with him at the time of death. In his epitaph, Nazki is said to have written about all the details regarding his last rites, asking his son Far-ooq to abide by his directions strictly.

(Kashmir Observer, 18 April, 1998)

## Wait For Final JEE-Main Answer Keys, Don't Draw Conclusions: NTA To Students

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The National Testing Agency (NTA) has said that engineering aspirants should wait for the final JEE-Main answer keys and not jump to any conclusions about errors in the provisional keys.

The clarification came amid reports that the agency is receiving



**“The answer key challenge process is a key part of ensuring a fair and reliable system for all candidates. The purpose of the 'answer key challenge' process is to remove any anomaly and ensure fairness**

complaints about several errors reported in the answers for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE-Main).

“The NTA has always followed a transparent examination process, which allows candidates to view their recorded responses as soon as the provisional answer keys are released. The NTA considers every challenge to the provisional Answer Key with utmost seriousness.

“The answer key challenge process is a key part of ensuring a fair and reliable system for all candidates. The purpose of the 'answer key challenge' process is to remove any anomaly and ensure fairness,” the NTA said.

The agency said the answer keys for the JEE Mains are only provisional, and the final answer keys have not been published yet.

“The score is determined by only the final answer key. Drawing conclusions based on the provisional answer keys is not desirable. The NTA would like to advise and inform candidates that they should not be misled by reports that create unnecessary doubt and anxiety,” it said.

The JEE-Main was conducted in two phases – January edition and April edition.

## Judiciary Cannot Direct President, Act As 'Super Parliament': Dhankhar

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the President to take decisions and act as a “super Parliament”, saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a “nuclear missile” at democratic forces.

Dhankhar's strong words to the judiciary came during his speech to Rajya Sabha interns, days after the Supreme Court sought to fix a timeline for the President to grant assent to the Bills reserved for her consideration by the Governor.

“So, we have judges who will legislate, who will perform executive functions, who will act as super Parliament and absolutely have no accountability because the law of the land does not apply to them,” Dhankhar said.

The Vice President also described Article 142, which grants plenary powers to the Supreme Court, as a “nuclear missile against democratic forces available to the judiciary 24x7”.

“Article 142 has become a nuclear missile against democratic forces (and) available to (the) judiciary 24x7,” he said.

Article 142 of the Constitution gives the Supreme Court the power to issue orders that ensure “complete justice” in any matter before it. This power is also known as the Supreme Court's “plenary power”.

“There is a directive to the President by a recent judgment. Where are we heading?”

“What is happening in the country? We have to be extremely



sensitive. It is not a question of someone filing a review or not. We never bargained for democracy for this day. President being called upon to decide in a time-bound manner, and if not, becomes law,” Dhankhar said.

The Vice President said his worries were at a “very highest level” and he had never thought in “my life” that he would have the occasion to see it.

He reminded the audience that the President of India is in a very elevated position.

“(The) President takes an oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. Others, including ministers, the vice president, parliamentarians and judges take an oath to abide by the Constitution,” Dhankhar said.

“We cannot have a situation where you direct the President of India and on what basis? The only right you have under the Constitution is to interpret the Constitution under Article 145(3). There it has to be five judges or more...,” he said.

Stressing the principle of separation of powers, he underlined that when the government is elected by the people, the government is accountable to Parliament and to the people in the elections.



Chief of Iranian Armed Forces, Mohammad Bagheri, welcomes Saudi Defence Minister, Prince Khalid bin Salman, in Tehran, Iran, April 17, 2025. Iranian Armed Forces Office/WANA (West Asia News Agency)/Handout via REUTERS Purchase Licensing Rights

## Saudi Defence Minister Arrives In Tehran Ahead Of Iran-US Talks

Agencies

DUBAI, April 17 (Reuters) - Saudi Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman arrived in Tehran on Thursday for meetings with officials in a visit ahead of weekend talks between Iran and the United States over the Iranian nuclear programme.

The defence minister delivered a message from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Thursday, Iran's state media reported without giving further details about the content of the message.

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Iran and the U.S. are set to hold a second round of talks in Rome this weekend about Tehran's disputed uranium enrich-

ment programme.

“Our belief is that the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia is beneficial for both countries,” Iranian state media cited Khamenei as saying in the meeting. Khamenei voiced Tehran's readiness to overcome obstacles

in the Middle East from Yemen to Syria.

Saudi Arabia welcomed Iran's nuclear talks with the U.S., saying it supported efforts to resolve regional and international disputes, in a statement published by the country's official news agency on Saturday.

**“Our belief is that the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia is beneficial for both countries**

in the way of improving ties with Riyadh.

Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed in a 2023 deal brokered by China to re-establish relations after years of hostility that had threatened stability and security in the Gulf and helped fuel con-

“Ties between the Saudi and Iranian armed forces have been improving since the Beijing agreement,” Iran's armed forces chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri said after meeting the Saudi minister in Tehran, according to Iranian state media.

## Iran Confirms Second Round Of Nuclear Talks With The US Will Be In Rome

Agencies

DUBAI: Iran confirmed Wednesday that the next round of nuclear talks with the United States this weekend will be held in Rome after earlier confusion over where the negotiations would be held.

The announcement by Iranian state television came as Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian formally approved the resignation of one of his vice presidents who served as Tehran's key negotiator in its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, Rafael Mariano Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency, also arrived in the Islamic Republic on Wednesday. His talks may include negotiations over just what access the IAEA inspectors can get under any proposed deal.

The state TV announcement said Oman will again mediate the talks on Saturday in Rome. Oman's foreign minister served as an interlocutor between the two sides at talks last weekend in Muscat, the sultanate's capital.

Officials initially on Monday identified Rome as hosting the negotiations, only for Iran to insist early Tuesday they would return



to Oman. American officials so far haven't said publicly where the talks will be held, though Trump did call Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq on Tuesday, while the ruler was on a trip to the Netherlands.

The stakes of the negotiations couldn't be higher for the two nations closing in on half a century of enmity. US President Donald Trump repeatedly has threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's nuclear program if a deal isn't reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels.

Pezeshkian praises former vice president while acknowledging his resignation

The former vice president, Mohammad Javad Zarif, served as a key supporter of Pezeshkian in his election last year but drew criticism from hard-liners within Iran's Shiite theocracy, who long have alleged Zarif gave away too much in negotiations.

In March, Zarif tendered his resignation to Pezeshkian. However, the president did not immediately respond to the letter. Zarif has used resignation announcements in the past in his political career as leverage, including in a dispute last year over the composition of Pezeshkian's Cabinet.

## US Admn Threatens To Revoke Harvard's Ability To Enrol Foreign Students

Press Trust Of India

Washington: The US Department of Homeland Security has threatened to revoke Harvard University's ability to enrol foreign students if it failed to provide by April 30 records on its international student visa holders' “illegal and violent” activities.

It also cancelled grants totalling more than USD 2.7 mil-

lion to Harvard University, declaring it unfit to be entrusted with taxpayer dollars,” the DHS said in a statement on Wednesday.

“The Secretary also wrote a scathing letter demanding detailed records on Harvard's foreign student visa holders' illegal and violent activities by April 30, 2025, or face immediate loss of Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certification,” it said.



lion to Harvard University.

The latest action from the Trump administration against Harvard comes on the heels of a USD 2.2 billion federal funding freeze because the university rejected a list of demands. The administration also proposed the revocation of the university's tax-exempt status over its radical ideology.

“Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Kristi Noem announced the cancellation of two DHS grants

“Harvard bending the knee to antisemitism — driven by its spineless leadership — fuels a cesspool of extremist riots and threatens our national security,” said Secretary Noem.

“With anti-American, pro-Hamas ideology poisoning its campus and classrooms, Harvard's position as a top institution of higher learning is a distant memory. America demands more from universities entrusted with taxpayer dollars,” he said.

## More Than 130 Students In US Join Federal Lawsuit Over Revoked Visas

Agencies

WASHINGTON: More than 130 international students across the United States have joined a federal lawsuit accusing the Trump administration of unlawfully canceling their visas, jeopardizing their legal status in the country, court documents show.

The students allege the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency abruptly and illegally terminated their status in the government's Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) database, putting them at risk of arrest, detention and deportation.

The initial complaint was filed by 17 students on April 11 in the state of Georgia.

Since then, 116 more have joined them as the administration of US President Donald Trump pursues a wide-ranging immigration crackdown that has targeted foreign students, among many others.

Across campuses in the United States, international students have been scrambling as they have discovered their visas have been revoked, often for little or no reason, according to court documents and media reports.

The Georgia lawsuit names US Attorney General



Pam Bondi, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons as defendants and seeks to reinstate the revoked visas.

In the complaint, which does not identify the students by name “due to fear of retaliation,” the summaries offered for each of the 17 original cases reveal seemingly arbitrary cancellations, with each plaintiff giving their best guess as to what may have prompted them to be targeted. Some pointed to minor traffic infringements, such as John Doe 2, a Chinese citizen pursuing an engineering doctorate at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

He was notified by his school that his visa was revoked after a criminal records check, but the violation was not specified. The student believes it may have been related to a traffic offense that was closed and, according to the filing, he has no other criminal history.

N E W S M A K E R S

## ED Visits Bengaluru Man Who Claimed To Have Imported Rs 50-Crore Dog

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday visited the house of a man here to conduct a potential search for the violation of foreign exchange rules after he claimed to have imported a Rs 50-crore dog.

The assertion, however, was found to be fake.

Sources said that the officials of the federal probe agency found that the man “had no means” to purchase such a costly canine, and such reports were “just created” for possible social media engagement.

The man, according to reports, had claimed that he had imported the “world's most expensive” dog — a cross-breed of a Caucasian Shepherd and Wolf. The claim gained prominence on social media, inviting the ED's glare.

Officials of the federal probe agency, acting on this open-source information, reached his home to verify the claims, only to find that they were fake.



The dog, whose pictures were also circulated widely on social media, was owned by his neighbour and was not worth “even a lakh (of rupees)”, they said.

The agency has not initiated any probe under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the sources said.

**“The man, according to reports, had claimed that he had imported the “world's most expensive” dog — a cross-breed of a Caucasian Shepherd and Wolf. The claim gained prominence on social media, inviting the ED's glare.**

## Rahul Gandhi To Visit US, Will Give Talk At Brown University

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi will be on a visit to the US next week during which he will be giving a talk and interacting with faculty members and students at the Brown University.

Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said Gandhi will be visiting Brown University in Rhode Island, United States, on April 21 and 22.

He will be giving a talk and interacting with faculty members and students, Khera said.

Prior to visiting Rhode Island, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha will meet with members of the NRI community, as well as office bearers and members of the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC), he said.



**“Prior to visiting Rhode Island, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha will meet with members of the NRI community, as well as office bearers and members of the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC),**

## PDP Formed Open Alliance, Unlike NC's Secret Deals: Parra

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Senior leader of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra on Thursday stated that there was no distinction between the current elected government and the previous Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir, as repressive actions such as attachment of properties, employee terminations, and raids persist unabated.

Representing Pulwama constituency in the Assembly, Parra strongly criticised Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for skipping the last three days of the legislative session, during which the controversial Waqf Amendment Bill was scheduled for discussion.

Parra alleged that Omar Abdullah chose to visit the Tulip Garden instead of attending the Assembly and speaking on an issue that deeply concerns the Muslim community. "He is ashamed of calling himself a Muslim. Let him not pass the resolution, but with 60 Muslim MLAs in the House, including three from PDP, we expected his presence," Parra said.

Addressing criticism over PDP's alliance with BJP, Parra clarified that the coalition was formed with a transparent goal of ending atrocities, detentions, and administrative oppression. "We forged the alliance openly. There was no deal behind closed doors on August 5. In 2002, we opened channels on both sides of Kashmir; in 2014, we facilitated an all-party delegation to meet Geelani Sahab," he said.

He highlighted that under PDP rule, amnesty was granted to 12,000 stone pelters, a dia-



logue-based resolution was proposed, and Prime Minister Modi acknowledged that the Kashmir issue could be solved through dialogue. "Despite NC having 50 MLAs, they never took such steps," Parra remarked.

He accused NC of making covert deals throughout history. "Afzal Guru's execution was a secret deal. Shinde himself revealed that Omar Abdullah suggested hanging Guru during Chilla-e-Kalan so people wouldn't protest. Such deals were also made during Maqbool Bhat's execution and the 1953 Delhi Agreement," Parra asserted.

He emphasized that PDP, even with only 13 MLAs, achieved more than Hurriyat in 70 years. On the recent statements by former RAW chief A.S. Dulat, Parra said, "They forced him to revise his remarks, but the book can't be rewritten. The truth about how our blood was sold must be spread."

Parra reiterated that whether under an elected government or Governor's rule, repression continues. "People are suffering under both regimes. If the CM remains silent over these serious issues, should we fear for his chair and not speak up?" he questioned.

He also expressed concern that the region's culture, language, and religion are under threat, urging the Chief Minister to clarify his stand.

## With Hawala Channels Blocked, Drug Money Fuels Illegal Activities: Police

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The crackdown on hawala transactions and the terror ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir has led anti-national elements to increasingly rely on drug smuggling to fund illegal activities, said SSP Kupwara, Ghulam Jeelani, on Thursday.

Highlighting the vulnerability of areas like Tangdhar due to its tough terrain, Jeelani said the region is prone to smuggling and infiltration. "Several FIRs have already been registered under narco-terror links," he added.

To counter such threats, authorities have enhanced surveillance and security, including deploying female BSF and police personnel to detect and prevent smuggling by female operatives.



The statement follows a recent operation that led to the arrest of three drug smugglers, including a notorious woman trafficker from South Kashmir. Jeelani reiterated the police's zero-tolerance policy toward narcotics and arms smuggling, warning of strict legal action including property seizures.

He urged public cooperation and credited successful operations to timely community inputs. "Together, we can defeat this menace," he said.

