

## India-Pakistan Ceasefire Extended

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The Indian Army on Thursday said that following the understanding reached between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan on May 10, both sides have agreed to continue confidence-building measures aimed at reducing alertness levels along the border.

The decision was conveyed in a communication issued by the Indian Army on Thursday.

"As the situation develops further, we shall intimate you," the note added.

The Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of Pakistan and India talked over a hotline to discuss the ceasefire, which has now been extended until May 18, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar | [More on P10](#)

## Pak Signals Willingness To Discuss IWT

Weeks after India placed the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan has signalled its willingness to discuss New Delhi's long-standing concerns about the treaty, sources said. According to the sources, Pakistan's | [More on P10](#)

# Op Sindoor India's Most Decisive Strike In 30 Yrs: DM

'Talks With Pak Only On Terrorism, PoK' | Says Terror Acts Will Be Met With War



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said that any talks with Pakistan will only be on terrorism and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Addressing soldiers at Badami Bagh Cantonment

here, Singh said India will soon eradicate terrorism from the region with the help of the armed forces.

"Had a wonderful interaction with the brave Indian Army soldiers at the Badami Bagh Cantt in Srinagar. PM

Shri @narendramodi has re-defined India's policy against terrorism, and any attack on Indian soil will be considered an act of war," Singh posted on X after interacting with soldiers at the Badami Bagh Cantonment here.

"Terrorism and talks cannot go together; talks with Pakistan will only be held on terrorism and | [More on P10](#)

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## Armed Forces Scripted Historic Victory: LG

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said the country is proud of the armed forces for avenging the Pahalgam terror attack by launching Operation Sindoor against terror infrastructure in Pakistan.

The LG also echoed Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's words that Pakistan's nuclear weapons should be under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"Nation is proud of our armed forces for scripting a historic victory saga of

'Operation Sindoor' with bravery and avenging Pahalgam terror attack. They have given exemplary punishment to terror planners sitting in Pakistan by dismantling their terror bases and killing top terrorists," Sinha said in a series of posts on X.

He also posted pictures of the defence minister interacting with soldiers at the Army's 15 Corps headquarters at Badami Bagh here. The LG was also present at the function.

"The world has seen that terrorism in J&K Union Territory is engineered and executed by Pakistan and our mighty forces have | [More on P10](#)

## 3 JeM Terrorists Killed In Tral Encounter

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Three Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, officials said.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the Nader Tral area of Awantipora in the south Kashmir district after receiving specific inputs about the presence of terrorists there, a police official said.

The search operation turned into a gunfight after the terrorists opened fire at the forces, who retaliated, he said.

The three terrorists were killed in the exchange of fire, they said.

"The eliminated terrorists have been identified as Asif Ahmed Sheikh, Amir Nazir Wani and Yawar Ahmed Bhat, from whom three AK-series rifles, twelve magazines, three grenades and various other war like stores have been recovered," Army's Chinara Corps said in a post on X.

Sources in police said the terrorists belonged to the proscribed JeM.

Speaking to reporters near the encounter site, inspector general of police (IGP), Kashmir, V K Birdi termed the killing of the three as a significant development in the fight against terror.

"These are | [More on P10](#)

## Mercury Soars Across J&K Srinagar Hits 30°C, Dry Spell To Continue Till May 18

Agencies

Srinagar: The maximum temperatures rose in the twin capitals of Jammu and Kashmir with mercury settling in Srinagar at 30.0 degrees Celsius and 40.4 degrees Celsius in Jammu on Thursday.

A significant rise in the day temperature was witnessed at multiple places in Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu was the hottest in the region at 40.4 degrees Celsius, reads data of the local Meteorological department (MeT).

Around 30 degrees Celsius temperature was recorded at three other places, including Batote, Banihal and Bhaderwah, the data reveals. Furthermore, Qazigund recorded a day temperature of 29.7 degrees Celsius, followed by Kokernag at 28.4 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded 27.9 degrees Celsius while Gulmarg recorded a

maximum temperature of 20.0 degrees Celsius. The mercury in Pahalgam settled at 24.5 degrees Celsius.

