

JAMMU UNDER ATTACK

India-Pakistan Tensions Escalate

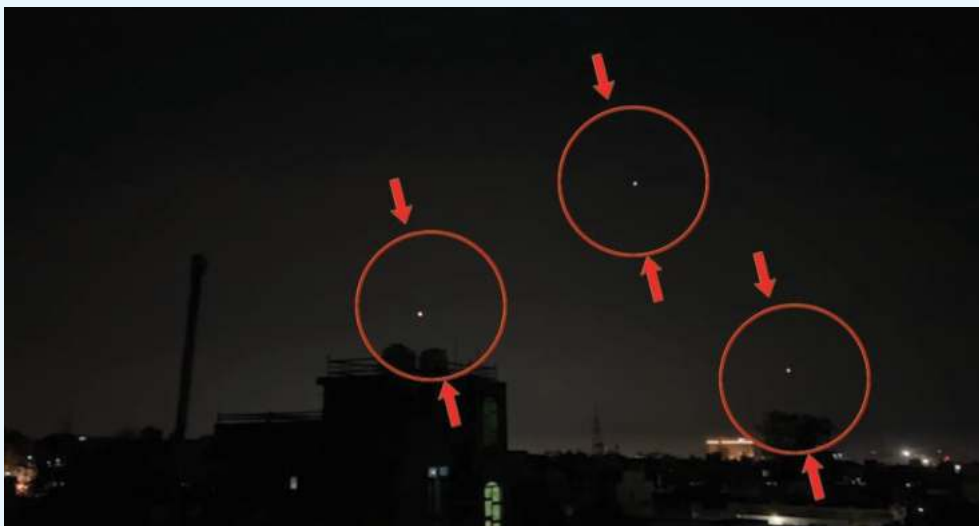
KO Web Desk

Jammu: Pakistan, hours after its foiled attempt to target 15 Indian cities, launched attacks on parts of Jammu and Kashmir in an enormous escalation.

Indian air defence units successfully intercepted at least eight missiles fired by Pakistan towards the border areas of Jammu, including the strategically important Jammu Airport at Satwari on Thursday evening, defence sources said here.

Drawing a parallel to the tactics of the Palestinian Hamas terror group, the sources said all "cheap" rockets directed at the Jammu region were successfully intercepted and neutralised by Air Defence Units.

Shortly before 9 pm, loud explosions were heard from Jammu followed by clamour of sirens and a blackout. The missiles were aimed at key locations, including Satwari



(Jammu Airport), Samba, RS Pura, and Arnia.

The sources said that the Pakistani Army has been operating in a manner akin to a terror organisation like Hamas and referred to a meeting between Pakistan's Inter-Services

Intelligence (ISI) and Hamas operatives in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir last month.

There were also potential sightings of hostile drones along India's western border, which were successfully thwarted.

Electricity Snapped

A sudden power outage plunged Jammu city into darkness following two loud explosions, likely resulting from the interception of intruding drones.

Immediately after, sirens echoed throughout the city, alerting residents to seek shelter.

A blackout was also enforced across the Kashmir Valley, including here, late on Thursday evening, and sirens were heard at a few places, sources said.

As the area plunged into darkness, police asked people to stay home and switch off all lights.

The aerial objects had attempted to strike the strategic Jammu airport and its surrounding areas, which house Army, IAF, and paramilitary installations.

The sources confirmed the activation of air defence protocols, resulting in the downing of several Pakistani drones by the Indian Air Defence System. Eyewitness accounts suggest that one of the drones was seen falling outside the airport premises.

Residents of Jammu city were seen perching from their balconies to | [More on P6](#)

India Neutralises Pak Missiles Aimed At 15 Cities

Destroys Air Defence System In Lahore

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India on Thursday said it foiled Pakistan military's attempts to attack 15 places in Northern and Western India using missiles and drones, and destroyed a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore as tensions between the two sides mounted amid fears of a wider conflict.

The defence ministry said the Pakistani military attempted last night to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarai, and Bhuj. These attempts were neutralised by

the Integrated Counter Unmanned Aircraft System (Grid and Air Defence systems), it said. The Pakistani attempt came after Indian armed forces early Wednesday carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan under Operation Sindoor.

The defence ministry said India called its anti-terror response as "focused, measured and non-escalatory" and that Pakistani military establishments had not been targeted.

"It was also reiterated that any attack on military targets in India will invite a suitable response," it said. "Today morning Indian armed forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in Pakistan. Indian response has been in the same | [More on P6](#)

Choice Of De-Escalation Is With Pak: FS Vikram Misri



Observer News Service

The choice of de-escalation is with Pakistan as it escalated the situation with the Pahalgam terror attack and India only responded to it through Operation Sindoor, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said | [More on P6](#)

Pak Shells Kupwara, Baramulla Sectors Along LOC

Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked shelling along the Line of Control in Kupwara and Baramulla districts of Jammu and Kashmir late on Thursday evening with the Indian armed forces | [More on P6](#)

Nation Fully Prepared For Responses: DM

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: No limit will become an obstacle to protect India's sovereignty and the nation is fully prepared for such responses, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday as tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad escalated amid fears of a wider conflict.

Singh's comments at an event came shortly after the defence ministry said the armed forces foiled Pakistan military's attempts last night to attack 15 places in Northern and Western India using missiles and drones,



and destroyed a Pakistani air defence system in Lahore.

The Indian armed forces on early Wednesday carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) | [More on P6](#)

PM Chaired High-level Meeting, Asks Ministries To Stay Alert



Observer News Service

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting with secretaries of various ministries to review national preparedness and inter-ministerial coordination in the wake of recent developments concerning national security.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of seamless coordination among ministries and agencies to ensure operational continuity and institutional resilience. He called for continued alertness, institutional synergy and clear communication across all levels of governance.

The meeting was attended by the Cabinet Secretary, senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office, and

Secretaries from major ministries, including Defence, Home Affairs, External Affairs, Information and Broadcasting, Power, Health, and Telecommunications.

The PM reviewed planning and preparedness measures undertaken by various ministries to address the current situation. Secretaries were directed to conduct a comprehensive review of their respective ministries' functioning and ensure an uninterrupted operation of essential systems. Special emphasis was laid on readiness, emergency response, and internal communication protocols.

The ministries were instructed to strengthen their coordination with state authorities and ground-level institutions. A Whole of

Government approach was underlined as key to addressing any emerging challenges.

The secretaries shared details of their planning and identified action points relevant to their respective sectors. The meeting also included discussions on enhancing civil defence mechanisms, tackling misinformation and fake news, and securing critical infrastructure. The overall focus remained on ensuring institutional preparedness, coordination, and national security.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh briefed opposition leaders on Operation Sindoor, the Indian military's response to the Pahalgam terror attack. He said that over 100 terrorists were killed in the operation, which | [More on P6](#)

LG Takes Stock Of Security Situation In J&K

Urges Vigilance Amid Cross-Border Threats

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday reviewed the security situation in the Union Territory, an official spokesman said.

The review meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, Principal Secretary (Home) Chandraker Bharti and other senior police officials.

Sinha, who took stock of the preparedness in various districts, was briefed by officials



about actions taken to ensure infrastructure, public safety and cyber security on the directions passed during the meetings on Tuesday. Sinha directed the officials to be on alert and deal sternly with | [More on P6](#)

Will Do Anything To Help: Trump

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday said he wants India and Pakistan to "stop" the conflict, saying if he can do anything to "help", he will be there. "Oh it's so terrible. My position is I get along with both. I know both very well and I want to see them work it out. I want

to see them stop and hopefully they can stop now. They have gone tit for tat, so hopefully they can stop now. I know both, we get along with both the countries very well.

"Good relationships with both and I want to see it stop. And I can do | [More on P6](#)

UNGA Chief Urges Restraint

United Nations" Concerned over the "escalating hostilities" between India and Pakistan, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) president Philemon Yang on Thursday urged the neighbours | [More on P6](#)

India-Pak Tensions Disrupt 100's of Flights; Global Airlines Reroute

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Over 90 flights to and from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport were cancelled on Thursday as rising military tensions between India and Pakistan sent shockwaves through global aviation networks. The disruption follows India's targeted strikes under Operation Sindoor on terror infrastructure across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack last month that killed at least 26 people.

A total of 46 domestic

departures, 33 arrivals, 5 international departures, and 6 international arrivals were cancelled in Delhi alone, according to an airport source. India's largest carrier IndiGo has grounded 165 flights until Saturday morning, sending its shares down 1.1%. Other airlines, including Air India, SpiceJet, and Akasa Air, also reported cancellations.

Indian armed forces struck nine sites in

Pakistan and PoK on Wednesday, prompting Pakistan to claim it had shot down five Indian fighter jets in retaliation. While India stated it had targeted "terrorist infrastructure," Pakistan rejected the existence of such camps and condemned the attacks as dangerous escalations that risked civilian lives.

The airstrikes and ensuing military rhetoric have led to the closure of around 27 airports

across India and Pakistan, disrupting both domestic and international flight operations.

International carriers swiftly responded. United Airlines cancelled its Delhi-bound flight citing "airspace limitations." Lufthansa, KLM, Singapore Airlines, Korean Air, and China Airlines have either rerouted or cancelled flights to avoid Pakistani airspace. Thai Airways and American Airlines also adjusted their schedules to minimize risk.

Images from flight tracking websites showed long streams of aircraft rerouting via Oman, UAE, and Kuwait | [More on P6](#)

Schools, Colleges To Remain Closed Across J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Amid prevailing situation, authorities on Wednesday said that schools, colleges and universities shall remain closed across Jammu and Kashmir on Friday and Saturday.

Minister of Education, Sakina Itoo said, "Keeping in view the safety of students, all the private and government schools, colleges and universities shall remain closed on Friday and Saturday."

Registrar of KU also said, "We have decided to suspend the

Stop Streaming Pak Content: Govt

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Amid rising tensions with Pakistan, the government on Thursday advised OTT platforms and social media intermediaries operating in India to discontinue streaming of Pakistan-origin content, including web-series, films and podcasts with immediate effect.

The advisory by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting comes in the wake of strikes by Indian armed forces on terror sites in Pakistan to avenge the terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22. "In the interest of national security, all | [More on P6](#)

Mudslides, Flash Floods Block Highway

Observer News Service

Jammu: Traffic on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was suspended early Thursday after heavy rains triggered multiple landslides and shooting stones from hillocks overlooking the arterial road in Ramban district, officials said.

A flash flood also hit Ramban market but there was no report of any casualty, the officials said.

According to traffic department officials, vehicular movement on the highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir | [More on P6](#)



Srinagar Police Initiates Legal Action Against Online Provocation & False Information

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar Police On Thursday evening tweeted that It has come to the attention of credible agencies that certain unidentified individuals, acting in furtherance of a larger enemy design, are systematically disseminating misinformation and inflammatory content on various social media platforms amidst the current rise in tensions between India and Pakistan.