## Waqf Board Retrieved Properties In Past 3 Years: Darakhshan

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board and BJP National Executive Member, Dr Darakhshan Andrabi, on Thursday said the board has reclaimed significant land and properties over the past three years, ensuring protection of mosque and shrine assets.

Speaking at an Ambedkar Jayanti event organised by BJP at Dak Bungalow, Anantnag, Dr Andrabi said people continue to visit religious places peacefully. "There's no unrest or restriction on religious practices," she said.

She also defended the Waqf Board's recent initiatives, calling them focused and sincere,

despite political criticism. "Some people are trying to divert attention, but the public trusts the Waqf Board's work," she added.

Referring to constitutional values, she credited Prime Minister Modi for reinforcing constitutional governance, saying, "Modiji introduced Samvidhan Divas and revitalized constitutional spirit in the country."

The event was attended by BJP leaders including District President Rakesh Koul, ST Morcha UT President Chowdhary Roshan, and General Secretary Ad. The speakers paid tribute to Dr B. R. Ambedkar and pledged to carry his message of justice and equality to grassroots communities.

## Mirwaiz welcomes SC's interim relief on Waqf Amendment Act

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Mirwaiz Kashmir, Moulvi Umar Farooq, has welcomed the Supreme Court's interim relief on Waqf Amendment Act.

In a post of X, Mirwaiz, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said: "The Supreme Court asking some tough questions of the Govt on the Waqf Amend-

ment Act, and its interim stand—that no new members will be added to Waqf boards and that "Waqf-by-user" properties will not be denotified, is welcome. It gives hope to Muslims who look up to it as their last recourse for relief and justice. We hope the Apex court revokes this biased and excessive Act against the interests of the vast Muslim community."—(KNO)



# Thailand Emerges As New Trap For Youth Lured By Fake Job Offers

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Not only are the youth from Kashmir being lured to Saudi Arabia with promises of good jobs, but now, many are being sent to Thailand under similar false pretences, only to find themselves trapped in exploitative situations.

Multiple families said that many job consultancies in Kashmir valley are exploiting the desperation of young people, offering them false promises of employment abroad, only for them to end up working in scam operations with no pay.

A Baramulla family disclosed the troubling account of their relative, who was assured a legitimate job opportunity in Thailand by an agent.

However, upon arrival, he found himself trapped, forced to work in a scam operation without receiving any salary. "He was told he would earn well, but now he is stuck, and no one is helping him," the family member said.

"Not only are our son, but many other youths being lured there with promises of good jobs. They are treated poorly, with no salary, forced into scam operations, and their passports seized," they said.

Similarly, another family from Srinagar said their son was lured by an agent with promises of a good job in Thai-

land, but now, like others, he is caught in a similar trap, unable to leave or earn. The duo families have urged the government and police for inter-



vention.

They urged the police to launch a crackdown on these consultancy companies, which they claim are exploiting young people and sending them abroad with false promises.

"We want action to be taken against these agents who are ruining the lives of our children. It is time the government and police step in," another family member said.

Earlier, it was highlighted how hundreds of youth from the Kashmir Valley were earlier scammed on the pretext of jobs in Saudi Arabia.

Many of them are still stuck in the country, having worked for months without receiving any salary.

A preliminary survey found that around hundreds Kashmir youth are trapped in exploit-

ative conditions across Gulf countries.

Over 75% earn just 1,100 Saudi Riyals (Rs 25,000) monthly, far less than promised. Also, 55% report not receiving any salary in the first three months, leaving them in financial distress with restrictive contracts.

The authorities have yet to take meaningful action against the recruitment agencies responsible for these fraudulent schemes.

In addition to Thailand and Saudi Arabia, some agents and consultants have been sending youth to Gulf countries with the promise of jobs, only for them to face exploitation.

Many workers end up with low salaries, while some are given tourist visas for just two months, after which they are forced to exit the country, despite having spent large amounts of money to get there.

Recently, a viral video featured two youth from Bandipora, who accused a consultant from Baramulla and another from Srinagar of fraud.

They explained that they were promised good jobs in Saudi Arabia with a good salary, but they found themselves in difficult situations without the pay they were promised.

"We were told we would get good jobs, but now we have nothing," one of the youth said in the video



**NOT ONLY IS OUR SON, BUT MANY OTHER YOUTHS BEING** lured there with promises of good jobs. They are treated poorly, with no salary, forced into scam operations, and their passports seized,"

WORLD HEMOPHILIA DAY

## Doctors Emphasize Early Diagnosis, Awareness To Prevent Complications

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** On the World Hemophilia Day, the leading health professionals in Kashmir here have stressed the urgent need to raise awareness about bleeding disorders and ensure early diagnosis to prevent serious complications.

They highlighted the importance of equitable access to treatment and care, especially for the underprivileged sections of society.

Dr Mushtaq at DHSK said that Hemophilia is an important medical condition to understand because of its serious implications for health and the need for early diagnosis and proper management.

"There is a need for increased awareness, prioritizing early diagnosis, and ensuring availability of treatment—particularly factor replacement therapy—for those in need. Achieving this requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including policymakers, healthcare

professionals, and the community," he said.

Dr Ishtiyak said that World Hemophilia Day is a moment to stand in solidarity with individuals living with bleeding disorders. "Let us honor the resilience of patients and their caregivers, and push for better access to treatment. Knowledge is crucial—educating ourselves and others can lead to timely diagnosis and effective management of hemophilia," Dr. Ishtiyak said. "By fostering awareness and compassion, we can build a supportive environment for patients and their families."

Doctors noted that despite the challenges, advancements in medical science have significantly improved the quality of life for people with hemophilia.

However, disparities in healthcare access remain a major concern.

They emphasized the need for stronger healthcare infrastructure, improved access to therapies, and enhanced training for both medical personnel

and the public.

The doctors said that hemophilia is usually genetic and is usually inherited and affects mostly males, with females being carriers and it is life threatening without treatment and genetic mutations are the most common causes of hemophilia. They said that hemophilia can lead to excessive bleeding, spontaneous bleeding, joint damage, muscle hemorrhages, internal bleeding and infections.

They added that hemophilia is a genetic bleeding disorder, so it cannot be completely prevented but certain measures can help manage and reduce the risk of complications that includes genetic counselling, avoiding injury, getting vaccinated against hepatitis A and B and maintaining a healthy weight to reduce stress on joints.

"World Hemophilia Day is not just about recognition; it's a call to action. We must ensure that no one is left behind, regardless of their socioeconomic status," doctors said—(KNO)

## Kupwara Police Bust South-North Drug Route

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant crackdown against drug trafficking in Kashmir, Kupwara Police have arrested three drug smugglers—including a woman kingpin—from South Kashmir and seized 1.71 kilograms of contraband from their possession.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kupwara, Ghulam Jeelani, while addressing a press conference, revealed that the arrests were made during a late-night operation after a police party intercepted a suspicious vehicle.

"Upon search, three individuals were apprehended with a significant quantity of narcotics. One of the accused is a woman, Haseena Begum, a known drug smuggler with multiple FIRs registered against her across the Valley," SSP Jeelani said.

He further stated that Haseena Begum had been actively involved in smuggling contraband from South to North



Kashmir. "She has a history of drug trafficking and is considered a major player in the trade," he added.

An FIR has been registered against all three accused, and the vehicle used in the smuggling operation has also been seized. The SSP said investigations are ongoing to uncover the broader nexus involved in the drug racket.

In a notable revelation, the SSP disclosed that the arrested woman's brother is a government employee. "We are writing to the Director of CAPD to initiate strict departmental action against him," Jeelani announced.

To enhance vigilance in border areas such as Tangdhar, SSP Jeelani said that women personnel from the BSF and local police will be deployed to check female suspects. "Some female traffickers misuse their identity and circumstances to bypass security. That will no longer be tolerated," he emphasized.

He issued a stern warning to absconders involved in earlier drug cases in Tangdhar. "Your properties will be attached. There will be no escape from the law," he said, adding that anyone found involved in the drug trade would face stringent legal action, including the seizure of assets.

## School Education Dept Faces Acute Shortage Of Teaching Staff

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The School Education Department has acknowledged a severe shortage of teaching personnel and urged administrative bodies to avoid deploying teaching and non-teaching staff in non-academic roles, stating it disrupts the education process.

Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) School Education Department, Shantmanu, in a formal communication, highlighted that teaching staff were being deployed by Deputy Commissioners in administrative offices without approval or prior information to the Education Department.

"The primary duty of the teaching staff is to impart quality education, and such deployments divert them from their core role," Shantmanu noted.

He emphasized that the department already faces acute



staff shortages and warned that this administrative practice hampers students' academic progress. All Deputy Commissioners have been directed to restrict such deployments and maintain the operational integrity of educational institutions.

Shantmanu added that if there is any specific requirement of staff for administrative tasks, the matter should be routed through the Directorate of School Education or the administrative department for proper handling.

## One-Time Relaxation In Age Criteria For Class-1 Admissions

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a key decision, the School Education Department on Thursday announced a one-time relaxation for determining the minimum age for admission to Class 1st in Jammu Division for the 2025-26 academic session.

Financial Commissioner Shantmanu said the minimum age will be reckoned as of September 30, 2025, for the upcoming session. However, from the academic session 2026-27 onwards, the age will be reckoned as of March 31 of the respective year.

This decision follows requests and representations concerning age eligibility in the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which mandates a minimum age of three years for pre-primary enrollment.

The relaxation is intended to accommodate children enrolled in Nursery during the 2022-23 session. The directive applies to all educational institutions in Jammu Division, except for winter zones.

Shantmanu stressed strict compliance to ensure a smooth admission process and reiterated that no further relaxations will be granted post-2026-27.

## KIMS Medical College Bemina Organizes Blood Donation

Observer News Service

**BARAMULLA:** A blood donation camp was organized today in Waripora, District Baramulla, in collaboration with the 176 Battalion of CRPF, Sub District Hospital Magam, and the Blood Centre of SKIMS Medical College and Hospital, Bemina.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from CRPF personnel, with around 50 individuals stepping forward to donate blood. A total of 50 blood units were collected during the camp, significantly strengthening

ing the life-saving reserves at the blood bank.

The camp was efficiently organized and managed by Dr. Mohd Suhail Malik, Head of Department, Blood Bank SKIMS MCH Bemina, along with his dedicated team. Dr. Zuhalla from SDH Magam also played a key role in the successful coordination of the event.

This initiative highlights the spirit of collaboration between healthcare institutions and security forces in serving public health needs and promoting the culture of voluntary blood donation.

## Muslims Eagerly Awaiting Return Of Kashmiri Pandits: Grand Mufti

Addresses Seminar in Chennai, Calls for Unity Among Different Communities

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir's Grand Mufti, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam, has called for the dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley, expressing heartfelt support from the Muslim community.

Speaking at a seminar titled 'Talk for Peace' held at Mahabalipuram in Chennai, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam addressed a diverse gathering of communities and underscored the importance of communal harmony and brotherhood. He said that Muslims in Kashmir are eagerly waiting for their Kashmiri Pandit brethren to return. "We will welcome them with open arms," the Grand Mufti assured.

The event was organized by

Swami Hari Prasad, who presented a letter of thanks to the Grand Mufti for bringing attention to the plight and rightful concerns of the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Emphasizing the importance of inter-community peace, Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam also referred to a recent controversy that had erupted between two communities. He stated that efforts were made to mediate and restore peace. "We played our role to bring peace and maintain harmony," he said.

He reiterated his long-standing commitment to peaceful coexistence, stating, "I have always been pitching for peace and harmony between the communities and will continue to do so."

## Skill Exchange Programme On Forest Fire Management Held

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In compliance with the directions of the Director, Fire and Emergency Services, Alok Kumar, (ADGP), and in light of recent forest fire incidents, a joint skill exchange programme was organized as part of observance of Fire Service Week 2025.

The event was held at Fire Headquarters, Batamalo, under the overall supervision of Assistant Director Command Srinagar, Aqib Hussain Mir.

The primary objective of this initiative was to enhance coordination among key stakehold-

ers viz. Fire and Emergency Services, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and the Forest Department.

The programme aimed to promote mutual understanding, reinforce inter-departmental collaboration, and build operational synergy in responding to forest fire emergencies.

The event featured expert-led training sessions delivered by experienced trainers and subject matter specialists from the participating departments. These sessions were designed to impart technical knowledge, best practices, and discuss coordinated response strategies.

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KO VIEW

Waqf: A  
Welcome Pause

The Supreme Court’s observations and interim intervention in the implementation of the amended Waqf Act, 2025, mark a timely and necessary pause. The central government, on its part, has told the Court that it will put on hold at least two contentious provisions of the Waqf Act, 2025- the concept of ‘waqf-by-user’ and representation of non-Muslims on waqf boards till the next week. This is an acknowledgement of the fact that in a pluralistic society like India, religious sentiments of any community need to be handled with sensitivity and care.

The backlash against the amended law hasn’t come out of nowhere. It reflects real anxiety and unease among many in the Muslim community. The provision of waqf-by-user, which says that land can be treated as waqf if it’s been used for religious or charitable purposes over time — even without official records - is a legal grey area. In a land where property disputes already drag on for decades, where documentation is patchy at best in many places, this clause opens the door to more confusion, conflict, and perhaps even social unrest.

Then there’s the matter of appointing non-Muslims to waqf boards. While representation is generally a good thing in public institutions, religious bodies work a bit differently. For many Muslims, the waqf is not just another administrative structure - it’s deeply tied to faith, to history, to a community’s way of giving back. Having outsiders manage or influence its working feels intrusive, even disrespectful. These are not just political or legal concerns - they touch something much more emotional and personal.

To its credit, the government has promised the Court that it won’t move forward with these changes until a proper hearing happens. This is a welcome gesture. But more than legal back-and-forth, what is needed now is honest conversation. Reforms, if they are genuinely meant to improve transparency and governance, should be discussed openly with the people they impact the most.