Meanwhile, Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said that generally dry weather conditions are expected till May 18 evening with the possibility of rain, thundershower, gusty winds towards the evening at scattered places on Sunday.

He added that there is a possibility of light rain, thunder and gusty winds at scattered places on May 19, while generally dry weather is expected from May 20 to May 22 in the region.

Moreover, in its advisory, the MeT has said that a significant rise in day temperature is expected during the next three days, mainly in the Jammu division.

The farmers have been advised to continue farm operations till May 18 afternoon.

SRINAGAR  
30.0°C

JAMMU  
40.4°C

BANIHAL  
30°C

QAZIGUND  
29.7°C

KOKERNAG  
28.4°C

KUPWARA  
27.9°C

PAHALGAM  
24.5°C

GULMARG  
20.0°C

## Robust Tourism Strategy After Amarnath Yatra: CM

Chairs Meeting With Key Tourism Stakeholders

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Thursday chaired a meeting with key tourism stakeholders to listen to their concerns and discuss a way forward for the tourism sector in Kashmir in the aftermath of the recent adverse situation affecting tourism in the region.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister called for the formulation of a comprehensive and well-thought-out tourism revival plan.

"This is my suggestion for your consideration that we thoughtfully shape and finalize this plan without undue haste," he said.

He proposed that a robust tourism revival strategy be jointly developed with the Tourism Department after



the conclusion of this year's Amarnath Yatra.

The package, he said, should extend support to hotels, houseboats, shikaras, taxis, handicrafts and explore innovative models such as unique shopping festivals on the analogy of those in Dubai.

"We should also consider engaging artists for cultural performances, restarting the laser fountain shows, and

introducing other attractions to enhance the tourist experience," the Chief Minister added.

Acknowledging the difficulties faced by the tourism sector, Omar Abdullah said, "I understand the challenges many of you are grappling with—be it managing establishments, retaining employees, or dealing with fixed overheads. Many among you are under | [More on P10](#)

## Will Make Every Effort To Bring Back Tourists: Union Minister

Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu Thursday said the government would make every effort to bring back tourists to Kashmir, which has

witnessed a decrease in footfall of visitors after last month's terror attack in Pahalgam. He reviewed the functioning of the Srinagar airport | [More on P10](#)

## SC Order On Assent To Bills President Seeks Top Court's Opinion, Poses 14 Questions

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu has posed 14 crucial questions to the Supreme Court over its April 8 verdict that fixed timelines for governors and the President to act on bills passed by state assemblies.

Exercising her power under the rarely used Article 143 (1), President Murmu said in the present circumstances, it appears that the following questions of law have arisen and they are of such nature and public importance that it is expedient to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court of India thereon.

Article 143 (1) of the Constitution deals with the power of the President to consult the Supreme Court.

The provision says, "If at any time it appears to the President that a question of law or fact has arisen, or is likely to arise, which is of such a nature and of such public importance that it is expedient to obtain

the opinion of the Supreme Court upon it, he may refer the question to that Court for consideration and the Court may, after such hearing as it thinks fit, report to the President its opinion thereon".

The questions posed by the President are: \* What are the constitutional options before a governor when a bill is presented to him under Article

200 of the Constitution of India? \* Is the governor bound by the aid and advice tendered by the Council of Ministers while exercising all the options available with him when a bill is presented before him under Article 200 of the Constitution of India? \* Is the exercise of constitutional discretion by the governor under Article 200 of the Constitution of India justifiable? \* Is Article 361 of the Constitution of India an absolute bar to judicial review in relation to the actions of a governor under Article 200 of the Constitution of India? \* In the absence of a constitutionally | [More on P10](#)



## Trump Wants Apple To Stop Production Of iPhones In India

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: US President Donald Trump on Thursday said he has asked Apple CEO Tim Cook to stop producing iPhones in India, and rather make them in the US.