"Preliminary findings indicate that these posts contain fabricated narratives, distorted facts, and sensitive information related to ongoing covert operations within Indian territory.

The unauthorised disclosure of such information poses a serious threat to national security and serves the strategic interests of hostile elements," police said in a tweet on 'X'.

The content being circulated appears to be deliberately crafted to spread confusion, incite fear, and provoke unrest among the public.

Initial assessments suggest that the dissemination of such material has already caused concern within sections of the civilian population and holds the potential to disrupt public order.

Given the gravity of the

situation and its implications on the sovereignty, unity, integrity, and security of the nation, Srinagar Police has taken cognizance of these incidents by identifying the accused individuals namely Inayat Hussain Rather S/o Mohammad Ibrahim Rather R/o Shalina Near Masjid Sharief Pampore , Rather Arif S/o Gh Nabi Rather R/o Wanpora Anantnag and Sheikh Umar Farooq S/o Farooq Ahmad Sheikh R/o Ichgam Budgam.

In this connection, case FIR No. 14/2025 under sections 197(1)(d), 353(1)(b) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has been registered in PS Shergarhi and investigation has been initiated apprehend those responsible for these unlawful activities.

The general public is urged to remain vigilant and refrain from sharing unverified information on social media. Any suspicious activity or content may be reported to the concerned authorities for prompt action.

Srinagar Police remains committed to preserving peace and ensuring the security of all residents. Any individual found promoting violence, disruption, or unlawful activities will face stringent legal consequences in accordance with the law.

IGP Kashmir Chairs High-Level Security Review Meeting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a bid to strengthen coordination among various security agencies, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, V.K. Birdi, chaired a comprehensive joint security review meeting at the Police Control Room (PCR) Srinagar.

The meeting witnessed the participation of senior officers from the Police, Army, Intelligence Agencies, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), and other key departments. Those present included IGs and DIGs from the BSF, CRPF, SSB, RPF, ITBP, and Traffic Police, as well as senior officials from the CID, SDRF, and telecommunication units. District SSPs from across the Kashmir zone also joined the de-

liberations virtually.

The session began with a detailed briefing to IGP Kashmir on the current security landscape in the Valley. The discussions centred around intelligence inputs, potential threats, response mechanisms, and the need for enhanced coordination among all stakeholders.

Emphasizing the importance of unified efforts, IGP Birdi called for improved inter-agency collaboration, timely information exchange, and joint operational readiness to effectively tackle emerging challenges.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed commitment by all participating agencies to continue working in close sync to ensure peace and stability across the Kashmir Valley. (CNS)

SKIMS Establishes Command Centre Amid Rising Border Tensions

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, has activated a Command Centre to ensure efficient coordination and rapid emergency response. This move is aimed in case of any medical or logistical emergencies.

To streamline communication and enhance

preparedness, SKIMS has issued a list of key contact numbers for various departments, including the SKIMS Control Room, Engineering Control Room, and the Medical College & Hospital Control Room at Bemina. The Command Centre will function 24/7 and will be overseen by senior officials such as Mohd. Akram Wani and Dr. Shah Nawaz Hameed.

FATEH KHAWANI

With deep sorrow and grief, it is to inform that widow of Late Sheikh Ghulam Ahmad, resident of New Colony, Nigeen, Hazratbal passed away on Thursday, May 8, 2025 .Her Fateh Khawani will be held on Sunday ,May 11, 2025 at 10 AM at their ancestral graveyard near Bahu ud Din Sahib ,Razgarji Mohalla, Malkha srinagar

Mourners:

- 1.MEHRAJ-U-DIN SHAH
2. SHEIKH MUZZAFAR
3. SHOWKAT AHMAD RANGREZ
4. SHIEKH MOHAMMAD YOUSUF

Contact : 9906589224

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform that my Name, Father's Name & Mother's Name is wrongly written/recorded in my Educational/Qualification Certificates with Name as IKHLAS MUSHTAQ, Father's Name as MUSHTAQ AHMED WANI & Mother's Name as PARVEEN and the same needs to be rectified with the Correct Name as IKHLAS MUSHTAQ WANI, Correct Father's Name as MUSHTAQ AHMAD WANI & Correct Mother's Name as PARVEENA. Objections, if any, should reach the Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days, no objection will be accepted.

IKO



Red Cross Society Observes 'World Red Cross Day'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K branch of Indian Red Cross Society Thursday organized an event to commemorate 'World Red Cross Day 2025' in Red Cross House Srinagar.

Red Cross staffers and the volunteers were present on the occasion.

G.A. Qureshi, Hon. Treasurer IRCS J&K hoisted the Red Cross flag. Addressing the gathering, Qureshi spoke on this year's theme 'Keeping Humanity Alive' which captures the essence of

what the Red Cross Movement stands for-neutrality, compassion and unwavering support for those in need.

He urged the Red Crossers to be present for the people in their most difficult times, putting humanity first regardless of race, gender, nationality, religion or political beliefs.

"On this day, let us take pledge to alleviate human sufferings and wipe every tear. Today is an opportunity for us to unite in our persistent commitment to a common humanity. We also reaffirm

the fundamental principles of the Red Cross movement, which are at the heart of everything we do to assist people in need and during troublesome times. Let us continue to work together and be a beacon of hope to those who are in despair and support to those who feel forgotten or deprived," he said.

He enjoined upon the Red Cross volunteers to remain in close contact with the respective Deputy Commissioners for providing prompt and effective assistance during emergencies and crisis situations.

Red Cross Committee Organizes Programme At GGHSS, Kothi Bagh

Srinagar: In connection with the celebration of World Red Cross Day-2025, an impressive function was organized by the District Red Cross Committee at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GGHSS) Amira Kadal, here on Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, who is also the Chairman District Red Cross Committee was the chief guest on the occasion.

Addressing the function, DC underlined the role of District Red Cross Society in offering help, care, and life-saving services to people in disasters. He also highlighted the role of Red Cross teams, volunteers in providing humanitarian aid and support during emergencies and everyday life

Dr Bilal lauded the dedication, compassion, courage of the District Red Cross team and other volunteers for working tirelessly by re-

sponding to the needy people during any calamity or exigent situation.

DC remarked that natural calamities have spared no one during any worst situations, but Red Cross staff and volunteers play pivotal roles in saving and rehabilitation of people.

He also deliberated upon the background of the Red Cross Society and remembered international Red Cross volunteers for their contribution for the welfare and betterment of the society.

Kashmir
Aspire. Strive. Achieve.

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

I did wash my hand ... but... did I clean it enough? Wash it again? Is it clean now?

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING BUT UNSEEN PAIN, distress, myths and stigma associated with OCD

KASHMER / Kashmir American Society of Healthcare, Medical Education & Research in collaboration with **HPVT** (Help Poor Voluntary Trust) is initiating a **free 8 weeks Group therapy** for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of J&K.

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial. You do not have to fight your battles alone. There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT Building (First Floor), Daresht Kadal Chowk, Srinagar
9070806160

HELP

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS
SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

RAILWAYS

- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR
11 Zil-Qadah
1446

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 01
ZUHR	12:27
ASR	5:19
Magrib	7:23
ISHA	8: 55

This Day In History

- 328 -Athanasius is elected Patriarch bishop of Alexandria
- 1092- Lincoln Cathedral is consecrated in Lincoln, England
- 1386- Treaty of Windsor between Portugal and England is ratified at Windsor cementing and strengthening ties between the two kingdoms. The treaty guarantees the mutual security of both nations and strengthens commercial ties. It is the oldest diplomatic alliance still in force. [1]
- 1450- 'Abd al-Latif (Timurid monarch) is assassinated
- 1460- Courtyard of the episcopal palace in Atrecht (akak Arras) has witch burnings
- 1502 - Christopher Columbus leaves Spain on his 4th and final trip to the New World
- 1915 - German & French fight Battle of Artois
- 1916 - British-France Sykes-Picot conference over division of Turkey
- 1922 - The International Astronomical Union formally adopt Annie Jump Cannon's stellar classification system, which with only minor changes, is still used today
- 1944 - Russians recapture Crimea by taking Sevastopol
- 1945 - World War II: Partisans liberate Ljubljana.
- 1945- World War II: Hermann Goering is captured by the United States Army
- 1945 - World War II: The Soviet Union marks Victory Day
- 1945 - World War II: The Channel Islands are formally liberated by the British
- 1955 - German Federal Republic (West Germany) joins NATO
- 1956 --First ascent of Manaslu, the world's eighth-highest mountain.
- 1956 - War Reparations and Peace Settlement between Philippines and Japan was finally signed at Malacañang Palace under Magsaysay administration
- 1960 - Nigeria becomes a member of British Commonwealth
- 1960 - US becomes the first country to legalize the birth control pill
- 1965 - Luna 5 launched (USSR) 1st attempt to soft land on Moon (fails)
- 1966 - China performs nuclear test at Lop Nor, PRC
- 1974 - US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee begins formal hearings on Nixon impeachment
- 1978 - Corpse of kidnapped Italian ex-premier Aldo Moro found
- 1987 - 183 die aboard a Polish jetliner that crashes in Warsaw
- 1989 - Journalist petition Chinese government for freedom of press
- 1992 - Armenian forces capture Shusha, marking a major turning point in the Karabakh War
- USA
- 1993 - Landslide in Nambija Ecuador, kills 300
- 1995 - Kinshasa, Zaire under quarantine after an outbreak of Ebola virus
- 1997 - 1st US ambassador since Saigon fell arrives in Vietnam
- 2002 - 38-day stand-off in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem comes to an end when Palestinians inside agree to have 13 suspected militants among them deported
- 2002 - In Kaspiysk, Russia, a remote-controlled bomb explodes during a holiday parade killing 43 and injuring at least 130
- 2004 - Chechen president Akhmad Kadyrov is killed in a land mine bomb blast under a VIP stage during a World War II memorial victory parade in Grozny, Chechnya
- 2005 - Liberal commentary website The Huffington Post is launched
- 2006 - Estonia ratifies the European Constitution.
- 2009 - Jacob Zuma is sworn in as President of South Africa
- 2012 - A Russian passenger jet disappears with 45 people on board
- 2015 - A gun fight erupts in Macedonian town of Kumanovo between police and Albanian separatists adding to the government crisis

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KO VIEW

Tourism’s
Tough Test

Last three years witnessed a record number of tourists visiting Kashmir. Statistics reveal a steep rising curve. In 2024, 2.95 million tourists visited Kashmir, up from 2.71 million in 2023 and 2.67 million in 2022. What is more, last year, the number included 43,000 foreign tourists.