And one can hope that the central government has good intentions and wants to do right by the Muslim community. There’s certainly the need for reform in Waqf. It is important to know what happens to the large amounts of money collected at the Waqf administered religious places and institutions. Also, the Muslim leaders need to introspect whether the Waqf properties have been used for the welfare of the community. More specifically, whether they have been used to build hospitals and educational institutions. That said, the inefficient use of resources or corruption is not just limited to Waqf but something that afflicts religious bodies across the communities. So, to pick up Waqf selectively for reform is a decision that the government should reconsider. For now, the case is in the Supreme Court and we can hope that its decision will address the fears of the Muslim community and, meanwhile, the government too would make efforts in this direction.



Mind Over Market

Irshad Mushtaq

Investing in a volatile market often tests more than just financial knowledge, it challenges emotional resilience and decision-making. When markets decline, the accompanying anxiety and a barrage of negative news can cloud judgment, leading investors to act impulsively. Many tend to sell off assets out of fear, interpreting a temporary dip as a permanent downfall. This emotional reaction not only locks in losses but can also lead to missed opportunities when markets recover. Investors who exit too early may remain skeptical during rebounds, preventing them from reentering the market and benefiting from the upswing.

However, market downturns don’t always spell disaster, they can also serve as opportunities. Investors who stay disciplined and maintain a long-term perspective are better equipped to navigate uncertainty. Volatility is part of the investing journey, and recognizing it as such can help avoid panic-driven choices. In fact, downturns can offer a chance to purchase fundamentally strong stocks at lower valuations, setting the stage for long-term growth.

A diversified portfolio anchored by quality investments is key to weathering market fluctuations. Resilient companies tend to perform steadily over time, cushioning the impact of volatility. Guidance from experienced investors or financial advisors can also be invaluable during such times, offering clarity and confidence when emotions run high. Mentorship helps investors maintain focus, avoid rash decisions, and learn from real-world experience.

Ultimately, smart investing is as much about managing emotions as it is about understanding markets. Continuous learning, staying updated with economic trends, and developing patience and discipline are essential tools for financial success. By embracing these principles, investors can transform market turbulence into a strategic advantage, positioning themselves for stronger returns and long-term financial well-being.

- The author is a reputed financial advisor based out of Srinagar.

America Self-Destructs

'Far from fighting to uphold the system that it leads, the US is taking a wrecking ball to it. China just needs to sit back and watch.'



Shlomo Ben-Ami



It certainly would not justify Trump's ambition to assert US sovereignty over Canada, Greenland, and the Panama Canal, even as his embrace of geopolitical spheres of interest effectively legitimizes efforts by other powers – Israel and Turkey in Syria, Russia in Ukraine – to seize territory by force

US President Donald Trump is not known for respecting science and history. From promoting unproven treatments for COVID-19 to insisting that any discussion of shameful elements of America’s past is “divisive,” he prefers to manipulate them for political ends. One wonders whether he realizes, when he waxes nostalgic about America’s historical “greatness,” that he is usually referring to times when the United States was a geopolitical weakening.

Trump’s invocation of the Monroe Doctrine is a case in point. When President James Monroe asserted in 1823 that the Western Hemisphere was solely the domain of the US, America was far from establishing itself as a global power. And while it has been used to rationalize US intervention and imperialism since then, Monroe’s original vision was focused on keeping European colonialism at bay. It certainly would not justify Trump’s ambition to assert US sovereignty over Canada, Greenland, and the Panama Canal, even as his embrace of geopolitical spheres of interest effectively legitimizes efforts by other powers – Israel and Turkey in Syria, Russia in Ukraine – to seize territory by force.

Similarly, Trump justifies his embrace of high tariffs by pointing out that they were a feature of the Gilded Age, when rapid industrialization fueled prosperity in the US. But, again, he is referring to a period – the late 1870s to the early 1900s – when America’s global clout was relatively modest. While the US was already a rising economic power, it was not yet “at its richest” by any means. Inflation-adjusted GDP per capita is around six times higher today than in the 1890s – which was also a period of peak economic inequality.

Moreover, after the McKinley tariffs of 1890 – named for their Republican architect, then-Representative William McKinley – increased average duties on all imports from 38% to 49.5%, the party was soundly defeated in that year’s midterm

elections, in one of the biggest partisan swings in US history. The tariffs also indirectly contributed to the Panics of 1890 and 1893, which, at the time, was the worst economic downturn the US had ever experienced.

Invoking the era before 1913, when the federal income tax was introduced, Trump has also floated the idea of using tariffs to finance the entire US government budget. This reflects not only a gross misunderstanding of how tariffs work – Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick says it would amount to “let[ting] all the outsiders pay,” even though tariffs are paid by importers – but also a total disregard for historical experience and mathematical reality.

Tariff revenues could not cover the US government’s expenses in the early 1900s, and they certainly could not do so today, no matter how many civil servants the unelected billionaire Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency fire, or how many agencies they gut or programs they defund. After all, America’s biggest budget items are Social Security (enacted in 1935) and Medicare (created in 1965), which Americans have no interest in losing.

The foreign-aid commitments, responsibilities to NATO and other allies, and investments in scientific research that the Trump administration decries amount to a much smaller share of the US public budget. More important, they bring tremendous dividends, in the form of US global influence, stability, and prosperity. In fact, the Pax Americana that reflected and perpetuated American “greatness” was always based on a broadly beneficial, but primarily self-serving, system of economic, military, and cultural projection – precisely the system that Trump is now destroying.

The Trump administration has effectively declared open season on the scientific institutions that have made it the world’s leading innovation powerhouse. It has subdued Ivy League universities, purged the Department of Health and Human Services, and moved to slash funding for world-

renowned scientific research institutions, including the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Energy, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As the US cuts funding for research and development, China is pouring money into it, having invested \$52 billion in R&D last year – up 10% from 2023.

Moreover, the Trump administration is dismantling US foreign-aid programs, including the US Agency for International Development (USAID), a leading tool of US soft power. Trump has also withdrawn the US from the World Health Organization and the Paris climate agreement, while embracing coercive bilateral deal-making, such as his effort to control Ukraine’s endowment of critical minerals.

The US appears eager to turn even Europe, its closest partner, into an enemy, potentially driving it to pursue deeper engagement with China. In light of its plans to borrow heavily to finance increased defense spending, the European Union might even find itself sharing China’s desire to dethrone the dollar as the leading global reserve currency. If the dollar does fall, however, it will be the Trump administration, not Europe or China, that pushed it. Already, Trump’s tariffs are fueling a crisis of confidence in the greenback, reflected in rising yields for US Treasuries.

For years, commentators have been fretting about the so-called Thucydides Trap: When an incumbent hegemon (the US) fears a rising challenger (China), war becomes inevitable. But Trump has now turned the concept on its head. Far from fighting to uphold the system that it leads, the US is taking a wrecking ball to it. China just needs to sit back and watch.

- By Arrangement with the Project Syndicate

Shlomo Ben-Ami is author of *Prophets Without Honor: The 2000 Camp David Summit and the End of the Two-State Solution* (Oxford University Press, 2022).



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Kashmir's Culinary Controversy is Unpalatable

I’m writing to express my concern regarding a recent advertisement published by The Lalit Grand Palace Hotel, Srinagar, in a leading local daily. The advertisement caused considerable distress among members of the local community. Given the religious and cultural context of Kashmir, where the majority of people follow Islam—a faith in which the consumption of pork is strictly prohibited—such a move reflects a lack of sensitivity toward the region’s deeply held beliefs and traditions.

Although the hotel later withdrew the advertisement, the fact that

it was published in the first place has raised serious questions about the awareness and responsibility of institutions operating in culturally sensitive regions. The retraction, while necessary and appreciated, came only after public discomfort had already been registered. This sequence of events could have been avoided with a more thoughtful and respectful approach in the first place.

Religious values are not just private beliefs; they shape the public and social fabric of our society. In Islam, pork is considered impure and its consumption is expressly forbidden. This prohibition is not a

matter of personal preference but a foundational aspect of the faith. Publicly promoting pork in a Muslim-majority region, therefore, is not just a marketing misstep, it is a disregard for the sentiments of the local population.

India is a country celebrated for its diversity, but that diversity brings with it the responsibility of mutual respect. In many parts of India, laws and customs are shaped to accommodate and honor the sentiments of local communities. Just as some states have laws respecting the Hindu community’s reverence for cows, it is only fair and just that simi-

lar sensitivity is shown to Muslim beliefs in regions like Kashmir.

I hope this incident encourages greater mindfulness in the future. Businesses and institutions must operate with cultural awareness and sensitivity, especially in diverse societies. Respect for religious sentiments is essential for fostering mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Sincerely,  
Faizan Mushtaq

## The Spy's Shadow Over 370



An ex-intelligence chief's revelation about secret political backing for Article 370's abrogation puts Kashmir's oldest party in the crosshairs of public anger and historical reckoning.

Ragif Makhdoomi

The political discourse in Jammu and Kashmir has entered yet another phase of disillusionment. In a recent media interview tied to the release of his new book *The Chief Minister and The Spy*, former RAW chief A.S. Dulat dropped a bombshell: Farooq Abdullah, the patriarch of the National Conference (NC), had "secretly backed" the abrogation of Article 370.

It's the kind of statement that could be dismissed as political sensationalism, except Dulat backs it with detail. On page 208 of the book, he writes that Farooq told him in 2020, "Maybe the NC could even have had the proposal passed in the legislative Assembly in Jammu and Kashmir. 'We would have helped,' he told me. 'Why were we not taken into confidence?'" The passage landed like a thunderclap in a region still reeling from the constitutional move of August 5, 2019.

The NC quickly denied the claim, but for many Kashmiris, Dulat only confirmed what they had long suspected: betrayal from within.

The recent election campaign led by Aga Ruhullah Mehdi revived public hope. The NC had promised that the first business of the Assembly would be to pass a resolution opposing the abrogation of Article 370. But when the legislative agenda was released, the resolution was missing. It was PDP MLA Waheed ur Rehman Parra who introduced one, only to be shut down by the Speaker under the bizarre pretext that he couldn't hear it amid the noise.

Yet visuals from the session showed the Speaker calmly reading the reso-

lution. When social media outrage followed, the Assembly scrambled to introduce a watered-down version the next day. It made no mention of August 5, 2019. It didn't condemn the revocation. It was a resolution in name only.

The confusion deepened when the Congress's state president, an NC ally, emerged from the session and claimed the resolution was about restoring statehood, not Article 370. Public rage only intensified. While some NC MLAs attempted damage control on social media, their explanations fell flat. Even Aga Ruhullah later distanced himself from the language of the resolution.

Then came Omar Abdullah's curious praise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, adding fuel to the fire. His remark, "There are no clouds in the sky," struck many as tone-deaf and ill-timed. The party's attempt to deflect blame onto the PDP was undone by Dulat's revelation, and by history.

This isn't the first time the Abdullahs have traded principle for power. L.K. Advani, in his memoir, recalls how Farooq gave up autonomy in exchange for a cabinet berth in the Vajpayee government. The legacy goes even further back, to Sheikh Abdullah's own compromises. The writing is on the wall. The betrayal didn't begin on August 5, 2019. That was merely the final signature on a deal decades in the making.

*The author is a law student and rights activist based out of Kashmir. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.*

# When a Spy Becomes a Friend

The friendship between Farooq Abdullah and A. S. Dulat reveals something deeper about the way politics and power work behind the scenes.

Ashish Gupta

In Kashmir, very little stays secret for long. But one story that has always puzzled people here is the strange and steady friendship between Dr Farooq Abdullah, the National Conference patriarch and A. S. Dulat, the former head of India's spy agency, RAW.

Their friendship is not new. It goes back to the 1990s, a time when Kashmir was caught in a storm of violence, fear and broken trust. Dulat was deputed by Delhi to try and understand the ground situation. But he did more than just observe. He started to build relationships. And the one he built with Farooq Abdullah became more than just a working connection.

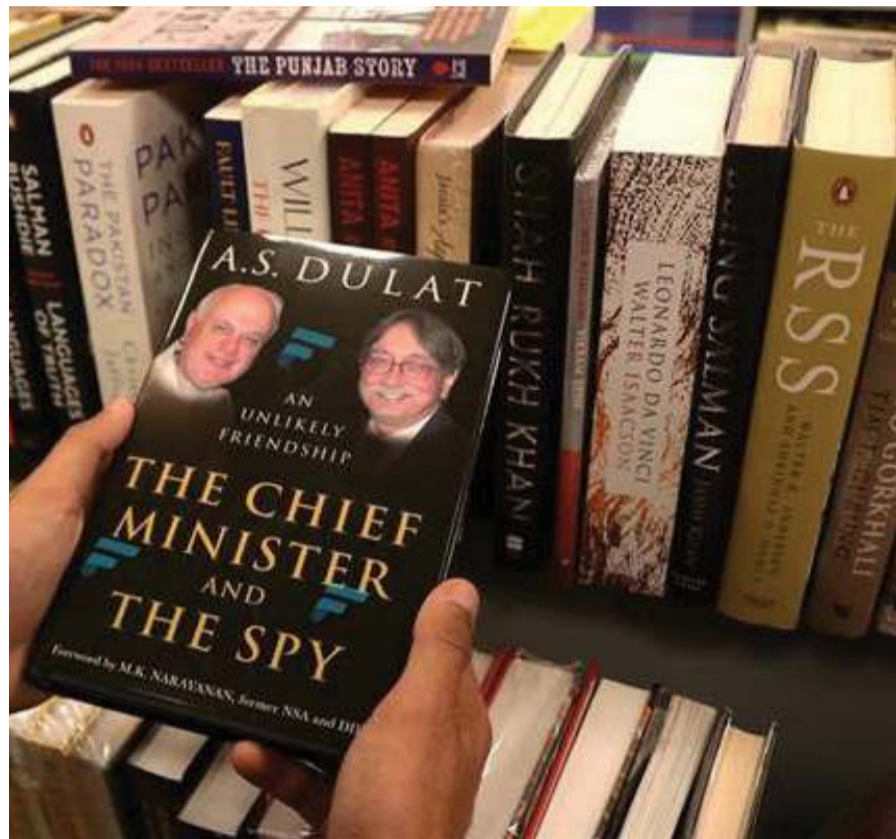
They met often, spoke freely, and even laughed in each other's company. In his books, Dulat talks about how much he enjoyed Farooq's company. He calls him a man of charm, jokes and sharp thinking. Farooq, on his part, never denied the closeness. He welcomed Dulat into his home, even during times when others were not allowed in.