Apple has no smartphone production in the US - most of its iPhones are made in China while facilities in India produce around 40 million units per year (about 15 percent of Apple's annual output).

Trump, who in his second term as President is pushing for local manufacturing, said Apple will be "upping their production in the United States."

Soon after Trump's comments in Doha, Qatar, Indian government officials spoke to Apple executives, who assured that Apple's investment plans for India are intact and the company proposes to make the country a major manufacturing base for its products.

"I had a little problem with Tim Cook yesterday," Trump said of his conversation with Apple's CEO, in Doha. "I said to him, Tim,



you're my friend. I treated you very well. You're coming in with USD 500 billion (investment). But now I hear you're building all over India. I don't want you building in India if you want to take care of India."

Apple had earlier this year pledged to spend USD 500 billion in the US over the next four years.

As a result of discussions with Cook, Trump said Apple will be "upping their production in the United States."

He did not elaborate.

While Apple did not respond to an e-mail sent for comments, sources | [More on P10](#)



Utensils lie broken and walls bear the scars as a man inspects his damaged kitchen after cross-border shelling in Poonch. KO Photo by Faisal Khan.

## Court Sentences 5 Drug Peddlers To 10-yr RI

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A special court in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district sentenced five individuals to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh each for their involvement in illegal drug trafficking.

The special judge, designated under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, convicted Mohammad Rafiq Bhat, Anayatullah Bhat, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat, Mubeena Banoo, and Sajad Ahmad Ganie for attempting to sell charas to local youth in 2022.

According to police, the accused were caught red-handed by law enforcement officials at Kokernag police station with 5 kg of charas in their possession. The prosecution presented 17 witnesses during the trial to support the charges.

After thoroughly examining the evidence and hearing arguments from | [More on P10](#)









## Govt Forms Panel To Frame Policy For Renovation Of Buildings Near Dal Lake

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has formed a committee to develop a comprehensive policy for the repair and renovation of buildings situated within 200 meters of Dal Lake.

This policy, as per the government order, will specifically address structures that were legitimately built before the imposition of a ban by the High Court of J&K on July 19, 2002.

The committee will be headed by the Divisional Commissioner of Kashmir and will include several key officials from various government departments.

The members of the committee include the Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar, the Commissioner of Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Vice Chairmen of the Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA) and the Srinagar Develop-

ment Authority, the Director of Tourism Kashmir, and other relevant experts.

The committee's primary objectives are to establish criteria for determining which buildings were constructed legally before the imposition of the ban. Create a framework for granting permissions for repair, renovation, and reconstruction of these buildings, ensuring they comply with the relevant environmental and regulatory norms.

Recommend measures to promote the use of sustainable construction technologies and proper waste disposal during repairs and renovations to protect the ecological balance of the area. Set guidelines to maintain the aesthetic appeal and heritage character of the region during construction activities.

Propose further steps for improving the sustainability and safety of buildings around the Dal and Nigeen Lakes.

## Mandeep Kaur Reviews Ongoing Projects In City



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD), Mandeep Kaur on Thursday conducted an extensive tour of Srinagar city to review implementation of key urban developmental projects.

Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Dr. Owais Ahmed, Vice Chairman LCMA, Shahid Saleem, senior officials of SMC, LCMA and other line departments accompanied the Commissioner Secretary.

The tour included visit to multiple project sites across the city, focusing on ongoing interventions aimed at urban beautification, environmental sustainability and infrastructure development.

The Commissioner Secretary visited Eidgah, Brar

Numbal site, Rakh Arth housing colony Bemina, Parimpora and adjoining areas.

She emphasized the importance of completing projects within stipulated timelines. He asked for fostering effective coordination among the agencies to realise tangible improvements in Srinagar's air quality. She stressed the need to accelerate project execution and involve local communities for greater impact.