According to the Economic Survey Report tabled by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah recently, this surge was a strong sign of the region’s return to peace and normalcy. Places like Gulmarg continued to charm visitors with its famous Gondola ride pulling in over 7.6 lakh tourists and earning more than 100 crore in revenue.

Pahalgam was the place that rivalled Gulmarg and Srinagar in drawing most of the tourists. And during June and August every year, it hosted thousands of pilgrims to Amarnath cave shrine. Last year alone, over five lakh pilgrims visited the shrine, a major chunk took the route through Pahalgam.

But the terror attack at the South Kashmir resort killing 25 tourists and one pony operator has changed everything. The tourists were at Baisaran, a bowl-shaped Valley close to hills when the attackers in camouflages are reported to have suddenly emerged and shot the tourists dead from a point-blank range. Over the past 35 years of the trouble in the Valley, it is rarely that the tourists have been targeted. This didn’t happen even in the nineties when the Valley was awash with guns. So, the deliberate killing of visitors has left people baffled.

However, the fallout of the atrocity was quick. The Valley was soon empty of the tourists. And the thousands who had made the bookings for the coming weeks and months cancelled them. There is some hope that the tourists will return to the Valley in the near term - albeit not in the numbers they have in recent years. Many courageous visitors have come, some of them even visiting Pahalgam. But this, of course, isn’t enough. The tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir’s GDP and employs two million people. The sector has the potential to shore up the Valley’s beleaguered economy. While the sharp drop in tourist numbers is certain to drive up unemployment figures, we can hope that once the current hostilities are over, the situation will perceptibly improve. Here’s hoping that J&K regains the relative peace and prosperity it enjoyed in recent years.



The Green Way Forward

Irshad Mushtaq

Beyond the headlines, Kashmir’s true wealth lies in its harvests. The region’s bounty ripens on orchard trees, weaves through artisan looms, and flows through its timeless valleys. For Kashmir, the road to lasting prosperity is one rooted in these sustainable practices.

At the heart of this green economy is horticulture. Apples from the Valley already travel across India and beyond, but diversification is key. Alongside apples, walnuts, cherries, and saffron—a spice more precious than gold—can offer a resilient farm economy less vulnerable to market or climate shocks. With smart packaging, organic branding and better cold storage, these products could double their value.

Kashmir’s handwoven carpets, Pashmina shawls, and walnut wood carvings are already admired across the globe. Yet many artisans remain locked in local markets. The digital economy offers them a passport to global buyers. One artisan with an Etsy shop can earn what ten shops do in Srinagar’s bazaars.

Tourism, long a mainstay, remains a big income push. But the new tourist cares about impact. Eco-lodges, heritage homestays and zero-waste treks can both preserve nature and create lasting jobs. This is where circular economy ideas—like waste recycling, local sourcing, and renewable energy—can be more than theory.

Education and commerce, too, must move online. Digital classrooms can break the region’s isolation. E-commerce can bring its creators and growers to global markets without middlemen.

Kashmir’s potential lies not in polluting factories or quick fixes, but in patient investment in what it already has: rich soil, skilled hands, and stunning landscapes. If nurtured right, these could turn Kashmir into a model of green prosperity.

The writer is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Threads of Identity

Gritty Mazdoors, innovative Karigars, and passionate Kalakars are the heartbeat of Kashmir’s craft heritage. But as workshops fall silent and youth turn to screens, the valley risks losing its cultural soul.



Irshad Mushtaq

“We chase trends, forgetting that our traditions are timeless. And our youth? They’re not lazy; they’re uninspired. No one has shown them that a lathe or a loom can be as thrilling as a smartphone. We’ve failed to make craftsmanship cool.

I grew up hearing stories of our great-grandfathers, the Kalakars whose hands turned wood into poetry. Their carvings adorned homes across Srinagar, each piece a testament to patience and passion. Today, those stories feel like relics.

The workshops of Kashmir, once alive with the hum of chisels and the scent of cedar, are quiet. Our youth scroll through feeds while the tools of our ancestors gather dust. How did we drift so far from the Mazdoor’s grit, the Karigar’s ingenuity, and the Kalakar’s fire?

The Mazdoor is the backbone of Kashmiri craft. Picture a man hauling timber through narrow alleys, his shoulders broad from years of labor. He doesn’t just carry wood; he lays the foundation for artistry. Without his sweat, there’s no canvas for creation. Yet, we rarely celebrate him. His work is seen as grunt labor, not the bedrock of culture.

I’ve met Mazdoors who take pride in their calluses, but their children dream of desk jobs, not the dignity of manual work. We’ve taught them to look away from the very hands that built our heritage.

Then comes the Karigar, the artisan who blends tradition with invention. I once watched a Karigar in a cramped shop weave a rug so intricate it seemed to tell a story. He spoke of learning from his father but also experimenting with new patterns to attract younger buyers. Karigars are innovators, keeping Kashmiri craft alive by adapting without losing its soul. But innovation needs encouragement.

Too many Karigars struggle to find markets, their work overshadowed by cheap imports. If we don’t value their creativity, we risk losing the thread that connects past to present. The Kalakar, though, is the heart of it all.

These artists pour emotion into every stroke, every stitch. Our great-grandfathers were Kalakars, but so are the women

painting shawls with colors that seemed to sing.

Kalakars don’t just create, they preserve our identity. Yet, their passion is fading. Schools prioritize math over art, and parents nudge kids toward “practical” careers.

When was the last time we told a child their sketch could be a legacy? We’re starving the Kalakar’s spirit, and with it, our culture’s soul. Our ancestors weren’t distracted by screens. They honed their craft because it was their pride, their purpose. Today, we’re hooked on instant gratification: games, reels, likes.

teenager in a Srinagar workshop, grinning as he shaped his first walnut box. These skills aren’t just hobbies; they’re lifelines to our past and bridges to our future.

Second, we need to fuel innovation. Karigars can thrive if we connect them to markets and teach them to blend tradition with modern tastes. Imagine Kashmiri rugs designed with bold, minimalist patterns for urban homes. It’s not dilution, it’s evolution. Platforms like online marketplaces or local fairs can give artisans the spotlight they deserve.

Finally, we must ignite passion. Kalakars are born when kids

“I’ve met Mazdoors who take pride in their calluses, but their children dream of desk jobs, not the dignity of manual work. We’ve taught them to look away from the very hands that built our heritage.

I’m not saying phones are the enemy, but when a teenager spends six hours swiping and zero learning to carve, we’ve lost something. The Mazdoor’s discipline, the Karigar’s curiosity, the Kalakar’s devotion—these aren’t just roles; they’re values we’re letting slip.

The disconnect runs deeper. We undervalue what’s ours. Tourists buy machine-made souvenirs while handcrafted shawls sit unsold. We chase trends, forgetting that our traditions are timeless. And our youth? They’re not lazy; they’re uninspired. No one has shown them that a lathe or a loom can be as thrilling as a smartphone. We’ve failed to make craftsmanship cool.

But there’s a way forward, and it starts with us. First, we must champion handicrafts. Programs that teach kids woodworking or embroidery can spark pride in their heritage. I’ve seen it work: a

are free to create without fear of “wasting time.” Art classes, community projects, even competitions can nurture their fire. Let’s tell our children their work matters, that a painting or a poem can echo through generations.

Reviving Kashmiri craftsmanship isn’t about nostalgia; it’s about survival. The Mazdoor, Karigar, and Kalakar aren’t just roles, they’re the pulse of our culture. If we lose them, we lose ourselves.

Our great-grandfathers’ carvings still stand in old homes, but they’re fading. It’s on us to pick up the tools, teach the next generation, and make our craft vibrant again. Let’s not just honour our ancestors. Let’s make them proud.

The writer is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



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Kashmir’s Special Children Are Not a Footnote

In Jammu & Kashmir, a silent tragedy is unfolding. Children with special needs—autism, cerebral palsy, ADHD, Down syndrome—are being denied a basic right: occupational therapy. This isn’t a luxury. It’s a lifeline. Therapy helps these children eat, dress, write, or focus. Without it, they fall behind, permanently.

Across government medical colleges (GMCs) in Srinagar, Jammu, Anantnag, Baramulla and beyond, occupational therapy exists mostly on paper. These institutions lack therapy rooms, sensory equipment, and trained staff.

In Doda, Rajouri, and Kathua, not a single occupational therapist is on

staff. Even where therapists are employed, like at GMC Jammu’s Bakshi Nagar campus, services are nearly non-functional. Parents report therapists citing missing equipment or ward duties. Some direct families to private clinics, services that should be free in public hospitals.

I’ve raised this repeatedly. In 2023, I wrote to the Union Health Ministry. The reply: “Forwarded to J&K authorities.” In January 2025, I filed a grievance on the Samadhan platform. The outcome? Promises. On the ground? Nothing.

The cost of this neglect is immense. Private therapy costs Rs 400–500 per session, unaffordable for most

families. Some travel hundreds of kilometers for appointments that never happen. At SMHS Srinagar and GMC Anantnag, even therapists admit they cannot deliver care due to lack of infrastructure. In Baramulla, therapy is a one-off formality. There is no follow-up. No continuity. No care.

This isn’t just official apathy, it’s a violation of rights. Without timely intervention, these children lose the chance to live independent, dignified lives. Families, meanwhile, are pushed into a lifetime of caregiving and economic distress.

Solutions exist. Every GMC must have a functional occupational therapy unit with trained staff and

basic tools. Therapists should be integrated into pediatric and neurodevelopmental teams. Therapy must be subsidized for low-income families. Most importantly, regular audits should track services delivered and children’s progress.

Jammu & Kashmir’s most vulnerable children are being quietly written off. It’s time to act. Not with empty circulars, but with funding, staffing, and accountability. These children aren’t asking for miracles, but just a fair shot at life.

Sincerely,
Zaheer Jan
Kashmir

The Village Healer

In Kashmir's remote hamlet, Zahoor Hussain Hakeem turns hardship into hope, healing bodies and inspiring minds with relentless grit.

Gowher Bhat

A hundred kilometers from Srinagar, Zahoor Hussain Hakeem is quietly transforming a forgotten village. Dewalgam, nestled in misty Kokernag, has long been a place marked by isolation and hardship. But at 40, Zahoor has become its beacon of hope, defying the odds that once held him back.

Zahoor's story began at 15, when his father sent him to Srinagar to ease the family's financial burdens. Working as a servant for a wealthy man, Zahoor earned just enough to survive.

Yet, despite the hard labour, he found time to study. His late nights were fuelled by philosophy, literature, and Urdu poetry. It was through this self-discipline that he earned a degree in Political Science and a teaching credential, both with top marks.

After completing his studies, Zahoor set his sights on a teaching career, but fell just short on the National Eligibility Test. Disheartened, he returned to Dewalgam but refused to give in to failure.

He tried walnut and wood trading before venturing into Ayurvedic medicine, opening a shop under the mentorship of a local healer, Shapoo Sahib.