For many people in Kashmir, this closeness was hard to digest. Dulat was, after all, a spy. He was part of the system that many Kashmiris see as responsible for their pain. So why was the leader of Kashmir's oldest political party so friendly with him?

Some say Farooq trusted Dulat more than he trusted many Delhi politicians. Others believe Dulat was the only one who really listened. There are stories—now told openly—of late-night calls, quiet visits, and advice given when the National Conference was facing trouble. At times, it felt like Dulat was part of the party's kitchen cabinet.

This has not aged well. Today, people ask: what was really going on? Was this friendship just personal? Or did it affect political decisions? Did it help Delhi keep control of Kashmir through soft influence?

Dulat always says he believed in peace, and that the only way forward in Kashmir was



through dialogue. He says he never hid his friendship with Farooq, because it was based on mutual respect. That may be true. But in a place like Kashmir, where wounds run deep and history is full of shadows, even friendship can look suspicious.

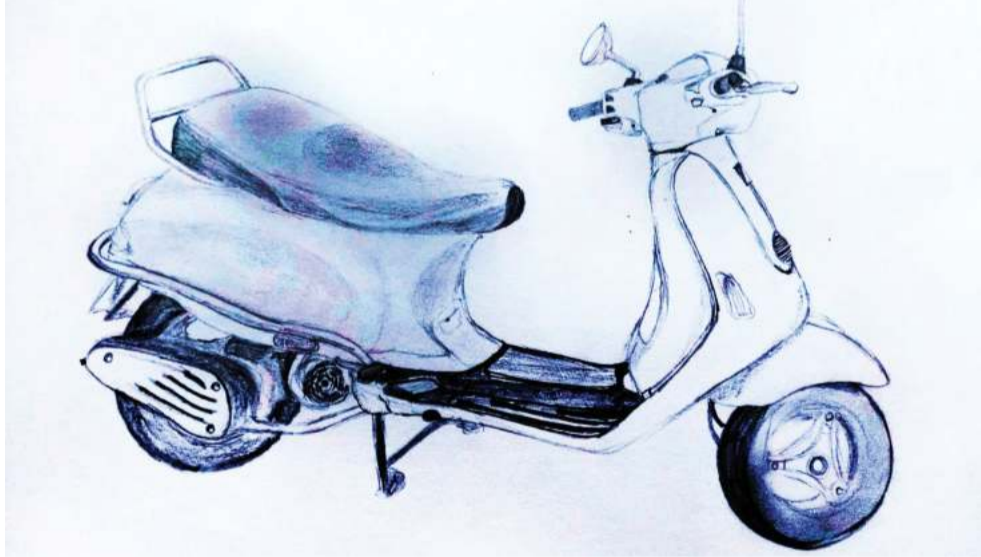
Farooq has always been a survivor. He knows how to shift his stand, how to play the crowd, and how to keep doors open on both sides. That's part of his charm—and part of the reason why people don't fully trust him. His friendship with Dulat adds to that doubt.

The story of Farooq and Dulat is not just about two old men who liked each other's company. It is about the quiet ways in which power moves. It is about the blurred lines between personal and political. And it is a reminder that in Kashmir, even friendship is never simple.

*- The author is a Delhi-based Political Science scholar. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.*

## Rs 1000 and a Wake-up Call

In Srinagar, flouting traffic laws has long been routine until technology made it harder to hide.



Aisha Hasnain

I knew we were in trouble the moment I saw that blue uniform. The traffic cop was glued to his phone, but it wasn't for scrolling Instagram – he was taking pictures. A moment later, my brother confirmed it: "He booked us with a chalan."

And just like that, our idyllic plan to breathe in the spring air at Badam Vaer turned into a thousand-rupee setback. My brother got the message: Pillion rider without crash helmet. Fine; Rs 1000. Section 129 of the Motor Vehicles Act had officially ruined my mood.

Yes, I knew the rules had tightened in the Valley. My brother had even reminded me to wear a helmet. But I struggle with severe anxiety – the weight of a helmet on my head or anything tight around my neck makes me feel like I'm suffocating. So, I carried it in my hand, hoping I could throw it on if we spotted a cop in time. But who can outrun technology these days?

In Kashmir, bending traffic rules has been second nature. Growing up, there were rarely zebra crossings. Cars never paused for pedestrians. We crossed roads like dodging bullets – pure instinct. It's not that we're lawless; it's more that the law never felt real. I'd call it a mutual understanding between drivers and traffic police. I even owe part of my education to this un-

spoken system. Back in 2017, when my mental health made hostel life impossible, I convinced my father to get me a scooter. No license. No number plate. No helmet. But I rode to class every day, guilt wrapped around me like a shawl. It was wrong, yes. But I told myself: this was about a girl's education. That scooter was my ticket to independence.

Ironically, it was only after Mr Basant Rath became IG of Traffic that things changed. He brought a level of discipline we weren't ready for – and we both hated and admired him for it.

Now, enforcement is smarter, quicker. A phone camera is enough to book you. Still, some lessons come with grace. Once, I jumped a red light after a long day of tuition, assuming it was harmless. A man, old enough to be my father, gently pulled up beside me and said, "My dear, don't break signals." I never did again.

So yes, I got fined. But the photo – me in shades, peeking from behind my brother, helmetless – is kind of iconic. "A thousand bucks for a memory," I joked.

Maybe that's how Kashmir changes – not all at once, but in small, personal reckonings. And maybe, just maybe, that traffic cop's photo was exactly what I needed.

*- The author can be reached at aishahasnain02@gmail.com.*

## Kashmiri Volunteer's Mission Medicine

After years of volunteering in hospitals, a Srinagar Samaritan has opened a discount pharmacy — and a lifeline for those who can't afford treatment.

Ansar Hussain Dar

In a quiet corner of Baghat, Srinagar, far from the chaos of hospital corridors, a modest medical store is trying to do something unusual – put care before commerce.

At Qadri Haq Medicate, the man behind the counter, Sheikh Tassaduk Amin, knows most of his customers by name. He knows which ones are battling cancer, whose dialysis is due next week, and who's struggling to pay for their monthly prescriptions. Every customer gets an 18 percent discount – no paperwork, no proof of poverty. "It's simple," he says. "People are sick. They need help. We do what we can."

But this shop isn't just about discounts. It's the next chapter in a story that began nearly a decade ago – when Tassaduk, now in his thirties, saw his own father wrestle with liver disease. The struggle to manage medications, the endless waiting in hospital lines – it stayed with him. His father survived. The experience changed his son.

In 2016, during one of the most violent summers Kashmir has seen, Tassaduk stepped up. As protests erupted and hospitals overflowed with the injured, he joined a local volunteer group called Help Poor and camped inside Srinagar's main hospital for weeks. While others ran for cover, he stayed – fetching medicines, coordinating care, comforting patients' families. He wasn't a doctor, but he was often the one people turned to when doctors weren't around.

"It was chaos," he remembers. "But in that chaos, I found my calling."

Since then, Tassaduk has become a familiar face in Kashmir's shadow



healthcare network – a volunteer who shows up when systems fall short. Need a blood donor at midnight? He'll find one. Can't afford a scan? He'll try to arrange it. Life-saving drugs like chemotherapy injections or immunosuppressants aren't available in his shop yet, but through his work with Help Poor, he helps desperate families source them from wherever possible – Delhi, Amritsar, even Mumbai.

"We get calls from everywhere," he says. "People hear there's someone in Srinagar who can help. That's enough for me."

He's hoping to eventually stock those high-cost, critical medicines at his store – not just to sell them, but to make them more accessible, especially for poor and terminally ill patients who often have nowhere else to turn. "We're working on it,"

he says. "It'll take time. But we'll get there."

The store itself is small – just enough room for a counter, shelves, and a few waiting chairs. But it's the tone that sets it apart. There's no upselling. Just quiet service and a phone that doesn't stop ringing.

For Tassaduk, this is more than business. It's personal. It's about the people he's met in hospital wards, the families he's sat with during endless waits, the patients who whisper "thank you" even when the help is small.

In a place where healthcare often feels out of reach, Tassaduk Amin is doing what the system can't – showing up, sticking around, and reminding people that compassion still has a place behind the counter.

*- The author is a staffer at Kashmir Observer.*

# 'No Evidence Technology Causes ‘Digital Dementia’ In Older Adults'

## The Conversation

In the 21st century, digital technology has changed many aspects of our lives. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is the latest newcomer, with chatbots and other AI tools changing how we learn and creating considerable philosophical and legal challenges regarding what it means to "outsource thinking".

But the emergence of technology that changes the way we live is not a new issue. The change from analogue to digital technology began around the 1960s and this "digital revolution" is what brought us the internet. An entire generation of people who lived and worked through this evolution are now entering their early 80s.

So what can we learn from them about the impact of technology on the ageing brain? A comprehensive

new study from researchers at the University of Texas and Baylor University in the United States provides important answers.

Published today in Nature Human Behaviour, it found no supporting evidence for the "digital dementia" hypothesis. In fact, it found the use of computers, smartphones and the internet among people over 50 might actually be associated with lower rates of cognitive decline.

### What is 'digital dementia'?

Much has been written about the potential negative impact from technology on the human brain.

According to the "digital dementia" hypothesis introduced by German neuroscientist and psychiatrist Manfred Spitzer in 2012, increased use of digital devices has resulted in an over-reliance on technology. In turn, this has weakened our overall cognitive ability.

Three areas of concern regarding the use of technology have previously been noted:

An increase in passive screen time. This refers to technology use which does not require significant thought or participation, such as watching TV or scrolling social media.

Offloading cognitive abilities to technology, such as no longer memorising phone numbers because they are kept in our contact list. Increased susceptibility to distraction.

### Why is this new study important?

We know technology can impact how our brain develops. But the effect of technology on how our brain ages is less understood.

This new study by neuropsychologists Jared Benge and Michael Scullin is important because it examines the impact of technology on older people who have experienced



significant changes in the way they use technology across their life.

The new study performed what is known as a meta-analysis where the results of many previous studies are combined. The authors

searched for studies examining technology use in people aged over 50 and examined the association with cognitive decline or dementia. They found 57 studies which included data from more than 411,000

adults. The included studies measured cognitive decline based on lower performance on cognitive tests or a diagnosis of dementia

### A reduced risk of cognitive decline

Overall, the study found greater use of technology was associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline. Statistical tests were used to determine the "odds" of having cognitive decline based on exposure to technology. An odds ratio under 1 indicates a reduced risk from exposure and the combined odds ratio in this study was 0.42. This means higher use of technology was associated with a 58% risk reduction for cognitive decline.

This benefit was found even when the effect of other things known to contribute to cognitive decline, such as socioeconomic status and other health factors, were accounted for.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified that I, Syed Zulufkar Aziz Andrabi, S/o Syed Ab. Aziz Andrabi, Resident of Baghati Kanipora (B.K. PORA), Momin Abad Colony Sector - A, previously have wrongly mentioned father's name in the school records of my children as Syed Zulufkar Andrabi, which needed to be corrected as SYED ZULUFKAR AZIZ ANDRABI in the Delhi Public School Budgam records of my children mentioned below:

S. No.	Name of the ward	Class	Previously written as Fathers name	Corrected Fathers name
1	Syed Momin Andrabi	9th./F	Syed Zulufkar Andrabi	Syed Zulufkar Aziz Andrabi
2	Syed Zulkifal Andrabi	8th./A	-do-	-do-
3	Syed Khairun Nissa Andrabi	1st./B	-do-	-do-

If anyone has any objections to this inclusion/ modification, they may notify the undersigned or the concerned authorities within seven days of publication of this notice.

inf

## OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE, BANDIPORA

Present: Khalil Ahmad Choudhary

- In the case of:
- Khadija Begum W/o Late Abdul Khaliq Shah
  - Rubeena Begum W/o Ghulam Mohammad Shah
  - Ajaz Ahmad Shah S/o Late gHULAM Mohammad Shah
  - Ulfat Rashid D/o Late Ghulam Mohammad Shah
  - All R/Os of Sumbal Sonawari, District Bpr.

(Petitioner)

V/S  
Public at large

(Respondent)

In the matter of:  
Petition for grant of Succession Certificate with respect to the amount Rs. 10,60,296/-. Whereas the case above titled is sub-judice before this court and through the medium of this newspaper the general public is informed that if any person/ persons has/have any objection to the aforementioned case, they are hereby directed to appear before this court on dated fixed, i.e., 16/04/25, failing which appropriate proceedings will be followed.

Sd/-

fko Principal Distt. Judge, Bandipora

## OFFICE OF THE NAIB TEHSILDAR TILGAM

EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS

Subject:- Issuance of Registration orders in respect of delayed Birth/Death.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The registrar births and deaths (Block Development Officer) Khipora has submitted a case file pertaining to Birth/Death of Aflaq Hamid Lone

S/D/W/O Abdul Hamid Lone R/O Khasgam Tehsil Pattan District Baramulla with verified date of event (Birth/Death) as 04-06-1994 occurred at Home.

In this connection if anybody having objections to the issuance of said registration may contact this office within seven (07) days, after which no objection shall be entertained.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class  
Naib Tehsildar Tilgam

fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have taken a Metlife policy bearing Policy No:- 20306055 on 31-MAR-2010 by the name of Shameema Shabnum while my actual name as per my Aadhar Card is Shameema Mushtaq. Regarding this, If anyone is having any objection he/she may file the same in the office of the METLIFE Department within 7 Days. After that no objection will be submitted.