Later, the Commissioner Secretary held a review meeting with the concerned officials to discuss project timelines, identify bottlenecks and formulate mitigation strategies.

The Commissioner Secretary highlighted the critical role of sustainable urban planning and smart city initiatives in creating a resilient, cleaner and healthier Srinagar.

## Programme On Drug Abuse Held At Women's College Nawakadal

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** To sensitise students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encourage them to play their part in its eradication from the society, District Administration Srinagar organized an awareness programme on Drug De-Addiction at Government Women's College Nawakadal.

The event was held on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat as part of an ongoing Drug Free Jammu and Kashmir initiative of the Government to educate school children, staff members, and local residents about the growing menace of drug addiction and the collective responsibility to curb it.

During the event, informative sessions addressing the physical, mental, and social consequences of substance abuse were held to effectively sensitise the participants.

The program witnessed active participation from college faculty, students, local community members and officials from various departments.

The event featured active participation from Departmental Resource persons representing Social Welfare, Police, Health, Education, Excise and SMC and others, all working together to raise awareness among students and the local population.

Students contributed through speeches, skits, and discussions, further emphasizing the message.

## Minors Back On Roads Without Helmets, Public Seeks Action

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Despite previous efforts by traffic authorities to curb underage and unlicensed driving, minors are once again being spotted riding two-wheelers without helmets across several localities in Srinagar, particularly in the city's interior areas.

Following the Tengapora Thar Jeep accident, the Traffic Police had launched awareness campaigns targeting parents, urging them not to allow their underage children behind the wheel. The initiative received appreciation for its active enforcement and educational

outreach. However, the current situation suggests a worrying return to reckless behavior on the roads.

Locals say the streets of Srinagar are once more witnessing young boys and girls, many without valid driving licenses or helmets, zipping through busy and narrow lanes, putting their own lives and those of others at risk.

"Just weeks ago, there was strict checking, and we thought things have improved," said a local from Downtown Srinagar. "But now, minors are back on the roads like nothing ever happened. Authorities must act before another tragedy occurs." [KNT]

# BJP Holds Tiranga Rally To Mark Operation Sindoor's Success



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Leaders and workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday held a Tiranga rally at Srinagar's Lal Chowk to commemorate the success of 'Operation Sindoor'—a military response to the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 that claimed the lives of 26 individuals, most of them tourists.

Amid tight security, the iconic Ghanta Ghar in Lal Chowk echoed with patriotic slogans such as "Hum Hindustani hain, Hindustan hamara hai," as hundreds of BJP supporters marched, waving the national flag.

The rally, which began from Sher-i-Kashmir Park and culminated at Lal Chowk, witnessed significant participation from senior BJP leaders and party workers, all unified in expressing solidarity with the armed forces and honoring their swift response to the deadly attack.

J&K BJP President Sat Sharma led the rally, accompanied by other senior leaders. Addressing the gathering

**6** **ICONIC GHANTA GHAR IN LAL CHOWK ECHOED WITH PATRIOTIC SLOGANS SUCH AS "Hum Hindustani hain, Hindustan hamara hai," as hundreds of BJP supporters marched, waving the national flag.**

at Lal Chowk, Dr. Darakhshan Andrabi, National Executive Member of BJP and Chairperson of the J&K Wakf Board, praised the armed forces for their precision and courage.

"Pakistan has consistently targeted our people, but under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has shown strength and fearlessness," Andrabi said. "Opera-

tion Sindoor was a bold and decisive strike on terror camps across the border. This Tiranga Rally is a tribute to our brave forces and a strong message to the global community."

She further remarked that Jammu and Kashmir has long suffered the brunt of cross-border terrorism and called upon citizens to unite for peace and prosperity in the region.

Similar Tiranga Yatras were held across the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region. In South Kashmir's Pahalgam—where the April 22 attack occurred—BJP workers and local residents conducted a distinctive rally on horseback, symbolizing resilience and a call for peace.