After completing formal Ayurvedic training, Zahoor's ambition grew. He envisioned opening a cupping therapy center, aiming to blend healing with ser-



Representational Photo.

vice. But Zahoor's vision extends beyond just healing.

He is working to turn his cow farm into an apple orchard, a step toward economic self-sufficiency and community renewal.

His ideas have sparked a shift in the village's mindset, where people are beginning to believe change is possible.

"Zahoor is our light," says Abbas Rather, a local driver. He's not just a healer; he's a mentor, guiding children with fatherly care, teaching them for free. "He never says no," says Sha-keel, a young shopkeeper. "Whether it's medicine, school, or life, his words have weight."

Mustaq, a tailor, recalls a cold winter night when a woman urgently needed a ride to the hospital. Zahoor didn't hesitate. He grabbed his keys and drove her to

safety, through snow and freezing temperatures. "He's always there when you need him," Mustaq says. Farooq, who runs an allopathic pharmacy, respects Zahoor's wisdom. "We talk about everything: medicine, faith, politics. His knowledge is lived experience," Farooq says.

Zahoor's compassion goes beyond the village. He regularly treks to the Pindoo Bal mountains to visit nomadic Bakarwal communities, delivering herbal ointments for joint pain, charging far below cost. "It's not about money," Zahoor says. "It's about service."

Zahoor's influence is felt deeply among the village's youth. He teaches literature to boys, helping them aim higher in life. Aadil, a young man now studying business in Chandigarh,

credits Zahoor for shaping his future. "He gave me belief," Aadil says. "He showed me I could rise, no matter where I came from."

Zahoor's kindness extends to the most vulnerable. Widows remember his help in distress. Disabled villagers speak of his unwavering respect and dignity. Even the wealthier locals have been humbled by his generosity.

In a region where unemployment is high, Zahoor could have let a missed government job define him. "If I'd gotten that job, I might not be here doing this," he says. "This is my path."

As his therapy center nears completion, Zahoor's influence continues to grow. His work embodies endurance and empathy, and in Dewalgam, they say his footsteps light the darkest paths.

The Dandelion That Cried on Canvas

When grief needed a story, she borrowed a stranger's grave. A reflection on loss, illusion, and the quiet rebellion of mourning without reason.

Aisha Hasnain

I'm trapped in a cocoon of my own, and they don't fail to see me defeated every day. "Yeh kaisa ranj hai/ What sorrow is this?" He asks.

They ask what it is that I'm mourning. I do not find words to explain the chemistry of my tragedy. Why my lips are drooping. Why my gaze is lost. Why my eyes are pale. Why I say my chest aches. Why I barely see my neighbours. I have turned us into strangers. Ah, I look like a mystery to them. A mystery that they adore. It is sad, they say.

I need a dum-my-reason for the paranormal sorrow I have felt. For the longest time I have been without a story to tell. But where can I find a parallel? It is the graveyard. I need to make someone's grave my own. Come Nooré Chashmam - the vision of my eyes - let's go.

I sit beside a grave. I stuff my mouth with my scarf and wail. I have given myself a false closure. I run my fingers through the earth. My tears burn my face. I grab the collar of my frock and I drag someone's attention: "What is it?"

He helps me with my shawl and saves my modesty. "What is it, my dear? Is it him who you mourn every day?"

My eyes fish for the name on the stone:

"Yahya was the light of my eyes. The eyes that have turned pale since he left. My lips try to mimic the words he'd speak. Alas, I fail. I want to break the mirror in which I look good. What use is it now? This decade has been an eternity..."

"But . . . he died three years

back?" He puts me in an awkward position. I don't let him notice that I skipped a beat:

"He had an ailment unknown to anyone but me."

"Is that why . . ." He can't complete his words when he sees the rage in my eyes.

"I will not spare anyone who did this to me," I whimper. And I mean it. I hug the dirt on



the grave. He pleads: "Let go, my dear! It will trouble his soul. For love's sake!"

I let my soiled dress soak in water while I unwind on my bed. It is liberating to have a convincing alibi for my chronic grief. This night is peaceful. The following day I cannot wait to go back.

A woman is waiting for me. His mother.

"Oh love, are you the reason he took his life?" She laments. She has picked the news of a woman wailing by her son's grave from the air. The pain in her eyes resonates with mine, yet different in nature. She has lost a piece of her soul; I seem to have lost my entire.

"Yes, unfortunately, I am the one," I break down and together we sit beside the grave. "A woman like

you couldn't have accepted a man like him."

I let her say, "But was it before, or after you that he took to unholy means?" I tell her exactly what she wants to hear: "I found a better suitor and he couldn't take it."

"So he didn't die of overdose. He died of . . . love!" She can't hold back her tears or happiness. "Yes. I am sorry." An unoriginal exclamation.

I wake up with the odourless old rose petals resting in a bowl by my side. It is the usual sight. I hold on to things and I can't let go. My mind tries to find beauty in everything, living or gone.

"Ruh rafoo nahiñ hoti/ A tear in a soul cannot be darned," he told me once, creating another irreparable hole in my soul.

I return to Yahya's resting remains. His mother is there again, as if certain that I would show up. Wild dandelions have grown on Yahya's grave. On the only grave. Strange.

"It's handh. These leaves cure the pain in the back," she tells me. I can't take my eyes off of this undomesticated beauty. I see my reflection in the radiant flower: Bright, untamed, bewitching and wild! It's a sign.

"I still have the roses he sent me before his death," I tell her, "They belong with him."

In the dead of the night, I cross the fence. I sneak into the graveyard. I lay those petals on his grave. They can rest together.

In the village, the air is thick with the story of Yahya's lover who lives with a guilty conscience to her and ever so misses the lost love of her life. Hence, why she is so grieved. That is the answer to her agony until she digs her own. Out of the abyss in her mind where she meets death every day. She is not meant to be saved.

The author goes by her pen name, Aisha Hasnain. She can be reached at aishahasnain02@gmail.com.

Professors on Pause

A system that should nurture talent instead reduces its scholars to temporary, undervalued labour. Restoring respect for educators is key to fixing the valley's academic future.



Dr. Ashraf Zainabi

Kashmir's academic community is grappling with a troubling paradox: some of the most qualified individuals—holding PhDs from prestigious institutions like IITs, Central Universities, and international research centers—are relegated to being "academic arrangements."

This term, bureaucratic in tone, fails to capture the harsh reality these educators face: they are treated as disposable, temporary workers.

Across J&K's public colleges and universities, these contract faculty members are integral to the functioning of the system. Many of them hold advanced degrees, some with postdoctoral qualifications and research experience that rivals their peers anywhere in the world.

Yet, despite their critical role in teaching, research, and mentoring, they remain relegated to insecure, short-term contracts.

For over two decades, these contractual professors have been the backbone of the system, often doing much more than their roles demand, yet they are overlooked when it comes to policymaking and long-term planning.



J&K'S EDUCATION SYSTEM NEEDS URGENT REFORM. Regularizing long-serving contractual faculty, implementing UGC norms with integrity, and ensuring a fair promotion system are critical steps.

Ironically, in many institutions, lower-ranking staff such as clerks and lab assistants enjoy more job security and institutional respect than these highly qualified educators. This is not to undermine the importance of these roles, but it underscores a troubling reality: those responsible for shaping the intellectual future of the region are treated as expendable.

The term "academic arrange-

ment" itself speaks volumes. These educators are hired on an ad-hoc basis, often with no assurance of future employment. Many of them work under constant stress, with their contracts renewed annually and no access to the benefits that permanent faculty enjoy, such as pensions, promotions, or even fair salaries in line with UGC norms.

Some of these teachers, even in their forties, are still awaiting regularization, while younger scholars are discouraged from pursuing academic careers altogether.

The instability that comes with such precarious employment conditions sends a clear message: in J&K, dedication and expertise do not guarantee job security or respect.

The consequences of this system extend beyond the faculty. Students, too, suffer when experienced educators are replaced with newcomers every year. The lack of continuity means that valuable teaching relationships are severed, and institutional memory is lost. Departments become revolving doors rather than stable academic communities, eroding the quality of education over time.

More concerning is the broader cultural message this sends:

excellence, merit, and hard work seem irrelevant in J&K's higher education landscape.

The system rewards longevity over talent, and those seeking long-term stability are encouraged to look elsewhere.

When intellectual labour is undervalued, the region loses out on its greatest resource: its educators.

The psychological toll on these educators is also significant. Many report feeling invisible, caught between a system that neither recognizes their contributions nor offers them a clear future. Their achievements are often celebrated in academic audits and institutional reports, yet they are denied the recognition they deserve in terms of permanent employment. This treatment is neither respectful nor fair; it is survivalism imposed on scholarship.

J&K's education system needs urgent reform. Regularizing long-serving contractual faculty, implementing UGC norms with integrity, and ensuring a fair promotion system are critical steps.

More importantly, a fundamental shift is needed in how the region's institutions define respect—moving from token gestures to meaningful structural changes.

The New Education Policy 2020 emphasizes equity, inclusion, and the importance of quality faculty. However, in J&K, these principles have yet to be realized. The region's reliance on temporary appointments has become entrenched, and its brightest minds are left to navigate an uncertain and undervalued career path.

If J&K is to reclaim its place as an intellectual center, it must start by restoring dignity to its educators. This process cannot be symbolic; it must be substantive and structural.

The writer is a Chadoora-based teacher-researcher. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Valley's Ego Virus

From hospital halls to public offices, pride has turned into performance. What began as personal success now threatens the fabric of Kashmiri society.



Peerzada Mohsin Shafi

In Kashmir, status changes people. A uniform, a government job, and a medical degree once meant service. Now, too often, they signal separation. A young man who walked the same lanes as everyone else begins to act as if he belongs elsewhere. With power comes distance. With distance, a quiet disdain.

This isn't a new story, but it has become a bigger one. What once stayed private is now part of daily public life. Officers hold handkerchiefs to their noses while passing the streets they once played in. Doctors mock patients online. Engineers speak to labourers as if speaking down a well. These shifts are subtle, but their weight is real. The Valley is seeing a slow erosion. Not of wealth or infrastructure, but of humility.

Pride, in faith traditions, was the first sin. In Islamic belief, when Allah asked the angels to bow to Adam, all obeyed—except Iblis. "I am better than him," he said, "You created me from fire and him from clay."

That line, in Surah Al-A'raf, marked the beginning of his downfall. His refusal wasn't about belief. It was about ego.

In Christian thought, Lucifer too falls. Not for denying God, but for trying to be like

Him. Pride crosses boundaries faster than reason.

In Kashmir, the effects aren't just spiritual. They are social. Public servants, once among the people, begin to operate above them. They speak less, listen even less, and act as if their presence is a favour.