Media Line Ads

## اطلاع عام

میں نظیر احمد ڈار ولد محمد قاسم ڈار ساکنہ سرانے ڈار محلہ پورہ تحصیل سہیل سوناواری ضلع بانڈی پورہ 1982ء کے آس پاس گورنمنٹ پرائمری اسکول ڈار محلہ پورہ کا طالب علم تھا بد قسمتی سے آج تک میں نے اسکول سے یوم پیدائش سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل نہیں کی کچھ دن پہلے میں نے اسکول میں سرٹیفکیٹ کے لیے درخواست درج کی تھی لیکن وہاں پر اناریکارڈ ملنے کی وجہ سے میرا کوئی ریکارڈ موجود نہیں ہے اب پڑھیے اخبار میں ہر خاص و عام تک یہ پیغام پہنچانا چاہتا ہوں کہ اگر میری یوم پیدائش پر کسی کو شک ہے تو وہ سات دنوں کے اندر اندر اپنی شکایت درج کرے سات دنوں کے بعد کوئی شکایت قابل قبول نہیں ہوگی۔  
عرض نیاز  
نظیر احمد ڈار ولد محمد قاسم ڈار۔

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

## Office of The Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Shadipora

Email: midshadipora@gmail.com

## NOTICE

INVITINGTENDER

Short terme-NITNo.02 of 2025-26.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Shadipora, invites tenders by e-tendering mode in single cover system on **percentage rate basis**. Registered Experienced Mechanical workshop holders/Firms/contractors/SSI unit holders are eligible for below mentioned works.

S. No.	Name of work	Estt. Cost( Rs.)	Cost of T/Doc. (inRs.)	Earnestmoney@2% in the shape of CDR/FDR	Tech. Sanction	Time of Completion	M.H f Account
01	Shifting and realigning of 150mm dia. MS rising main pipe at Lift Irrigation Scheme Tube well Ikhwonpora of MISD Shadipora.	88200.00	50.00	1764.00	02 of 2025-26	07 days	2702 (M&E)

### Position of funds: Demanded

#### Key Dates of the Tender

The Bidding documents consisting of specifications, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (BOQ) and other details can be seen/downloaded from the official website [www.iktenders.gov.in](http://www.iktenders.gov.in) as per the schedule given below:

a.	Date of Publishing of Tender Notice	16/04/2025	(1500 Hours)
c.	Bid Submission Start Date	16/04/2025	(1500 Hours)
d.	Bid Submission End Date	22/04/2025	(1500 Hours)
e.	Date & time of opening of Bids	23/04/2025 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer MID Shadipora	
f.	Submission of performance security(PS)	i)The successful bidder has to provide@3%performance security of estimated amount within seven days after opening of tender.	

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document (Non- Refundable/Non- transferrable) to be deposited under MH: 0702-Rev. Misc. in shape of Treasury Challan/ receipt or e-Challan to be pledged in favor of the Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Division Shadipora.

- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of Price bids. Any information regarding the tenders can be had from this office on all working days  
Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website <http://iktenders.gov.in>

No: MIDSh/Ts/80-85

DIPK-487/25 Dated: 17-04-2025

Sd/- Executive Engineer Mech.  
Irrigation Division Shadipora

## Eating Almonds Daily Can Help Control Blood Sugar In Asian Indians: Study

### Press Trust Of India

Consuming almonds daily can help control blood sugar levels in specific populations, such as Asian Indians, according to a research article.

Analysing previously published research on almonds and cardio-metabolic health, an international team of researchers and physicians said almonds can help improve metabolic health by reducing 'bad' cholesterol and increasing beneficial gut bacteria.

Findings, published as a consensus article in the journal Current Developments in Nutrition, reinforce almonds' role as a heart-healthy, weight-supporting, and gut-friendly food, the team said.

The findings also reveal how almonds can potentially benefit specific populations such as Asian Indians, where rising rates of cardio-metabolic diseases are a concern, study author Dr Anoop Misra, chairman of Fortis Centre for Diabetes, Obesity and

Cholesterol, told PTI.

Consuming almonds was found to lower LDL, or 'bad' cholesterol by five units, and diastolic blood pressure in small but significant amounts of 0.17-1.3 mmHg.

For Asian Indians with pre-diabetes, eating almonds daily can help reduce fasting blood glucose and HbA1C, the researchers said.

"The most current meta-analyses on almond consumption and various health-related endpoints suggest that almond consumption does not result in weight gain and results in small reductions in LDL cholesterol and diastolic blood pressure, as well as improved glycemic responses in certain populations (i.e. Asian Indians)," the study said.

Dr Misra said, "These benefits aid weight loss efforts by helping stabilise energy levels and reduce appetite fluctuations. When paired with balanced nutrition and physical activity, almonds can be a health-promoting part of a weight loss plan."

# Dignified Farewell

## Transforming Kashmir's Final Rides

In Kashmir, it is a painful irony that the departed, who leave behind a lifetime of earnings, are often transported to their final resting place in load carriers – vehicles they would never have used for commuting while alive. This stark contrast raises a profound question: shouldn't every soul be granted a dignified farewell, just as they lived with dignity? It is time to ensure that the last journey of our loved ones reflects the respect and honor they deserve. Since launching a dedicated funeral service in Islamabad in 2014, Mother Helpage now invites you to donate generously to provide these services for Srinagar, Budgam, and Baramulla.



**Mother Helpage**  
INDIA

## Donate Now!



UPI ID: JKMERCH0665758202@UB

- Account Name: **Mother Helpage**
- Ac Number : **0472010100001092**
- IFSC : **JAKA0SAADIQ**
- Branch: **Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd, Sadiqabad, Anantnag.**

For queries call

**Farooq A Ashai** (Coordinator)

Ph: +91 788-9402837

Email : [farooq.ashai@motherhelpage.org](mailto:farooq.ashai@motherhelpage.org)

Trade Recalibrations Worrisome; India Will Focus On Policy Agility, Long-Term Vision: FM



Press Trust Of India  
**MUMBAI-** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said India will focus on policy agility and long-term vision to navigate the global challenges amid ongoing trade recalibrations worldwide.

The intensification of tariff wars and the rise of protectionist policies have the potential to disrupt global supply chains, increase production costs and create uncertainty in investment decisions across borders, she said while speaking at an event to mark stock bourse BSE's 150th anniversary.

"India is confident...we will navigate these global disruptions with policy agility and long-term vision.

"The recalibration efforts on trade are very challenging...it is worrisome, but also very challenging," she said.

The world is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, she said, pointing out that India stands firm in this environment with its strong macroeconomic fundamentals.

The country offers investors policy stability, growth, prudent macroeconomic policies and democratic institutions, she noted.

"The most effective path" for building economic resilience is to foster domestic efficiencies and competitiveness, Sitharaman said.

The government's focus remains firmly on building a robust domestic foundation through infrastructure development, inclusive growth and deeper regional cooperation, she added.

Acknowledging that the financial markets have been impacted as a result of the trade recalibration, she said India's financial markets have shown remarkable resilience despite recent global uncertainties.

Stock markets globally have faced turmoil ever since US President Donald Trump announced sweeping tariffs on most nations, including India, earlier this month. The markets recovered some ground after the US government announced a 90-day pause on the implementation of the reciprocal tariff.

Domestic institutional investors transition from lending a supportive hand to being a dominant force underlines the growing maturity and depth of India's capital market, she said.

The finance minister said she appreciates how the retail investors have placed their faith in the markets today, and the role played by women and youth in particular, but warned that any small omission or commission will shatter this newfound faith in the markets.

China Says In Working Level Communication With US Over Tariff War

Press Trust Of India

**BEIJING-** China on Thursday said it is in "working-level communication" with the US on the deadlock over their high-intensity tariff war but asserted that the person who "tied the bell" should untie it.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson He Yongqian was reacting to a jibe from US President Donald Trump, who was quoted as saying, "The ball is in China's court, and China needs to make a deal with us."

In response, the Chinese spokesperson quoted a proverb, saying, "The person who tied the bell must be the one who unties it."

Analysts here said talks between the two countries will be held at official levels before any dialogue between top leaders.

In response to a question, spokesperson He told the media briefing here that the ministry has been always maintaining working-level communication with its US counterparts.

While expressing Beijing's willingness for talks He, however said, "We urge the US to



immediately stop its maximum pressure tactics, coercion, and blackmail, and resolve differences through equal dialogue based on mutual respect".

China on Wednesday appointed Li Chenggang, previously China's Ambassador at World Trade Organisation (WTO) as its new international trade representative signalling its intentions to open a dialogue with the US to discuss massive tit for tat tariffs slapped against each other.

A fact sheet on tariffs by the White House on Tuesday said China now faces up to a 245 per cent tariff on imports to the US as a result of Beijing's retaliatory actions of imposing 125 per cent levies against US imports.

Gold Rises Rs 70 To Hit A Fresh Peak Of Rs 98,170/10g In Delhi Amid Firm Global Cues

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** Gold prices rose by Rs 70 to hit yet another record high of Rs 98,170 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid firm global demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

On Wednesday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity soared by Rs 1,650 to hit an all-time high of Rs 98,100 per 10 grams.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 70 to touch a fresh peak of Rs 97,720 per 10 grams against Wednesday's closing level of Rs 97,650 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices soared to record highs, fuelled by a weaker dollar, escalating trade war tensions, and growing concerns over global economic growth following US President Donald Trump's tariff announcements," Chintan Mehta, Chief Executive Officer at Abans Financial Services, said.

He said gold prices continue to surge as global uncertainty persists, with the US-China trade war disrupting supply chains and stoking fears of inflation and recession. As markets grapple with these risks, volatility remains elevated, reinforcing gold's role as a reliable hedge.

"Adding to the bullish sentiment, major banks have turned increasingly



positive on gold, pointing to broad-based sell-offs in equities, bonds, and currencies, alongside steady inflows into gold-backed ETFs and sustained central bank buying, Mehta added.

However, silver prices plunged by Rs 1,400 to Rs 98,000 per kg. The white metal had settled at Rs 99,400 per kg in the previous market close.

Meanwhile, spot gold rose to touch a record high of USD 3,357.81 per ounce in the overseas markets. Later, it pared all its gains to trade at USD 3,328.84 per ounce.

"Gold extended gains, hitting a fresh all-time high... after the US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell warned that uncertainty over US trade policy could weigh on the economy, dampening

global risk appetite," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

Spot silver in the Asian market hours fell 1.37 per cent to USD 32.32 per ounce.

According to HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saamil Gandhi, investors are now looking for US macroeconomic data, including initial jobless claims, and the Philadelphia Fed manufacturing number to be released later on Thursday.

Apart from this, market participants will also be awaiting the European Central Bank's (ECB) policy decision later in the day for further impetus on the interest rate cycle, amid tariff worries from the US, Gandhi said.

**GOLD PRICES SOARED TO RECORD HIGHS, fuelled by a weaker dollar, escalating trade war tensions, and growing concerns over global economic growth following US President Donald Trump's tariff announcements"**

Rupee Sheds US Tariff Impact; Ends 26 Paise Higher At 85.38 Against US Dollar

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI-** The rupee strengthened for the fourth consecutive session and closed 26 paise higher at 85.38 against the US dollar on Thursday, hitting the April 3 closing level, on the back of foreign fund inflows in domestic equities and broad weakness in the greenback.

The unit has pared all its losses since April 2, when US President Donald Trump announced sweeping reciprocal tariffs on multiple countries. On April 2, the rupee was quoted at 85.52 against the US dollar.

According to forex traders, a positive trend in domestic equities following a reprieve from the US tariffs boosted overall investor sentiment even though some recovery in crude prices weighed down on the Indian currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.48 and moved between the high of 85.31 and the low of 85.62 against the greenback during intraday. The unit ended the session at 85.38 against the dollar, logging



ing a gain of 26 paise from its previous closing level.

The rupee closed Wednesday's session with a gain of 16 paise at 85.64 against the dollar.

In the preceding four sessions, the Indian currency has added 130 paise, or over 1.5 per cent, since its April 9 closing mark of 86.68 against the greenback.

The Indian currency witnessed one of the most substantial weekly appreciation fueled by an influx of overseas capital and a prevailing appetite for risk, said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

"Fiscal spheres are responding favorably to developments concerning trade between the United States and China, while the 'China plus one' di-

versification tactic potentially help India. A redirection of investment from the US-China axis towards Indian markets appears plausible following prior years of asset disposals," Parmar said.

In the near-term, spot US-DINR has support at 85.20 and resistance at 85.72, he added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading marginally lower by 0.09 per cent at 99.29.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.21 per cent to USD 66.65 per barrel in futures trade.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee gained on surge in the domestic equities and FII inflows.

However, importer buying of dollars and recovery in crude oil prices may cap sharp gains, he said, adding "Traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims and housing data from the US. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.20 to 85.70."



Markets Surge For 4th Day; Sensex Reclaims 78k-Level

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI-** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 2 per cent on Thursday, registering their fourth day of rally as investors turned buoyant after foreign investors returned to domestic equities amid expectations of a breakthrough in US-Japan trade negotiations over reciprocal tariffs.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,508.91 points or 1.96 per cent to reclaim the 78,000 level. It finally settled at 78,553.20. During the day, it soared 1,572.48 points or 2.04 per cent to 78,616.77.

As many as 2,427 stocks advanced while 1,522 declined and 157 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty surged 414.45 points or 1.77 per cent to 23,851.65. In four days, the BSE benchmark jumped 4,706.05 points or 6.37 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,452.5 points or 6.48 per cent.

"Benchmark indices posted sharp gains on Thursday to end the week on a high note, posting four consecutive sessions of gains. Broader Mid and Small caps also closed higher.

"Markets opened lower on weak global cues after sharp overnight losses in US indices. After initial jitters, markets quickly bounced back to steadily climb higher throughout the day as the focus shifted to domestic factors and ongoing earnings. Banks continued to drive the benchmarks higher with private lenders leading the gains ahead of the earnings announcements," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

From the Sensex firms, Eternal, ICICI Bank, Bharti Air-

tel, Sun Pharma, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Reliance Industries were among the biggest gainers. On the other hand, Tech Mahindra and Maruti were the laggards.

The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.56 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.52 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended higher. Bankex jumped 2.56 per cent, telecommunication (2.22 per cent), financial services (2 per cent), services (1.47 per cent), teck (1.19 per cent), energy (1.13 per cent), auto (1.01 per cent) and healthcare (0.91 per cent).

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 3,936.42 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. On Tuesday, FIIs bought equities for Rs 6,065.78 crore.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index, Tokyo's Nikkei 225, Shanghai SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled higher.

European markets were trading in the negative territory.

US markets ended significantly lower on Wednesday.

Investors are expecting positive outcomes from ongoing negotiations between the US and Japan on reciprocal tariffs. Both countries are currently engaged in trade talks regarding reciprocal tariffs, aiming to reach a deal as soon as possible.

"A strong rally in large-cap stocks was observed today, primarily driven by financials, amid expectations of improved margins stemming from changes in savings deposit interest rates. Positive sentiment was further supported by a reversal in FII flows, although the sustainability of this trend remains uncertain.

RBI Issues Master Direction Of Deposits, Accounts

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI:** The RBI on Thursday said banks can open/close rupee accounts (non-interest bearing) in the name of their overseas branches or correspondents without prior reference to the central bank.

However, the opening of rupee accounts in the name of branches of Pakistani banks operating outside Pakistan requires specific approval of the Reserve Bank, said the Master Direction - Deposits and Accounts issued by the apex bank.

It further said credit to the account of a non-resident bank is a permitted method of payment to non-residents and is, therefore, subject to the regulations applicable to transfers in foreign currency.

Also Read:SBI passes on RBI rate cut benefit to borrowers, reduces interest rate by 25 bps

The debit to the account of a non-resident bank is in effect an inward remittance in foreign currency, it added.



On funding of accounts of non-resident banks, the RBI said banks may freely purchase foreign currency from their overseas correspondents/branches at ongoing market rates to lay down funds in their accounts for meeting their bonafide needs in India.

However, transactions in the accounts should be closely monitored to ensure that overseas banks do not take a speculative view on the Indian Rupee (INR). Any such instances should be notified to the Reserve Bank.

The RBI also said forward purchase/sale of foreign currencies against the rupee for repatriation/ funding is prohibited.

JKTPO Hosts 2nd District-Level RAMP Awareness Workshop

Observer News Service

**REASI-** The Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) Thursday successfully conducted the second district-level awareness workshop under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme at DC Office, Reasi. The workshop underscored the J&K Government's resolve to build a robust MSME ecosystem and drive inclusive economic growth at the grassroots.

The event was held under the guidance of Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Vikramjit Singh and Managing Director, JKTPO Sudarshan Kumar. It was organized in collaboration with the Grant Thornton-led State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) and District Industries Centre (DIC), Reasi.

General Manager, DIC Reasi Kishor Singh Karoch addressed the participants, emphasizing the vital role of MSMEs in the district's economic development. He encouraged MSME units and stakeholders to actively leverage the RAMP scheme's support mechanisms for enhancing productivity, market access, and institutional linkages.

This workshop is part of a series of outreach programs planned across the Union Territory to build awareness and capacity among MSMEs, stakeholders and implementing agencies under the RAMP initiative.

Jammu and Kashmir has been allotted ₹74.03 crore under the RAMP scheme, comprising ₹66.63 crore from the Central Government and ₹7.40 crore from the UT's contribution. The Department of Industries and Commerce is steering the implementation, with JKTPO serving as the Nodal Agency for seamless coordination and execution.

During the event, the SPIU team delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining the approved interventions under RAMP in J&K. Key highlights included the formalization of MSMEs through Udyam Registration and the strategic packaging and promotion of GI-tagged, ODOP, DEH and other distinctive regional products. The presentation also emphasized cluster development efforts by supporting the creation of producer companies and associations, alongside initiatives like Buyer-Seller Meets (BSMs), Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets (RBSMs), and the launch of the J&K MSMEs Health Clinic.

European Central Bank Cut Interest Rates For Seventh Time In Row

Associated Press

**FRANKFURT-** e European Central Bank cut interest rates Thursday for the seventh time in a row to counter worries about economic growth fuelled by President Donald Trump's tariff onslaught. The bank said in a statement that "the outlook for growth has deteriorated due to rising trade tensions".

It cited "exceptional uncertainty" about the future economic situation, saying future rate decisions would be taken on a meeting by meeting basis. The bank's move should support economic activity in the 20 countries that use the euro currency by making credit more affordable for consumers and businesses.

The bank's rate-setting council decided at a meeting in Frankfurt to lower its benchmark rate by a quarter percentage point to 2.25%. The bank has been steadily cutting rates after raising them sharply to combat an outbreak of inflation from 2022 to 2023.

Now that inflation has fallen, growth worries have taken centre stage. The economy in the 20 countries that use the euro grew a modest 0.2% in the last three months of 2024. Inflation was 2.2% in March, close to the bank's target of 2%.

Borrowers To Benefit From Intro Of 'Blended Interest Rates': Icra

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-**Rating agency Icra on Thursday said borrowers would benefit from the introduction of 'blended interest rates' for co-lending and sourcing arrangements as proposed by the Reserve Bank of India's draft framework.

On April 9, 2025, the RBI came out with a draft framework for co-lending and sourcing arrangements to cover a wide-ranging variety of arrangements among regulated entities (REs), which were not expressly covered in the past.

The draft framework also offered enhanced coverage of all asset segments vis-à-vis only priority sector lending (PSL) in the past.

This draft framework gains prominence given that the size of co-lending transactions have been witnessing robust growth over the past few years, the agency said.

According to the Icra report, the comprehensive scope of the proposed framework is set to provide clarity and guidance on permitted arrangements.

All categories of sourcing and co-lending

arrangements, with certain exceptions, are covered under the draft directions; this would significantly increase clarity for REs and re-shape the way such arrangements currently operate.

"Borrowers to benefit from introduction of 'blended interest rates' as draft directions propose to shift to a blended interest rate, which is calculated as an average rate of interest derived from the interest rates charged by respective funding REs, weighted by their proportionate funding shares," it said.

Under the proposed co-lending arrangements, Icra added that asset classification by the regulated entities shall be applicable at the borrower level.

This implies that if any of the regulated entities classifies their exposure as SMA (Special Mention Account)/NPA (Non-Performing Asset), the same classification shall be applicable to the exposure of other regulated entities as well, it said, adding that this will bring clarity on reporting of asset classification.

"In a nutshell, the draft framework is set to usher in greater operational flexibility for NBFCs but stricter compliance on default loss guarantees (DLGs) and disclosures," Icra said.

# CS led SLSC approves over Rs 300 cr plans for major agri schemes

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired the State Level Steering Committee (SLSC) meeting held regarding approval to the Annual Action Plans (AAP) in favour of major Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented by the Agriculture Production Department in the region.

The meeting besides Principal Secretary, APD, Shailendra Kumar, was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sheetal Nanda; Secretary, Tribal Affairs, Prassana Ramaswamy; Secretary, Planning, Talat Parvez; Secretary, Cooperatives, Babila Rakwal; DG, A&T, Mahesh Dass; DG, Budget, M Sultanand other concerned HoDs of APD.

During the meeting, the department submitted proposed action plan for 2025-26 fiscal under the major flagship schemes like Krishonnati Yojana (KY) and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) to the Chief Secretary led Committee for its approval.

For the Krishonnati Yojana, the sub-schemes focused on seeds, nutrition, digital agriculture and horticulture development. Besides, the department has projected a total financial



requirement of Rs. 20,881.62 lakh, significantly exceeding the Rs. 14,923.00 lakh ceiling conveyed by the Government of India, during the upcoming fiscal.

The sub-components included Agriculture Extension ATMA with an AAP for Rs 2,500.00 lakh. The Agriculture Extension ATMA acts as a platform to integrate agricultural research, extension services and farmers.

For the sub-component of Seeds (SMSP), an action plan of Rs 750.00 Lakhs was submitted for approval. The aim of the plan is to ensure the availability of quality seeds to farmers in a

timely and affordable manner.

Other sub-missions of the scheme included National Food Security & Nutrition Mission (NFSM) with a plan of Rs 875.00 lakh to increase the production of rice, wheat, pulses and coarse cereals through area expansion and productivity enhancement.

Similarly, National Mission on Edible Oils-Oilseeds (NMEO-OS) with an AAP of Rs 312 lakh for 2025-26. This sub-mission aims at increasing domestic production of edible oils by increasing the productivity of oilseeds, promotion of high-yielding oilseed varieties and hybrids.

On the other hand, the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) with an AAP of Rs 11,850.50 lakh aims at enhancing the horticulture production and improve the livelihood of farmers through sustainable practices.

The Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM) had a plan of Rs 4,604.62 lakh to modernize the revenue records and agriculture by using digital technologies to improve the productivity, reduce input costs and enhance farm-level decision-making. It also included development of a unified farmers' database and geo-tagging of assets.

The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) for the Financial Year 2025-26 has a total proposed Annual Action Plan of Rs. 9900.00 lakh. This comes alongside the progressive implementation of the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) across the Union Territory, showcasing a multi-pronged strategy to enhance the agricultural sustainability, mechanization and farmer empowerment.

The Proposed Annual Action Plan under RKVY for 2025-26 included allocations across several key sub-schemes aimed at holistic agricultural development. The major components of the proposed plan included Soil Health and Fertility retaining its original allocation of Rs. 280 lakh, Rained Area Development (Rs. 224 lakh), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) (Rs. 615.20 lakh), Per Drop More Crop (Rs. 1750 lakh), Agriculture Mechanization (Rs. 3141 lakh) and Agroforestry (Rs 116.25 lakh).

These sub-schemes are critical components of the government's broader mission to transform agriculture into a more productive, sustainable and technologically empowered vocation.

## Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development & Panchayati Raj visits Anantnag

Interacts with beneficiaries of flagship Rural Development schemes at Akad Park

ANANTNAG, APRIL 17: A high level delegation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Rural Development and Panchayati Raj led by its Chairman, Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, today visited Anantnag district as part of its nationwide tour to assess the on-ground implementation of centrally sponsored schemes under the Ministries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

The visit focused on evaluating the progress and impact of key rural development initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and the Lakhpati Didi Scheme among others.

The committee held a detailed interaction with scheme beneficiaries at Akad Park, where the citizens from various Panchayats of the district shared their personal experiences. They highlighted how these schemes have transformed their lives. The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the Central Government for launching inclusive and people-centric schemes aimed at

uplifting rural communities.

The beneficiaries also offered suggestions for further improvements in delivery of scheme entitlements at the grassroots level. During the visit, the Committee also inspected several stalls set up by different departments, including the Rural Development Department, highlighting the processes adopted for effective implementation of the schemes. The district and sectoral officers briefed the Committee on achievements, ongoing projects, monitoring mechanisms and innovative practices being adopted to enhance transparency and efficiency.

In addition, the Committee members undertook spot visits to project sites, including infrastructure works completed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and housing units sanctioned under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

While addressing the gathering, members of the Parliamentary Committee reiterated the Government's strong commitment towards welfare of the rural population.

### CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

#### Will Kashmir's Low

low, especially in areas that usually see tens of meters of snow." According to satellite data, many high-altitude regions in Kashmir and the western Himalayas have witnessed significantly less snowfall this season.

This shortfall in snowfall could lead to more than just immediate water shortages. Dr. Rashid highlighted that a reduced snow cover would also result in accelerated glacier melt. "When snow cover is reduced, glaciers lose their protective shield earlier in the season, exposing ice to warmer temperatures, which leads to faster melt rates," he explained. "This poses a long-term risk to the region's water security."

The timing of snowfall is crucial. Dr. Rashid emphasized that snow during the core winter months is vital, as it lasts longer and provides more consistent water flow throughout the year. "Even late snowfall in areas like Gulmarg or Zojila won't compensate for what's been lost earlier in the season," he said. "The snow deficit this year could significantly affect water flow during the peak summer and autumn months."

However, Dr. Rashid said that if western disturbances bring substantial precipitation in the coming months, the region's natural water reservoirs might still hold up.

Meanwhile, officials from the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department have acknowledged the low snowfall but assured that the situation is under control for now. A senior I&FC official stated, "At the moment, our water levels, including those in the Jhelum, are within normal range, and we don't foresee any immediate water shortages. However, if rainfall during March, April, and May is below average, it could lead to problems with drinking water and irrigation."

The official further emphasized that contingency plans are in place to address potential shortages. "We are better prepared this year than last. Last year was difficult, but we managed without major disruptions. Ultimately, it will depend on the weather over the next few weeks."

Adding to the concern, unusually high temperatures this early in the year have further exacerbated the situation. Dr. Rashid pointed out that Srinagar recently reached 30 degrees Celsius, the second-highest temperature recorded this season. "If these temperatures persist, it will accelerate the snowmelt and further deplete glaciers," he said. (inputs from KNO)

#### J&K Issues Advisory

Department (IMD). As per the IMD forecast, temperatures are expected to remain above normal during the coming months of summer, labour commissioner Charandeep Singh said in the advisory. The National Centre for Disease Control under the Union health ministry too has issued an advisory for heat-wave preparedness.

According to the advisory issued by the J&K labour department, immediate action -- particularly preventive measures and awareness creation among the stakeholders -- is imperative in view of the heatwave alert in the union territory.

"It is important to note that the heatwave poses potential occupational health risks to workers, particularly those employed in outdoor and heat-intensive workplaces," Singh said in the advisory.