This arrogance often grows slowly. It starts with a new desk or title, and spreads quietly. Over time, they stop greeting elders. They avoid old friends. They expect deference, not dialogue.

Social media has made this visible. Some doctors now post stories where patients become punchlines. One post stood out recently. An elderly woman asked for "Shaalkaak"—her version of a calcium tablet called Shelcal. The doctor turned her mispronunciation into an online joke. The post got laughs. But what it really revealed was how easy it has become to mock people.

Doctors are not alone. Similar attitudes exist across professions. The pride of knowing more, or having more, often leads to a kind of social blindness. People forget that their skills are tools, not trophies. And they forget that education without empathy is just noise.

In Kashmiri, we say: "Harre chu Khuda, te Bonne chus Bie." God is above, and I am below. The phrase is

used sarcastically, to point out those who act as if they are divine. Power, even in small doses, seems to create this illusion. But the soil waits for us all.

A poet once wrote: "Yatte te mae cxee, ta tte te mae cxee, mae cxee kaxrem gulzar." Here is soil, there is soil—so turn this soil into a garden for me. It is both a prayer and a truth. We come from dust, and to dust we return. Titles will fade. Degrees will decay. The only thing that might remain is how we made others feel.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Whoever has an atom's weight of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise." (Sahih Muslim). That's not just a religious warning. It's a reminder of scale. Ego weighs more than we think. And it keeps us from the things that matter most.

Kashmir doesn't need louder voices or higher chairs. It needs people who remember their roots, who carry their success with grace, not arrogance. In the end, we are all part of the same soil. The only question is: what will we leave behind—dust, or a garden?

Peerzada Mohsin Shafi, from Anantnag, J&K, holds an M.Tech in Infrastructure Development & Management.

IUST organizes Disaster Awareness Programme for Awantipora students

Awantipora, May 08: The Department of Civil Engineering, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), organized a Disaster Awareness Programme at HAJAHAD Public School, Awantipora, as part of its outreach initiatives aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The session was led by Er. Mohammad Iqbal Mirza, Senior Assistant Professor and Outreach Coordinator, who conducted an engaging session on disaster preparedness, focusing particularly on the do's and don'ts during

earthquakes. He highlighted the vulnerability of Kashmir Valley to natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods, and landslides, due to its distinct topography, climatic conditions, and geographic location. Er. Mirza emphasized the crucial need for awareness, preparedness, and resilience to mitigate the impacts of such events on communities.

The programme witnessed active participation from a large gathering of students, teaching, and non-teaching staff of both HAJAHAD Public School and LearnX Academy, underscoring the

local community's keen interest in learning about disaster risk reduction and safety measures.

The school administration warmly appreciated IUST, for spearheading this vital initiative and acknowledged the university's sustained efforts toward community engagement and social responsibility. Through such outreach programmes, IUST continues to reinforce its mission of integrating academic excellence with societal contribution, advancing the vision of NEP 2020 by fostering informed, resilient, and proactive communities.

Xiaomi India launches Xiaomi QLED FX Pro and 4K FX series with Fire TV built-in

A Smart, Immersive Viewing Experience with Alexa and DLG 120Hz Technology

Srinagar: Xiaomi India, a global technology leader, continues to elevate the home entertainment experience with the launch of the Xiaomi QLED TV FX Pro and Xiaomi 4K TV FX series with Fire TV built-in. Designed to seamlessly integrate into daily routines while delivering an immersive viewing experience, the new TVs offer a balance of high-end audio-visual capabilities and intelligent smart home features—bringing smarter, faster, and more cinematic content experiences to Indian homes.

Commenting on the launch, Anuj Sharma, Chief Marketing

Officer, Xiaomi India said, "At Xiaomi India, we understand that great visuals and sound are important for an exceptional home entertainment experience. But we also believe that true innovation lies in creating a connected, intelligent system that evolves with how people live and interact with content in 2025. The Xiaomi QLED TV FX Pro embodies this vision, combining stunning visuals, immersive audio, and cutting-edge features like Fire TV Built-In, Alexa voice assistant, and Picture-in-Picture mode to deliver a seamless, engaging entertainment

ecosystem that enhances every moment. Alongside it, the Xiaomi Fire TV FX Series offers dependable, high-quality 4K entertainment for users who want great performance, and great design."

Dilip R. S., Director and Country Manager, Amazon Devices India said, "We're thrilled to expand our relationship with Xiaomi to launch the latest QLED TV FX Pro and 4K TV FX series with Fire TV built-in. Together with Xiaomi, we look forward to delivering premium home entertainment experiences to customers. With Fire TV built-in, customers can

enjoy access to a vast selection of streaming apps via the Amazon Appstore on their home screen, seamlessly switch between DTH channels and OTT apps, and enjoy connected smart home experiences via Alexa without interrupting their viewing experience. These TVs combine Xiaomi's years of knowledge and expertise in design and audiovisual features with our rich experience in content-forward and voice-first innovations that make streaming smoother, quicker, lag-free and with a plethora of content choices for our customers."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

India-Pakistan Tensions

observe the aerial activity, including flares lighting up the night sky.

In a post on X, the PRO Defence Jammu said, "Military stations at Jammu, Pathankot and Udhampur were targeted by Pakistani-origin drones and missiles along the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir today."

"The threats were swiftly neutralised using kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities in line with established Standard Operating Procedures. No casualties or material losses were reported. India remains fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and ensure the safety of its people," it added.

Cellphone videos sent by locals showed lights streaking across the sky, indicating interception of the missiles and drones by the Air Defence System of the Indian armed forces.

With the activation of the Air Defence System, the sky lit up every other minute. On the ground, there was considerable tension. Cellphone services were down in parts of the city -- an extra hurdle for locals trying to get in touch with friends and relatives.

Blackouts have also been declared in Ferozepur and Gurdaspur in Punjab and parts of Rajasthan, another state that shares a border with Pakistan.

The Pakistani military opened up artillery fire in Punjab's Pathankot in a major escalation of hostilities this evening. Pathankot is about 30 km from the International Border and serves as the entry point to Jammu region and Himachal Pradesh. A blackout was enforced in Pathankot and Amritsar too. District authorities have said there was no need to panic. They asked people to keep their lights switched off and stay at home.

Heavy shelling is already in progress at the International Border at Samba, Akhnoor, Rajouri and Reasi.

The attacks come a day after Operation Sindoor, precision strikes on the terror bases in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir following the massive terror attack on tourists in Kashmir's Pahalgam.

The government and the army have repeatedly underscored that the strikes are non-escalatory, precise, controlled and measured.

Pakistan hit back early Thursday with an attempt to target military installations in 15 cities, including Srinagar, Pathankot, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Chandigarh that were foiled by the Indian armed forces.

The military had responded by targeting and neutralising Pakistani Air Defence Radars and systems in several locations, including Lahore.

Indian forces' response, the government said, was "in the same domain (and) with the same intensity" as the attacks launched by Pakistan. "The Indian Armed Forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided it is respected by the Pakistani military," the government said in a communique. (inputs from PTI)

India Neutralises

domain with the same intensity as Pakistan," the ministry said in a readout.

"It has been reliably learnt that an air defence system at Lahore has been neutralised," it said.

The ministry said Pakistan has increased the intensity of its unprovoked firing across the Line of Control using mortars and heavy calibre artillery in areas in Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar and Rajouri sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Sixteen innocent lives have been lost, including three women and five children, due to Pakistani firing," the ministry said.

Here too, India was compelled to respond to bring mortar and artillery fire from Pakistan to a halt, it said.

"Indian Armed Forces reiterate their commitment to non-escalation, provided it is respected by the Pakistani military," the ministry said.

In retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack, Indian armed forces early Wednesday carried out the missile strikes on the terror targets including Bahawalpur, a stronghold of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror group.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on Wednesday that India decided to carry out the "proportionate" strikes to bring the perpetrators and planners of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack to justice as there was "no demonstrable step" from Pakistan to act against terrorist infrastructure on territories under its control.

Choice Of De-Escalation

on Thursday.

His comments at a media briefing came amid heightened tensions between the two countries.

Misri said escalation started from that side (Pakistan) with the April 22 Pahalgam attack in

which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

"Our approach is not to escalate the situation, we only responded to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack," he said.

On de-escalation of the situation, Misri said, "Pakistan escalated the situation, we only responded. Choice is with Pakistan." He said at the UNSC meeting, Pakistan opposed mention of the role of terror group The Resistance Force (TRF) when it had already claimed responsibility for the Pahalgam attack.

The foreign secretary also said the retaliatory actions of Pakistan are impacting civilians, referring to firings along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Pakistan's reputation as the centre of global terrorism is rooted in various terrorist attacks across the globe," Misri, flanked by Wing Commander Vyomika Singh and Colonel Sofia Qureshi, said, adding Pakistan has been pursuing cross-border terrorism against India for decades.

He said India's action on Wednesday was restrained and it was confined to terrorist infrastructure.

In retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack, Indian armed forces early Wednesday carried out missile strikes on terror targets including Bahawalpur, a stronghold of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror group.

On Thursday, the defence ministry said the Pakistani military tried last night to target Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarlai, and Bhuj but these attempts were foiled and a Pakistani air defence system was destroyed in Lahore.

Misri also said Pakistan was deliberately creating roadblocks over the years on the Indus Waters Treaty issue.

Stating that Pakistan has a reputation of being a "centre of global terrorism," Misri said that terrorists killed during "Operation Sindoor" were given state funerals in the neighbouring country.

Addressing a joint briefing here, Misri stated that Pakistan remains a "global epicenter of terrorism," and revealed that terrorists killed in "Operation Sindoor" were given state funerals by the Pakistani establishment, with Pakistani Army personnel and other officials seen attending their burials. He displayed a picture of the funeral that he referred to.

Highlighting the international response, Misri said that every major diplomatic mission around the world recognized and condemned the Pahalgam attack, with countries like the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar appreciating India's restraint and responsible conduct.

"India's Executive Director at the IMF will raise concerns about Pakistan's duplicity. Let those who choose to open their purses for Pakistan also open their eyes to its record," he added.

Misri warned that any attempt by Pakistan to escalate the situation will be met with a strong response. "We have made our position clear. Pakistan escalated first, and we have responded with maturity and clarity. Any further provocation will be dealt with appropriately," he said.

Asked about reports of contact between the NSAs of India and Pakistan, the Foreign Secretary said, "I have no information with regard to contacts between the two National Security Advisors."

Replying to a query about India was considering severing diplomatic ties with Pakistan entirely, Misri emphasised that "nothing further from the decision already spelt out by the government."

Pak Shells Kupwara,

retaliating effectively, officials said. The Boniyar sector of Baramulla and the Tangdhar sector of Kupwara district were targeted by Pakistan but there were no reports of any casualty so far.

On the intervening night of May 7 and 8, the Pakistan Army fired small arms and artillery guns across the LoC in areas opposite Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri and Akhnoor sectors in J-K. The Indian Army responded proportionately.

Most of the civilian population in the Karnah area had moved to safer areas on Wednesday as Pakistani troops resorted to shelling after Indian armed forces pounded terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor.

Nation Fully Prepared

and Pakistan under Operation Sindoor.

"In Operation Sindoor, nine terror camps were destroyed in Pakistan and PoK (Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir) and a good number of terrorists were killed," he said.

The defence minister said India has always played the role of a responsible nation exercising great restraint and it believes in resolving

issues through dialogue.

"However, if anyone tries to take advantage of this restraint, they will face quality action," he said, assuring the nation that no limit will become an obstacle to protect India's sovereignty.

"We are fully prepared for such responsible responses in the future as well," he said.

The Indian armed forces executed the Operation Sindoor with "unimaginable" precision, he said.

"Operation Sindoor was successfully executed because our formidable and professionally-trained armed forces were equipped with high-quality equipment," he said.

The defence minister commended the "precision" with which the armed forces executed the operation without harming any "innocent civilians" and with "minimum collateral damage", describing it as "unimaginable and a matter of great pride for the nation.

In retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack, Indian armed forces carried out the strikes on the terror targets including Bahawalpur, a stronghold of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror group.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Pakistan's reputation as the epicenter of global terrorism is rooted in a number of instances where concrete evidence is available, not just to India, but to governments and authorities around the world.

"There are several terrorist attacks around the world where Pakistani fingerprints have been found. I don't need to deliver the point with regards to this audience about where Osama Bin Laden was found, and who called him a martyr," he said.

Will Do Anything

anything to help, I will be there," Trump said in response to a question on the "war" between India and Pakistan.

Trump made the remarks Wednesday in the Oval Office after the swearing-in ceremony of David Perdue as US Ambassador to China.

These were Trump's second remarks on the escalating tensions between the two nuclear-armed South Asian neighbours, after India launched Operation Sindoor targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Just hours after the Indian strikes, Trump had said that India and Pakistan have been fighting for a long time and people knew "something was going to happen".

"It's a shame, we just heard about it just as we were walking in the doors of the Oval (Office). Just heard about it. I guess people knew something was going to happen based on a little bit of the past. They've been fighting for a long time.

"They've been fighting for many, many decades and centuries, actually, if you really think about it," Trump said when asked about the attacks between India and Pakistan.

When asked if he has any message for the countries, he said, "No, I just hope it ends very quickly."

India launched Operation Sindoor early Wednesday hitting nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Punjab in retaliation for the terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22 that killed 26 people.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Army spokesman Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry said 31 people were killed and 57 others injured in the missile strikes launched shortly after midnight on cities in the Punjab province and PoK, and firing on the Line of Control.

UNGA Chief Urges

to exercise restraint and initiate steps to defuse the tension.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) president Yang also advocated "dialogue and diplomatic solutions in line with the UN Charter and international law" for lasting peace.

Yang's appeal comes a day after India's Operation Sindoor early Wednesday hitting nine terror targets in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Punjab province of Pakistan followed by one of the most intense artillery and mortar shelling in years targetting forward Indian villages along the LoC by Pakistan army.

"I am deeply concerned about the escalating hostilities between India and Pakistan. I call for both sides to exercise maximum restraint and for an immediate de-escalation," the UNGA president wrote on X.

Yang also denounced terrorism and attacks on civilians, saying that UN Charter should be followed in letter and spirit to resolve vexing issues for lasting peace.

"I reiterate my condemnation of all terrorist attacks and attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure," he said.

"I firmly believe that dialogue and diplomatic

solutions in line with the UN Charter and international law are the only ways to resolve differences and achieve lasting peace and stability," Yang added.

PM Chaired

remains ongoing. Rajnath said the Indian military is prepared to respond to any escalation but does not seek further military action unless provoked.

The government shared limited operational details, citing national security concerns. The opposition extended support to the government in counter-terrorism efforts.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said all parties expressed solidarity with the government and acknowledged the need for confidentiality in certain matters.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the all-party meeting was held in a cordial environment and commended the political leadership for maintaining unity and refraining from criticism during a sensitive time.

The government has maintained that it remains vigilant and prepared to protect national interests while ensuring internal coordination across agencies and ministries.

LG Takes Stock

any attempt to disturb public order and take the strongest possible measures to prevent fake news and misinformation.

"I have full confidence in the ability of officials, police and security forces to face any emergency situation. Seamless coordination among the administration, police and armed forces is key in the present situation. Deputy commissioners and senior superintendents of police must visit vulnerable areas together, spend time with people on the ground, focus on their needs and remain responsive," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He directed divisional commissioners to meet prominent citizens and ensure continuous public engagement. Other district officers should also visit border areas and meet the citizens and ensure their safety and medicare, he said.

"We have to take precautionary measures and be prepared for exigencies. Ensure effective execution of evacuation plan and other standard operating procedures. Basic facilities should be kept ready at shelter centres," Sinha said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that Indian armed forces have demolished terror factories inside Pakistan and ensured that no one dares to indulge in a misadventure in future.

"The adversary, however, is targeting civilians and on the night of May 7-8, attempted to engage a number of military targets in the country, including Jammu Kashmir. These were neutralised. We need to be alert and civil administration, defence and law enforcement authorities must work unitedly to tackle all the challenges on the ground," he added.

CM Orders

Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir V K Bidhuri, Secretary Health and Medical Education Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah and others.

The Chief Minister called for making immediate arrangements to provide safe accommodation for all those affected in border districts and ensuring uninterrupted essentials to the people.

In a post on X, the Office of Chief Minister, J&K, quoted Omar as saying that coordinated supply of food, drinking water, power and other essentials is being ensured on priority.

The ambulance services are being augmented to handle any medical emergencies effectively while adequate medical facilities and staff are being mobilised to provide timely care to those in need, the post reads.

The review meeting was held against the backdrop of Pakistan's indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas in Jammu and Kashmir after Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes in the neighbouring country to target the terror infrastructure there.

India-Pak Tensions

to bypass the conflict zone, increasing concerns of regional airspace congestion. Lufthansa's Delhi-Frankfurt flight on Wednesday was delayed by over 30 minutes due to the extended routing.

Pakistan, which had temporarily closed its airspace following the attacks, said its airports are now "fully functional" but expressed concern over the safety of Gulf country airliners. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's office accused India of putting 57 international flights at risk during the strikes.

Aviation advisory group OPSGROUP warned that Pakistan could impose a full airspace

lockdown if hostilities escalate further, similar to the 2019 shutdown that lasted nearly six months.

GPS spoofing, regional conflicts, and now airspace shutdowns are compounding operational headaches for airlines already navigating geopolitical risks. The Association of Asia Pacific Airlines raised alarms over the growing impact of such crises on commercial aviation in South Asia and the Middle East.

As of 10:30 GMT on Thursday, 3% of scheduled flights in India and a staggering 17% in Pakistan were cancelled, according to aviation tracking service Flightradar24.

With airspace restrictions, rerouted paths, and political uncertainty mounting, aviation industry insiders fear that the longer this standoff persists, the more severe the fallout for regional and international connectivity.

Schools, Colleges

classwork for Friday. If there are any other changes, we will notify the students accordingly."

Stop Streaming

OTT platforms, media streaming platforms and intermediaries operating in India are advised to discontinue the web-series, films, songs, podcasts and other streaming media content, whether made available on a subscription based model or otherwise, having its origins in Pakistan with immediate effect," the advisory issued by the ministry said.

The ministry said that several terrorist attacks in India have been established to have cross-border linkages with Pakistan-based State and non-State actors.

"Recently, on 22.04.2025, the terrorist attack in Pahalgam led to the killing of several Indians, one Nepali citizen, and injuries to a number of others," the advisory said.

The ministry invoked the Code of Ethics mentioned in Part III of the Information Technology Rules 2021, that publishers have to adhere to.

"Further, rule 3(1)(b) of Part-II of the IT Rules, 2021 provides that intermediaries shall make reasonable efforts by itself, and to cause the users of its computer resource to not host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, store, update or share any information that inter-alia "threatens the unity, integrity, defence, security or sovereignty of India, friendly relations with foreign States, or public order," the advisory added.

The advisory also came in the wake of claims by Pakistan social media handles about Operation Sindoor, which was dismissed by India as "full-blown disinformation offensive" with "lies" and digital theatrics to control the narrative.

"In the coming days your social media will be flooded with Pakistan sponsored propaganda. It's crucial to scrutinize every piece of information carefully," the fact check unit of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said in a post on X.

It said several Pakistan-based handles are circulating an old image that claims that a Pakistani missile has hit an Indian S-400 defence system.

"The image being shared is from 2023, of a fire at a military site in Moscow," the PIB's Fact Check Unit said.

It also said Pakistan-based handles are circulating a video claiming that the Pakistan Army struck posts in Battal Sector in Jammu & Kashmir, eliminating at least 12 Indian soldiers.

"This video is old and NOT related to any activity post #OperationSindoor," the PIB Fact Check unit said, adding that the photo used was from August 2011.

Mudslides, Flash

with rest of the country, was suspended at 7.30 am due to multiple mudslides and shooting stones between Seeri and Nachlana, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded on both sides.

A major mudslide was reported from Chamba-Seeri near Ramban town while a flash flood was also reported near a hotel in Ramban market resulting in damage to several parked vehicles, the officials said.

They said incessant rains are presently hampering the road clearance operation by agencies concerned.

"Commuters are advised not to travel on NH-44 till the weather improves and the road is clear," a traffic department spokesperson said. The weather office has forecast a generally cloudy with light to moderate rain, thunder showers and gusty winds at scattered to fairly widespread places in J&K between May 8 and 11 followed by possibility of brief spell of light rain or thundershower at isolated places on May 12.

"Intense showers at few vulnerable places may lead to landslides and mudslides," a spokesperson of the meteorological department said. He predicted a significant rise in day temperature from May 13 onwards, mainly in Jammu division.

Leh Admin Orders Ban On Flying Of Drones, UAV's

Observer News Service

LEH: In a significant move aimed at bolstering security, the district administration of Leh has imposed a blanket ban on the flying of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) across the region.

The order was issued on Wednesday by District Magistrate Santosh Sukhadeve, citing credible intelligence inputs and potential threats from anti-national elements.

According to the official directive, the decision follows a formal request from the Superintendent of Police, Leh, through letter No. CRB/Crime/2025-10071-74, dated May 8, 2025, highlighting concerns over the possible misuse of drones near sensitive installations and public areas.

"In exercise of powers under

Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, the flying, operation, or use of any kind of drone or UAV by locals, tourists, or private individuals is strictly prohibited within the entire jurisdiction of Leh district," the order, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) states.