Keeping in view such health risks, it

is imperative to adhere to the 'dos and don'ts' for safeguarding the health and well-being of the workers engaged in various sectors, he said.

All the assistant labour commissioners have been directed to ensure the implementation of the preventive and mitigative measures across all shops, commercial establishments, factories, brick kilns, construction sites, and other workplaces falling under their respective jurisdictions.

The labour department has called for the enforcement of the following preventive measures:

- \* Employers may be advised to reschedule working hours to avoid exposure to peak heat conditions, especially between 12 noon and 3 pm, wherever feasible.

- \* Employers must ensure uninterrupted availability of safe and cool drinking water at all workplaces.

- \* Employers must provide temporary shaded rest areas at the open work sites and ensure proper ventilation in the closed areas of brick kilns and construction sites.

- \* Employers must generate awareness among the workers on heat stress, its symptoms, and first-aid protocols to address heat-related illnesses.

- \* Employers must promote regular health check-ups, especially for outdoor workers and those in high-heat zones, in coordination with the local health authorities wherever possible.

- \* All work sites must be equipped with basic first-aid facilities, and the supervisors should have access to emergency contact numbers and transportation for medical emergencies.

- \* Employers must provide personal protective equipment, such as hats, caps, sunglasses, etc., to the workers at construction sites, brick kilns, etc., especially those working under the sun.

Also, the assistant labour commissioners have been directed to conduct regular inspections to assess compliance with the preventive measures, and extend guidance to the employers wherever necessary.

#### MET Forecasts Rain,

widespread light to moderate rain in plains and snow in the higher reaches. The Pir Panjal range in Jammu and upper regions of Kashmir--especially Anantnag-Pahalgam, Kulgam, Sinthan Pass, Shopian, Pir Ki Gali, Sonamarg-Zojila, Bandipora-Razdan Pass, Gulmarg, and Kupwara-Sadhma Pass--are expected to receive heavy precipitation.

The advisory warns of strong winds reaching 40-50 kmph, gusting up to 60-70 kmph, along with the possibility of hailstorms and lightning. The adverse weather may cause significant disruption to surface transport, particularly on the Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh National Highways and other major roads in hilly areas.

The Met Centre has also cautioned about risks of landslides, mudslides, shooting stones, and a rise in water levels in rivers and streams. Waterlogging in low-lying areas is also expected. Farmers have been advised to suspend all agricultural operations from April 18 until the afternoon of April 21.

#### Major Reshuffle

(IPS-2008) has been transferred as DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range, replacing Rayees Mohammad Bhat (IPS-2010), who now moves as DIG CID Kashmir.

Sheikh Junaid Mehmood (IPS-2009) has been placed in the awaiting posting list, while Umesh Kumar (IPS-2009)

takes charge as DIG IR Kashmir. Jatinder Singh Johar (IPS-2012), previously AIG Crime & Complaints PHQ, has been appointed as I/c Director, Police Telecommunication.

Sanjeev Kumar Yadav (IPS-2013) has been posted as Commandant 3rd Battalion IR, and Sanjeev Kumar Khajuria (IPS-2014) takes over as Commandant 1st Border Battalion JKAP, replacing Ashok Kumar Sharma.

Among the 2017-batch officers, Tanushree has been transferred to SP SIA Headquarters, and Bisma Qazi has been posted as Commandant 2nd Women Battalion JKAP.

At the district level, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat (IPS-2013) takes over as SSP Anantnag, replacing G. V. Sundee Chakravathy, who has been posted as SSP Srinagar. Amritpal Singh (IPS-2014) becomes Principal PTI Vijaypur, and Ranjit Singh Sambyal (IPS-2013) is now SSP Traffic City Srinagar, replacing Muzaffar Ahmad Shah, who moves to SP Special Crime Wing Kashmir.

Other key IPS-level assignments include:

- Hareesh H. P. (IPS-2017) - AIG Welfare PHQ
- Divya D. (IPS-2018) - SP SIA Kashmir
- Ragav S. (IPS-2018) - SP Tech CID Headquarters

Among JKPS officers, Suhail Munawar Mir (JKPS-1999) has been appointed Commissioner, Civil Military Liaison, while Ramesh Kumar Angral (JKPS-1999) becomes Director Home Guards, Kashmir. Mohammad Arshad (JKPS-1999) takes over as Director Home Guards, Jammu.

Further reshuffles include: Imtiyaz Hussain Mir (JKPS-1999) - Director, Civil Defence & SDRF Kashmir; Mohammad Arif Rishu (JKPS-1999) - Principal STC Talwara; Abdul Waheed Shah (JKPS-1999) - Head, Economic Offences Wing Srinagar

Shamsheer Hussain (JKPS-1999) - Commandant 20th Battalion IR

A series of officers have been shifted across CID, Home Guards, Traffic, and Investigation wings. Notable reshuffles include Ashok Kumar Sharma, Atul Sharma, Randhir Singh, Amit Gupta, Mohd Majid Malik, Javid Iqbal, and Amarjit Singh, who have taken on new command, supervisory, and field roles.

Among the younger JKPS cadre, officers such as Azhar Bashir Baba, Farooq Qesor Malik, Tanweer Ahmad Dar, Zoheb Tanweer, Rayaz Iqbal Tantray, and Mashkoor Ahmad Zargar have been assigned to new district and battalion responsibilities.

Field-level postings have also been reorganized to boost operational presence and intelligence-gathering, with officers like Raj Kumar, Mohd Ibrahim, Raseeq Ahmad Mir, Zulafqar Ahmad, and Shakeel Rehman Bhat repositioned across operations, security, and forensic divisions.

The government emphasized that this comprehensive reshuffle is part of its broader strategy to enhance policing effectiveness, improve public service delivery, and strengthen law and order machinery throughout Jammu and Kashmir.

#### Pak Must Vacate

New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Jammu and Kashmir is a Union Territory of India and dismissed any external claim over it.

"How can anything foreign be in a jugular vein? Jammu and Kashmir is a Union Territory of India. Its only relationship with Pakistan is that the latter

must vacate the territories it continues to occupy illegally," Jaiswal said.

General Munir had recently addressed an event in Pakistan, where he invoked the two-nation theory and linked it to the current situation in Kashmir. He urged citizens to educate their children about the ideological basis of Pakistan's creation, claiming fundamental differences with India.

Jaiswal also used the occasion to raise the issue of Pakistan's continued shelter to individuals accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. He said the recent extradition of Tahawwur Rana from the United States to India serves as a reminder of Pakistan's failure to act against known perpetrators.

He said Rana's extradition highlights the importance of justice for the victims of the attacks. "Pakistan may try very hard, but its reputation as the epicentre of global terrorism will not diminish," Jaiswal added.

He further said that Pakistan must bring all individuals responsible for the Mumbai attacks to justice, naming those still sheltered in Pakistan as a major concern for India's counter-terrorism efforts.

#### SC Gives Centre

seven days. He further states and assures that till the next date of hearing, no appointments will be made to the council and boards under sections 9 and 14 (of the Act)," the bench said.

The bench noted Mehta, appearing for the Centre, has also said that till the next date of hearing, waqf properties, including 'waqf by user' already registered or declared by way of notification, shall not be disturbed and denotified.

"If your lordships will say something about 'waqf by user', what will be the fallout?" Mehta said.

He added, "We, as a government, and Parliament, are answerable to the people."

The CJ said if the registration of any waqf property had taken place under the erstwhile 1995 Act, then those properties can't be denotified till further hearing.

The apex court, while hearing the matter on Wednesday, proposed to stay certain key provisions of the Act, including the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts and inclusion of non-Muslims in central waqf council and boards.

On Thursday, Mehta asked whether the court might consider staying, directly or indirectly, the Act based upon some prima facie or tentative reading of some of the sections.

"If your lordships are going to stay a statutory provision," Mehta said, "it by itself is rare. We will have to take your lordships to the history of legislation, followed by amendment".

He said the government received several representations, which ultimately resulted into the amended Act. Opposing the stay, the law officer referred to certain instances and said private properties were usurped as waqf in several places.

Terming it a "considered piece of legislation", Mehta said the pleas were filed before the Presidential assent and taken immediately by the bench. "We are not deciding the matter finally," the bench said.

Mehta argued staying the provisions of the Act may be a "harsh step" and said the government should be allowed to place its preliminary reply.

"Allow me to place within a week my preliminary reply with some materials, documents and statutes to show," he said, "and in one week,

nothing will change".

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, representing a state government, said "heavens are not going to fall if the interim order is not passed for a week or so".

Mehta further assured of not making appointments in the respective waqf boards even if some of the states were not before the court.

The CJ said, "We don't want the position to change. Parliament makes laws, executive decides and judiciary interprets."

The bench has also decided to hear only five of the total number of pleas before it and titled the case: "In Re: Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025".

About 72 petitions, including those by AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi, All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Anwar Basha former chairman Karnataka State Board of AUQAF represented by advocate Tariq Ahmed, Congress MPs Imran Pratapgarhi and Mohammad Jawed, were filed against the law.

Senior counsel including Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, Huzefa Ahmadi appear for the petitioners in the case.

While appointing three lawyers as the nodal counsel on Thursday, the bench asked the advocates to decide among themselves who was going to argue.

The petitioners were allowed to file their rejoinders to the Centre's reply within five days of the service of the government's response.

"We clarify that the next hearing (May 5) will be for the preliminary objections and for an interim order," the bench said.

The bench said a writ petition challenging the 1995 Waqf Act and the amendment made in 2013 should be separately shown in the causelist.

On Wednesday, the bench was miffed over the inclusion of non-Muslims in the central waqf council and boards and asked the Centre whether it was willing to include Muslims in Hindu religious trusts.

The CJ had proposed to issue the notice and to pass an interim order, saying it will "balance the equities".

Observing some provisions could have "grave ramifications", particularly those that potentially undermine judicially recognised waqf properties, the CJ proposed the order.

"The properties declared as waqfs by the courts should not be de-notified, whether they are by waqf-by-user or waqf by deed while the court is hearing the challenge to the Waqf Amendment Act 2025," he proposed.

"Waqf by user" refers to a practice where a property is recognised as a religious or charitable endowment (waqf) based on its long-term, uninterrupted use for such purposes, even if there isn't a formal, written declaration of waqf by the owner.

The Centre notified the Act which received assent of President on April 5.

#### Omar, Mehbooba Trade

Farooq Sahib did not even go to Parliament (on August 5, 2019). He stayed back. So there is nothing surprising for me," Mufti said while addressing a PDP workers' convention here.

Article 370 granting special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was abrogated by the Centre on August 5, 2019.

Adding to her charges, Mehbooba Mufti also claimed that Omar Abdullah had approached BJP leader

Amit Shah in 2014 for a possible alliance in Jammu and Kashmir. "He told Shah not to go with PDP, but to choose NC unconditionally," she alleged.

Reacting sharply to PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's remarks endorsing Dulat's claims, former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah questioned the credibility of the former spymaster and reminded Mufti of what Dulat had written about her own father, the late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, in an earlier book.

"If Mehbooba Mufti believes everything Dulat writes is true, then should we also consider what he wrote about Mufti's father in his first book as true?" Omar asked during a media interaction.

"If we consider that is true, how can Mehbooba ji make people understand? She should please answer that," he said.

He further criticised Dulat, alleging that it is his habit to exaggerate facts to boost book sales. "With friends like this, who needs enemies?" he added.

The exchange comes just ahead of the release of Dulat's latest book "The Chief Minister and the Spy", scheduled to hit the stands on April 18. The book has already stirred political waters in the region, re-igniting the long-standing debate over the events leading to the abrogation of Article 370 -- a constitutional provision that granted special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### Don't Shield, Report

I say this repeatedly -- Jammu and Kashmir should have only one mantra: 'Do not touch the innocent, but do not spare the guilty'. I repeat no innocent person should be harmed, but the one who has committed the crime must be punished," he said.

#### 'Health For All

infrastructure and invested in essential services to provide timely and appropriate healthcare," he said.

The camps, being held at three different locations -- Associated Hospital of GMC Doda, District Hospital Kishtwar, and Sub District Hospital Baderwah -- will witness super-specialty and general surgeries conducted by specialised doctors across various fields.

"There is a single resolve behind improvement in physical facilities -- to provide better protection to the people during health emergencies and to ensure healthy living and well-being for people of all age groups," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated that, under the guidance of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the J&K Administration has made significant strides in strengthening the healthcare sector.

He said, the entire health system has been sensitized in the last five years to ensure essential healthcare and develop infrastructure for noncommunicable diseases like mental health and psychosocial support in every district. We have been diligently working on key areas such as ensuring availability of Doctors, access to affordable Drugs, enhancing Diagnostics, and improving Delivery Mechanisms, the Lieutenant Governor added.

"I assure you all that promoting safe, healthy and better life will always be the priority of the administration," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor urged the people to identify, isolate and report divisive elements threatening peace and harmony.

# RCB Batters Look To Rise Above PBKS' Spin Challenge Led By Chahal

**Press Trust of India**

**BENGALURU:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru's push for a maiden home victory this season will depend on their batters taming the canny Yuzvendra Chahal in the IPL match against a supremely confident Punjab Kings here on Friday.

Chahal, in the company of off-spinner Glenn Maxwell, will have noticed Bengaluru batters' struggle against slow bowlers R Sai Kishore (2/22, Gujarat Titans), Kuldeep Yadav (2/17) and Vipraj Nigam (2/18, both Delhi Capitals) here, especially once the field was spread out.

Besides, both Chahal and Maxwell will also be armed with their familiarity with the conditions here, courtesy the years spent at the Royal Challengers' dug out.

Theoretically, RCB camp can take a slight consolation from the fact that they batted first against GT and DC and their spinners took full advantage of a no-dew atmosphere.

But Chahal, who returned to form with a four-wicket haul against Kolkata Knight Riders, and Maxwell, assuming that dull form with the bat will not hinder his inclusion in the eleven on Friday, operate aside from the conditions.

Chahal is a master of lengths rather than of magic balls. The leg-spinner lures with offerings wide of off-stump and the batters need to reach out to the ball for big hits, often resulting in catches in the deep.

He also varies his pace quite cleverly, and the batters need to put that extra effort if they want to hit sixes against him.

Maxwell too is a similar operator, relying on control rather than big turn or dippers.

The Aussie has also found some success against right-handers in white ball formats, and that might come handy for Punjab against their opponents whose batting line-up has an array of right-handers.

RCB have their set of spinners



in Krunal Pandya and Suyash Sharma, giving the hosts hopes of trading some punches of their own.

The Punjab outfit also has capable pace options in Arshdeep Singh and Marco Jansen, though not as decorated as Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar in the opposition ranks.

**Captain Patidar vs Captain Shreyas**

On the periphery, Rajat Patidar and Shreyas Iyer have little in common. Iyer has proven credentials, an IPL winning captain with an excellent track record as a batter in this tournament.

Patidar, on the other hand, is a first-time captain in the IPL and does not have a glittering CV as his PBKS counterpart as a batter.

But the dissimilarities end there. They have exuded a reassuring calmness while guiding the team irrespective of outcomes.

Match starts at 7.30 pm. IST.

## Budgam Schools Excel in Zonal Chess & TT Championships



**Observer News Service**

**BUDGAM:** The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam organized Inter-School Zonal-Level Chess and Table Tennis competitions across the district, showcasing young talent and sportsmanship.

In Zone Beerwah, Chess competitions at GMS Beerwah were inaugurated by Zonal Education Planning Officer Ab

Rashid Mogray, with Activity Incharge Mohd Yaseen Jan.

In Zone Hardpanzoo, Girls' chess event at HSS Hardpanzoo began with a Nasha Mukht Bharat pledge. In U-14, Ms. Wachoo won, while in U-17 category, HS Bonzanigam won.

In Zone B.K Pora, Principal Syed Nusrat Andrabi inaugurated chess matches at HSS Khanda, supported by Peer Javaid Hassan PEM. In Zone

Budgam, Chess competitions at Indoor Sports Stadium were inaugurated by PEM Mumtaz.

In Zone Dreygam, Principal Kifayat Hussain of HSS Parnewa inaugurated chess and table tennis events, joined by Incharge Farooq Sajad.

In Zone Nagam, Table Tennis competitions at BHSS Nagam (boys) and GHSS Nagam (girls) were inaugurated by ZPEO Jahan Aara.

## 'Kashmir Youth Have Passion, Need Platform': Irfan Pathan

**Agencies**

**SRINAGAR:** Irfan Pathan highlighted the untapped passion of Kashmir's youth for cricket, calling for consistent opportunities and better infrastructure to help them excel.

Speaking at the launch of EVCL in Srinagar, Pathan expressed his excitement for the upcoming tournament aimed at putting regional talent in the spotlight.

"I've seen it first-hand - a left-arm pacer from Kupwara,

boys from Baramulla... they have the fire. What's missing is exposure and proper training," said Pathan during the press conference in Srinagar.

He said, "We are not just looking for good cricketers, but for those with the hunger and spirit to make it big."

"This is not just a tournament; it is a platform to change lives," Pathan stressed, noting the impact the league could have in providing young cricketers with an opportunity to get noticed and progress

in their careers.

"Many districts still play on matting wickets. Turf wickets are essential if we want to prepare players for national-level competitions," he added.

"I am excited to bring cricket back to Kashmir and showcase the incredible talent that this region holds," Pathan said.

"The people of Kashmir now have the chance to witness live cricket action, and I urge all aspiring cricketers to register for this incredible opportunity." (KNO)

## Epic Victory Cricket League To Begin Inaugural Season In Kashmir

**Observer News Service**

**SRINAGAR:** The Epic Victory Cricket League, a franchise based T20 tournament is set to launch with its first edition of the tournament starting in the month of September.

Launched in Srinagar, on Thursday by former India cricketer Irfan Pathan, the league will include an equal balance of local Indian players with international stars and ex-Ranji cricketers from J&K. The franchise-based tournament, will feature a pool of over 200 players, which will get decided after a month and a half of trials across 20 cities.

"Epic Victory Cricket League is looking forward to bringing cricket to Kashmir once again and showcase the talent that this beautiful and we are very excited to also be playing in Jammu and Kashmir for the inaugural season. This is a huge opportunity for the people of Kashmir to come to the stadium and watch live cricketing action. I urge all the cricketers to register and join the EVCL for the opportunity of a lifetime," said Pathan.

Registrations will begin in the coming week on the official EVCL online portal for the trials held across 20 cities for a duration of 45 days. The trials kick off in Srinagar on June 15 and will conclude in Baraut, Uttar Pradesh, on July 31. Male cricketers from the ages of 17 to 39 are eligible for these trials, which will be held under the watchful eyes of a selection committee consisting of selectors from the state cricketing associations and the apex council of the EVCL.

"This isn't just about another competition. It's about providing a stage to the people who have missed the opportunity for many reasons and showcasing the incredible depth of cricket talent in India," said Vikas Dhaka, League Owner, Epic Victory Cricket League.

The league is set to broadcast on one of the leading OTT platform with coverage in over 7 languages that will include English, Hindi and in a first of its kind, Kashmiri and Dogra to include the vast population of the region.



### Complete Trials Details:

- **Srinagar:** 15/06/2025
- **Jammu:** 20/06/2025
- **Gorakhpur:** 27/06/2025
- **Varanasi:** 29/06/2025
- **Prayagraj:** 1/07/2025
- **Ayodhya:** 3/07/2025
- **Lucknow:** 5/07/2025
- **Azamgarh:** 7/07/2025
- **Kanpur:** 9/07/2025
- **Bareilly:** 11/07/2025
- **Moradabad:** 13/07/2025
- **Aligarh:** 15/07/2025
- **Agra:** 17/07/2025
- **Ghaziabad:** 19/07/2025
- **Meerut:** 21/07/2025
- **Bijnor:** 23/07/2025
- **Saharanpur:** 25/07/2025
- **Shamli:** 27/07/2025
- **Muzaffarnagar:** 29/07/2025
- **Baraut:** 31/07/2025

Cricket League.

The league is set to broadcast on one of the leading OTT platform with coverage in over 7 languages that will include English, Hindi and in a first of its kind, Kashmiri and Dogra to include the vast population of the region.

## Short TAKES

### BCCI Removes Assistant Coach Abhishek Nayar 8 Months In

The Indian cricket team's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar has been sacked just eight months into the assignment amid speculation of a rift with a high-profile member of the support staff even though Test debacles against New Zealand and Australia are being cited as the reason for his ouster.

If board sources are to be believed, Nayar has already been intimidated of the BCCI's decision to part ways with him.

"While India's recent Test debacles (against New Zealand and Australia) has led to the churning but there is also a feeling in the BCCI that Nayar became a scapegoat in the turf war between an important member of the support staff and a senior star player," a BCCI source told PTI.

Fielding coach T Dilip, and Strength and Conditioning coach Soham Desai are also on their way out after completing more than three years in their respective positions.

### DC Bowling Coach Fined 25% Of Match Fee For IPL CoC Breach

Delhi Capitals bowling coach Munaf Patel has been fined 25 percent of his match fee and accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the high-octane game against Rajasthan Royals here.

The match went down to the wire on Wednesday night with DC winning the edge-of-the-seat thriller in a Super Over after both teams were tied at 188 runs.

The former India pacer "admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.20 of the IPL Code of Conduct, which pertains to the conduct that is contrary to the spirit of the game," said an IPL statement.

Munaf, the statement said, had "accepted the Match Referee's sanction".

The statement did not specify Munaf's exact offence but it is likely that he was penalised for his argument with a match official after the former India pacer was not allowed to send a player into the middle to convey his message.

### Barcelona Chasing Treble

Barcelona were down in the dumps on Tuesday after losing for the first time in 2025 in a 3-1 defeat at Borussia Dortmund and it was up to coach Hansi Flick to offer his players some perspective.

Having thrashed last year's finalists 4-0 in the first leg, Barca qualified for the semi-finals with a 5-3 aggregate win and will play Inter Milan in the last four.

"The team has a lot of merit. There is still a long way to go and we are not at the end," he said.

Barcelona will be looking to exact some measure of revenge when they host Celta Vigo after the reverse fixture ended 2-2. Barca were up 2-0 before Marc Casado was sent off and the 10 men conceded two late goals to draw 2-2.

And unlike Real, Barcelona are still in the hunt for a treble in Flick's first season.

"We're still in three competitions. We're in the Champions League semi-final. This is a huge success and we can be happy for that."

### Van Dijk Joins Salah In Signing Two-Year Extension At Liverpool

Virgil van Dijk has joined Mohamed Salah in signing a new contract with Liverpool.

Van Dijk's deal was to expire at the end of the season but the Netherlands center back has penned a new, two-year contract.

"I'm very happy, very proud," Van Dijk told Liverpool's official website on Thursday. "There are so many emotions, obviously, that go through my head right now speaking about it."

"It's a proud feeling, it's a feeling of joy. It's just incredible. The journey I've had so far in my career, to be able to extend it with another two years at this club is amazing and I'm so happy."

A two-year extension for Salah, Liverpool's star forward, was announced last week.

The 33-year-old Van Dijk has proven to be as important a figure for Liverpool as Salah since joining from Southampton at the start of 2018 for \$100 million, a world-record fee for a defender.

## Premier League: Liverpool On Brink Of Title, Leicester & Ipswich Prepare For Drop

**Agencies**

**LONDON:** Liverpool can wrap up a record-equalling 20th English title on Sunday when Leicester City and Ipswich Town are both likely to have their relegation from the Premier League confirmed.

After several nail-biting Premier League title races that went down to the wire, Arne Slot's Liverpool have turned this one into a procession as rivals fell by the wayside.

Despite trailing champions Manchester City and Arsenal early in the campaign, Liverpool have been top for all but one week since Sept. 28 and three points at 19th-placed Leicester could see them join Manchester United as England's most-crowned club. For that to happen, second-placed Arsenal would also have to lose away to third-from-bottom Ipswich.

But whatever the outcome of this weekend's games, Slot looks certain to become only the fifth manager to win the Premier League in his debut season in English football -- the others being Jose Mourinho (Chelsea), Carlo Ancelotti (Chelsea), Manuel Pellegrini (Manchester City) and An-



tonio Conte (Chelsea).

While Liverpool's second Premier League title in six seasons has looked inevitable, so has Leicester's return to the Championship after a woeful campaign.

Leicester snapped an eight-game losing run in the league to draw at Brighton last week but are 17 points behind 17th-placed West Ham United with six games remaining and anything other than a shock win over Liverpool will put them down alongside bottom club Southampton who visit West Ham on Saturday.

Ipswich, who are 14 points

behind West Ham, may hope that Arsenal are still celebrating beating Real Madrid to reach the Champions League semi-finals when they host Mikel Arteta's team at Portman Road on Sunday.

The Suffolk club have at least shown some fight this season but defeat by Arsenal, along with wins for West Ham United and Wolverhampton Wanderers, would mean that for the second season in a row the three promoted clubs go straight back down.

With the issues at the top and the bottom all but decided, the battle for Champions League qual-

ification is at least providing some tension in the closing weeks.

Arsenal look set to qualify, but the five clubs below them are battling for the three other places.

Third-placed Newcastle United (59 points) visit seventh-placed Aston Villa (54) on Saturday while fourth-placed Nottingham Forest (57) are away at Tottenham Hotspur on Monday. Outgoing champions Manchester City (55) are currently hanging on to fifth place but can ill-afford any slip-ups at a rejuvenated Everton on Saturday.

Chelsea (54) have slipped down to sixth place after successive draws and, with a tough-looking run-in, will be desperate for a victory at Fulham on Sunday.

Bournemouth, Fulham and Brighton and Hove Albion are all still harbouring hopes of qualifying for Europe. Bournemouth are at Crystal Palace on Saturday while Brighton visit Brentford.

Fourteenth-placed Manchester United are on course for their worst finish since 1990 and Ruben Amorim's side will seek to snap a three-match winless run in the Premier League as they host Wolves on Sunday.

## Wounded Real Madrid Look For Domestic Success After CL Exit



**Agencies**

As Real Madrid lick their wounds following a humbling Champions League quarter-final exit, coach Carlo Ancelotti must rally his troops as they look to reel in LaLiga leaders Barcelona.

Reigning European champions Real were crushed 5-1 on aggregate by Arsenal without really offering a threat over two legs, a major cause for concern as Real trail Barcelona by four points in LaLiga.

What will worry Ancelotti more is that his side have won one of their last five matches in all competitions -- a 1-0 vic-

tory over relegation-threatened Alaves last weekend.

Kylian Mbappe, Real's top scorer this season with 33 goals in all competitions, saw red in that game and the Frenchman will be suspended for Sunday's home match against Athletic Bilbao, who are fourth in the standings.

Real must hope that Barcelona drop points against Celta Vigo the day before or they will be staring at a seven-point deficit to the leaders before they face Athletic, a team that have lost just once in their last 22 league games and beat them 2-1 in December.

Little wonder then that Ancelotti's job hangs by a thread

ahead of the Copa del Rey final later this month - a Clasico against Barcelona. "It could be this year, next year when my contract runs out (in June 2026)... There's no problem about it," Ancelotti said when asked about his future as Real's manager.

"But when I am done here, I will be grateful to this club. It could be tomorrow, in one year, or in 10 years, but I will be grateful to this club. And that's it, full stop."

"We have done very well in the last seasons but this year we have had to suffer. Things haven't gone as expected, but in sport it happens because there are no unbeatable teams."



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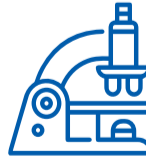
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