Residents and visitors have been urged to report any unauthorized drone activity to the Police Control Room at 6006028084, through the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) by dialing 112, or by notifying the nearest police or civil authorities.

Authorities have warned that violations of the ban will attract strict legal action under applicable laws. The directive, issued in the interest of public safety and national security, will remain in force until further notice.



Kashmir Apple Growers Benefit From Cold Storage

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Despite a slight decline in market demand and a decrease of approximately Rs 200 per box in apple prices, growers in Kashmir are still experiencing profitable returns, thanks to the strong performance of Controlled Atmosphere (CA) cold storage facilities.

Growers said this season has marked a positive shift for apple producers, as many began dispatching their stored produce as early as January, well before the usual mid-February period. "Prices have come down a bit, but we are still making profits," said Javed Ahmad, a grower from Shopian. "The early demand allowed us to sell at better prices before the prices dipped."

Currently, standard 10-kg boxes of apples are selling for around Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,200, while premium 16-kg boxes

fetch Rs 1,400 or more, excluding storage and transportation costs. Although this represents a Rs 200 per box decline from peak prices, growers say it is still better than last year's situation.

In 2024, about 20% of apples stored in CA units remained unsold for over nine months, mainly due to stiff competition from imported apples. However, this year, optimism is high, with nearly 80% of cold storage inventories already sold at better prices.

"Cold storage has truly transformed our business," said Mehraj Ahmad, manager of a CA unit in Lassipora. "Growers are no longer forced to sell at distress prices; they can wait for the right moment."

He added that the remaining 20% of stock is expected to be sold soon, and by the end of this month, the CA storage facilities are likely to be emptied. —(KNO)

Restoration Work Underway On Jmu-Sgr Highway



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The landslide-hit Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained closed on Thursday with the administration stating that road clearance operations are underway.

The highway was closed for traffic following a cloudburst and subsequent mudslides at over five locations, severely impacting vehicular movement and stranding commuters.

Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary said that immediate restoration of traffic movement on the highway is a top priority to ensure that stranded vehicles and passengers reach their destinations safely.

He said that adequate manpower and machinery have been deployed to expedite the clearance operations.

The Deputy Commissioner

also said that the cloudburst has significantly affected villages such as Bagna, Marog, Baihote, and Sincha. Assessment of damages and immediate restoration work will begin soon in these areas to mitigate the impact on local residents.

Furthermore, the district administration is providing all possible assistance, including food and other essential items, to stranded drivers and others in need.

The Deputy Commissioner has appealed to the public to remain patient, follow official traffic and weather advisories, and avoid unnecessary travel until the highway is fully restored and safe for movement.

He also urged people to rely on information available through the official handles of the district administration, District Police Ramban and Traffic Police—(with KNO inputs)

MeT Issues Yellow Alert For May 9-10

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: While the light rains lashed multiple areas across Kashmir, the weatherman here has issued a 'yellow alert' for May 09 and 10, predicting brief spells of light rain, thundershower and gusty winds at scattered to fairly widespread places across Jammu and Kashmir. A two-day yellow alert has been issued by the MeT from May 09.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said partly to generally cloudy with a spell of light to moderate rain, thundershower and gusty winds are expected at scattered to fairly widespread places.

The parts of Kashmir, including Srinagar - the summer

capital of Jammu and Kashmir, were lashed by the light rains on Thursday, bringing down the temperature across the valley.

The MeT Director further predicted the possibility of a brief spell of light rain and thundershower at isolated places on May 12, adding that there is a forecast of generally dry weather conditions from May 13 to May 17.

Meanwhile, the MeT has called upon people to follow the administration and traffic advisory.

"Avoid boating, shikara riding in Dal Lake, Wular Lake and other water bodies during inclement weather and gusty winds," it said in the advisory, adding that intense showers at a few vulnerable places may lead to landslides and mudslides.

CS Takes Stock Of Arrangements For SANJY-2025



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Thursday chaired a high level meeting of all the concerned departments attended by the senior functionaries of Civil Administration and Police to review the position of arrangements being made for smooth conduct of Shri Amarnathji Yatra (SANJY) 2025.

Dulloo had department wise appraisal of the status of facilities to be created by them for safety, security and convenience of the pilgrims going to visit the holy cave during the yatra period.

The Chief Secretary took a detailed review of the facilities to be created for pilgrims particularly in transit camps, lodgements and enroute Jammu-Srinagar National Highway besides on both the axis leading to holy cave from Baltal and Chandanwari.

He directed the concerned to suitably augment all the requisite facilities to ensure smooth and safe conduct of the pilgrimage. He directed the line departments including the PWD, Jal Shakti, PDD, H&UDD, RDD, Tourism, Health, Forest, FCS&CA, Telecom, DMRR&R and others to ensure that the works identified for them are completed well in advance.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned Divisional Commissioners to ensure proper coordination among the departments for timely execution of works on ground. He stressed on finalization of tenders for services like sanitation and others to be done before June so that the service providers are available much before the commencement of the yatra.

He also took a detailed overview of the ongoing works, condition of tracks, infrastructure and that of other services

like capacity of base camps, transit camps, lodgements, holding areas from the concerned Deputy Commissioners. He impressed upon them to make sure that no such facility is established in disaster prone areas and measures like fire-safety audit and compliance with all the safety parameters is done without any compromise.

The Chief Secretary exhorted the administration to increase the ambit of digital prepaid services for the easement of both the pilgrims and service-providers. He asked them to create necessary provisions for enabling most of the transactions to be done through this hassle-free mechanism only.

Dulloo further took note of the roles and responsibilities of the Departments like Health, FCS&CA, Forest, Animal Husbandry, SDRF, Information, Transport, Fire & Emergency Services in the successful conduct of the pilgrimage. He directed them to make adequate arrangements of the services provided by each of them along with the backups for any of the unforeseen circumstances. He asked for exemplary coordination with each other to make this religious affair memorable for all of the pilgrims coming to undertake yatra this year.

Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor and CEO SASB made a detailed presentation on the requirements for successful conduct of this year's annual Amarnathjiyatra here. He also highlighted the roles of the government departments, security forces and different service providers during this time.

He called on the concerned Deputy Commissioners to conspicuously earmark the disaster prone areas for avoiding pitching of tents/shops/langars there. He asked for ensuring every Yatri/ service provider is

allowed on the yatra track only after ascertaining that the concerned person is carrying valid RFID card besides employing effective crowd management and optimum frisking time at each access control gate.

He made out that during SANJY-2024, the holding capacity inside yatra camps established at different locations was over 58,000 and outside the yatra area it was around 53,000 scattered over different districts right from Lakhampur to Ganderbal. He made out that this year the capacity would suitably be augmented with lodgement facilities to be created near relevant Railway Stations too.

Regarding registration of Labour and other service providers, it was given out that till 07.05.2025, a total of 5,134 ponies, 4,910 pony owners, 325 Pithus, 436 Palkiwalas and 27 Hawkers had been registered by the twin Departments of Labour and Animal Husbandry here. It was added that all the ponies are insured under National Livestock Mission for a sum of Rs. 50,000 per animal, covering both natural as well as accidental deaths.

With respect to the weather forecasting infrastructure for dissemination of timely information about weather updates it was revealed that automatic weather stations at appropriate locations would be made operational by 20th June.

Moreover, large sized LED display boards at Base Camps, SMS alert to Administration/ Yatra officers, CAP alert by IMD in case of sudden development of potentially hazardous weather condition, Yatra specific web page, Doppler Weather Radar at Banihal top in addition to deployment of IMD officials at Baltal and Nunwan would also be made to make the yatra safe and secure for every pilgrim.

‘All J&K Hospitals Fully Prepared To Handle Border Tensions’

Agencies

SRINAGAR: An official from the Health and Medical Education (H&ME) Department said that the health infrastructure is fully prepared to handle emergencies.

Eight districts—three in Kashmir and five in Jammu—bordering Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), are considered most vulnerable to injuries, and all necessary facilities have been activated to ensure timely treatment for the injured.

The Government Medical College (GMC) Hospital Jammu, a leading healthcare institution in the region, said it is ready to manage medical emergencies arising from ongoing border tensions.

"We are equipped to respond to any situation. Mini ICUs with ventilators and monitors are operational, and we have sufficient stocks of medicines," said an official at GMC Jammu.

The hospital has prepared over 200 beds, with medical teams and logistical support staff on standby to provide 24/7 care, especially for those affected by shelling incidents. Authorities have also issued alerts to health facilities in border districts such as Rajouri, Poonch, Kathua, and Samba, urging vigilance and preparedness. Similar instructions have been disseminated in districts across north Kashmir.

Health authorities have assured the public that all necessary arrangements are in place to handle any emergencies. "From blood banks to trauma units, everything is ready. We have coordinated with district hospitals to

Satish Sharma Visits GMC Jammu



JAMMU: Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Youth Service Sports, Satish Sharma Thursday visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu to meet and enquire about the health, well-being of civilians injured in the recent cross border firing incidents along the Line of Control (LoC).

During the visit, Sharma interacted with the injured and their families, assuring them of the government's full support in ensuring the best possible medical care and rehabilitation. He directed the GMC administration and medical staff

to provide all necessary assistance and maintain high standards of care for the injured.

"We stand firmly with every citizen affected by this cowardly act," said the Minister. "The government is committed towards safeguarding the lives and dignity of our people living in border areas," he emphasized.

The Minister was accompanied by senior officials from the Health Department and the district administration, who briefed him on the ongoing treatment and the measures being taken to support the victims and their families.

Hospitals also said adequate stocks of medicines and blood supplies are available across all blood banks. They have called

on volunteers to step forward and donate blood voluntarily, to ensure sufficient reserves in case of emergencies.

Meanwhile, authorities continue to monitor the border situation closely, as fears of further escalation persist. The Jammu and Kashmir administration has urged residents in vulnerable areas to follow safety advisories and cooperate with emergency services to ensure safety and preparedness—(KNO)

HC Upholds Advisory To Chemists To Install CCTVs

Says Move Aiming At Checking, Preventing Sale Of Prohibited Drugs

M Ahmad

SRINAGAR: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has dismissed a plea challenging a government advisory, directing Retail Pharmacies and Wholesale Drug Outlets to install CCTV cameras and adopt a fully computerized billing system.

"This advisory...is...helpful in checking the purchase of prohibited drugs, and would serve a purpose for the benefit of public at large," said a bench of Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul while dismissing a petition filed by All India Organization of Chemists and Druggists which had claimed that the advisory was coming "heavily in the way of conduct of the business by the druggists and is, thus, impacting the chemists."

"It is not understandable how petitioners are aggrieved of the advisory so far as it directs retail pharmacies and/or wholesale drug outlets of U.T. of J&K to install CCTV cameras and adopt fully computerized billing system," the court said, adding, "The purpose for issuing such advisory is aiming at checking and preventing sale of prohibited drugs used as drug abuse by drug addicts and drug traffickers, who buy it from medical shops/stores."

Thus, the installation of CCTV cameras would help in identifying such drug abusers and, obviously, quell such practices besides maintaining computerized bills, the court said.

"It is worthwhile to mention here that consequences of drug use usually are not limited to users and often extend to the user's family and the greater community," the court said, adding, "The consequences of illicit drug use impact the entire criminal justice system, taxing resources at each stage of release supervision process. It impacts productivity.

It causes premature mortality, illness, injury leading to incapacitation and imprisonment all serve to directly reduce national productivity." The court underlined that public financial resources expended in the areas of health care and criminal justice as a result of illegal drug trafficking and use are resources which could otherwise be available for other policy initiatives.

"The global drug problem presents a multifaceted challenge that touches the lives of millions worldwide. From individuals struggling with substance use disorders to communities grappling with the consequences of drug trafficking and organized crime, the impact of drugs is far-reaching and complex," the court added.

Earlier the court was informed that over 98% of retail pharmacies and 99 percent of wholesale establishments have already installed CCTV cameras and adopted a computerized billing system.

"When the majority of retail pharmacies and wholesale establishments have installed CCTV cameras and started issuing computerized bills, it is not known who are being represented by petitioner-association in the instant writ petition," the court said, adding, "It appears that the name of association is being used albeit majority of drug pharmacies have already adopted installation of CCTV cameras. This suggests that a handful of drug pharmacies through instant writ petitions want to defeat the objective of the scheme of installation of CCTV cameras and computerization of the billing system."

The association instead of approaching the Court should have voluntarily installed CCTV cameras and adopted computerization of the billing system, the Bench said.

J&K Bank Conducts Orientation Workshop On 'Lal Ded Stree Shakti Loan Scheme'

Observer News Service



SRINAGAR: Reaffirming its commitment to women empowerment through inclusive financial interventions, J&K Bank today conducted a workshop-cum-orientation programme for officials of Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM) across the Union Territory. The session was aimed at familiarizing the participants with the recently launched microfinance product – J&K Bank Lal Ded Stree Shakti Loan Scheme – tailored specifically for women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Held through VC mode, the workshop was jointly chaired by the Bank's Deputy General Manager (MSME/Agri/GSS), Rakesh Magotra and Mission Director, JKRLM, Dr. Shubra Sharma. J&K Bank's Assistant General Manager Nuzhat Parveen, Incharge GSS Department Aftab Shalla, and JKRLM's State Project Manager (Financial Inclusion) Zubair Hassan were among the senior functionaries from both institutions who participated in the session alongside district and block-level officers and field functionaries of JKRLM.

Speaking on the occasion, DGM Rakesh Magotra said, "The Lal Ded Stree Shakti Loan is an individual micro-loan product curated for women associated with SHGs. Designed to encourage income-generating activities, the product allows eligible members to access credit based on group liability – thereby promoting financial independence and entrepreneurship among women in rural and semi-urban areas."

Presenting the operational and financial contours of the scheme, AGM Nuzhat Parveen gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation highlighting key features of the loan product. "Active women members of SHGs can avail credit ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2.00 lakh under the scheme at a concessional interest rate," she informed.

The session also featured an interactive Q&A round where queries raised by participants were addressed by Bank officials.

Notably, the Lal Ded Stree Shakti Loan Scheme was launched by the Chief Secretary, J&K Government, on International Women's Day this year during the 15th Union Territory Level Bankers' Committee (UTLBC) meeting held in Jammu. Rolled out as part of a strategic partnership between J&K Bank and JKRLM, the scheme is aimed at strengthening women-led SHGs by providing them with accessible and affordable credit for livelihood generation.

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Red-Hot RCB Aim To Seal Play-Off Spot Against Under-Pressure LSG

Press Trust of India

LUCKNOW: Royal Challengers Bengaluru would look to secure play-off qualification while the struggling Lucknow Super Giants will aim to stay alive in the tournament when the two sides clash in the Indian Premier League here on Friday.

Pressure is mounting on LSG skipper Rishabh Pant with every passing game, with his lack of runs coinciding with the team's slide in the business end of the tournament.

LSG have lost four of their last five games and can only reach 16 points if they win their remaining three games. 18 is a much



safer number in the play-offs race and RCB would back themselves to get there after winning five of their last six games.

Pant, who became the highest-paid player at the IPL auc-

tion, has had a season to forget thus far. He has tried batting at different positions but consistency has eluded him. His strike rate of 99.92 sums up his struggles this season.

LSG have relied heavily on their top three, including Mitchell Marsh, Aiden Markram and Nicholas Pooran, but that will to have change if they are to go deep in the tournament.

On the bowling front as well, they can improve a lot. Injury-prone pace sensation Mayank Yadav has proved expensive since his comeback. The fielding and catching of the team has also left a lot to be desired.

Chasing an elusive title, RCB, on the other hand, have enjoyed one of their most professional campaigns in IPL history.

Virat Kohli continues to pile on the runs with ridiculous consistency, having collected seven

fifties in 11 innings.

He provides the platform and the likes of Rajat Patidar and more recently Romario Shephard flex their muscle in the death overs.

Mayank Agarwal has joined the squad as a replacement for injured Devdutt Padikkal, who had reinvented himself this season.

The spin duo of Krunal Pandya and Suyash Sharma have been very effective while Josh Hazlewood and Yash Dayal have bowled the difficult overs with ease in the pace department.

LSG will need to come up with something special to halt the RCB juggernaut. Match starts 7.30 IST.

Short TAKES

IPL 2025: PBKS v DC Called Off Amid Blackout In Dharamsala

The IPL match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals here on Thursday was called off due to security reasons following air raid alerts in nearby areas, which forced a blackout in the hill town.

The Punjab side was 122 for 1 in 10.1 overs when the lights went out which at first was attributed to floodlight failure.

But later the teams and the spectators were evacuated from the stadium for their security.

Prabhsimran Singh was batting at 50 off 28 balls while his opening partner Priyansh Arya made 70 off 34 balls before getting dismissed by pacer T Natarajan before proceedings came to a halt.

J&K's Volleyball Team Strike Gold At Khelo India Youth Games

J&K joined the gold medal winners' list on Thursday as their boys' volleyball team edged out Uttar Pradesh in a thrilling summit clash of the 2025 Khelo India Youth Games being held in Bihar.

J&K's boys' volleyball team showcased resilience and focus to down Uttar Pradesh 35-33, 19-25, 25-17, 25-21 in a high-intensity final. Tamil Nadu rallied from the loss of the opening game to beat West Bengal 3-1 to claim the girls crown.

Maharashtra consolidated its place at the top with 19 gold, 19 silver and 16 bronze medals.

The battle for second place intensified with Rajasthan, who have 12 gold, five silver and four bronze, staying marginally ahead of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, who also crossed the 10-gold mark on Thursday.

Pakistan's Cricket Schedule Takes A Hit Amid Indian Military Strikes

A Pakistan Super League match was rescheduled, foreign players participating in the event weighed their options, while the PCB went into a huddle on whether to continue with it at all as the country's cricket schedule went haywire following India's military strikes across cities here.

The PSL, a T20 league which follows the IPL format, features six franchises and is scheduled to wind up in Lahore on May 18.

It was currently in its Rawalpindi leg but tonight's match between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi has been rescheduled for an unspecified later date by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

The Indian drone and missile strikes, which have targetted among others Lahore and Rawalpindi so far, are in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed.

Tonight's match aside, the league's future this season looks bleak at present with foreign players edgy about the security situation due to the military escalation between the two neighbours.

A report in 'The Telegraph' said English players, who have signed up for the league, are "split on whether to remain in Pakistan and play cricket".

Khyber Kashmir Super League Names Nivia As Official Ball Partner

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Khyber Cement Kashmir Super League 2025, powered by Athwas Hyundai, on Thursday announced Nivia as the official ball partner. The organisers say the upcoming season is poised to be the biggest and most competitive yet, uniting football fans across the valley.

This year's edition will feature six formidable teams, bat-

ting it out across 19 matches in a format designed to deliver maximum excitement and fierce competition. The league will feature six corporate teams.

The tournament will kick off with a round-robin league stage, where each team plays against every other team once – totalling 15 matches. The top four teams from the league stage will qualify for the playoffs, which will include:

- Qualifier 1 (1st place vs

- 2nd place)
- Eliminator (3rd place vs 4th place)
- Qualifier 2 (Loser of Qualifier 1 vs Winner of Eliminator)
- Grand Finale (Winner of Qualifier 1 vs Winner of Qualifier 2)

All matches will feature the newly launched Nivia official match ball, the same high-performance ball used in the Indian Super League.

YSS Budgam Holds Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Under the guidance of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Gh. Hassan Lone, various zones of the district organised a series of Inter-School Zonal Level Competitions across multiple sporting disciplines, drawing enthusiastic participation from a large number of students.

Zone Beerwah hosted Kho-Kho and Kabaddi tournaments for Boys in the Under-14 and Under-17 categories at DIET Ground Beerwah.

At Government Degree College Khansahib, an Inter-School Zonal Level Volleyball event for Boys and Girls

Under-14 was inaugurated by DDC Khansahib Bashir Ahmad Bhat, DDC Khag Molvi Nisar Ahmad Sahib and Sameer Ahmad (PTI, GDC Khansahib).

In Zone Chadoora, the Zonal Physical Education Office conducted Selection Trials for Martial Arts including disciplines like Judo and Thang-Ta for Boys Under-14 and Under-17.

Meanwhile, ZPEO Hardpanzoo inaugurated the Inter-School Zonal Level Kho-Kho Tournament for Under-14 Girls at HS Arizal.

In Zone Charari Sharief, an Inter-School Zonal Level Kho-Kho Tournament for Under-14 Girls was organized at the Sports Stadium Charari Sharief.

J&K Athletes Join 2nd Batch All India Kabaddi Referees Exam

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: General Secretary of J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association Kuldeep Kumar Gupta told that second batch of All India Kabaddi Examination for fresher has been conducted by Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India from 4th to 8 May at Jaipur, Rajasthan. All State/UT officials have undergone in the said examination, among them Mir Alam, Majid Khan, Nazarat Bhatti, Tanvir Iqbal and Anita Sharma from J&K have undergone 2nd Batch All India



Kabaddi Referees Examination which will boost Kabaddi during officiating of matches in the region.

They have to officiate local

tournaments, district championships, UT championships, School Nationals Games, Inter College and University Games, Police Games and National Championships.

The President of the association, Anil Gupta has appreciated the second batch undergoing training as Technical Officials.

The validity of the Fresher Course is three years from the date of examination and needs to be renewed accordingly to sustain the eligibility for officiating Kabaddi tournaments.



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