The Pahalgam rally also aimed to highlight the importance of restoring normalcy and supporting the region's tourism industry, which has suffered in the aftermath of the attack.

Elsewhere in the Valley and in Jammu, BJP Karyakartas took to the streets holding aloft the tricolour in solidarity with the armed forces and in celebration of Operation Sindoor's success.

## IUST's Media Students Visit Kashmir Observer

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** As part of its Industry Connect initiative, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication (DJMC), Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), organised an industrial tour to Kashmir Observer on Thursday.

The objective of the tour was to bridge the gap between academic learning and the practical dynamics of a newsroom. It aimed to familiarise students with real-time newsroom operations, and editorial practices in local and national print media organisations. During the tour, coordinated by Dr. Rabia Noor, Head, DJMC, the students interacted with several senior journalists.

The management of Kashmir Observer lauded the initiative and expressed interest in future collaborations to help shape the next generation of journalists. Editor-in-Chief, Kashmir Observer, Sajjad Haider, discussed job prospects for media students and encouraged them to learn social media management as well. He underscored the importance of grooming journalists directly from the field.

News Editor, Farzana Nisar, advised



students to "think out of the box" and encouraged them to move beyond hyperlocal narratives, emphasising the importance of pitching the right stories to the right platforms.

She also suggested organising a dedicated workshop on effective story pitching to further hone students' skills.

Shahid Ansari, from the administration team, advised students to align their abilities with evolving industry expectations. He said what matters the most is acquiring skills during one's academic journey and one should be able to foresee what is next after completing education.

"You should be industry-ready, so focus on building real and adaptable skills," he said.

Online Editor, Syed Hamid, said, it is an era of Online Journalism, where-

in news breaks every minute, so one has to be quick enough to cover it immediately while ensuring that "only credible news is being covered."

Other journalists who interacted with students included Syed Burhan, Feature Writer, and Roshan Elahi, Sports Editor.

Chief Designer, Muntazir Yaseen, said even as Artificial Intelligence is everywhere, it cannot beat human creativity. He added that graphic designing is a potential field to be explored by students.

Students were also given a tour of four major departments of the media house, viz., Editorial (Print and Multimedia), Advertising, Circulation, and Administration.

Later, the team also visited the office of The Hindu at Press Enclave here.



## 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), Dareskh Kadal Chowk, Srinagar

**9070806160**

- 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

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



### RAILWAYS

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



### HIGHWAY STATUS

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



**HIJRI  
CALENDAR**  
18 Zil-Qadah  
1446

### PRAYERS

FAJR	3:53
ZUHR	12: 27
ASR	5:21
Magrib	7:29
ISHA	9:03

## This Day In History

- 1204 - Baldwin IX, Count of Flanders, is crowned as the first Emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople
- 1527 - Florence becomes a republic
- 1571 Johannes Kepler, by his own calculations, is conceived at 4:37 AM
- 1606 - 2,000 foreigners murdered in Russia
- 1648 - Battle of Zhovti Vody: Bohdan Chmielricki's cosacks defeat Polish King John Casimir after 18 days of battle
- 1771 - The Battle of Alamance, a pre-American Revolutionary War battle between local
- Militia and a group of rebels called "The Regulators", occurs in present-day Alamancecounty, North Carolina.
- 1795 - Hedges Treaty: Batavia Republic becomes French vassal state
- 1803 - Peace of Amiens between French Republic and Great Britain ends
- 1811 - Peninsular War: Allies defeat French at Albuera
- 1822 - Greek War of Independence: Turks capture the Greek town of Souli.
- 1860 - Chicago: Republican convention selects Abraham Lincoln as candidate
- 1863 - Battle of Champion's Hill, Mississippi-bloodiest action of Vicksburg Campaign
- 1875 - Earthquake in Venezuela & Colombia kills 16,000
- 1907 - In the Pact of Cartagena, Great Britain, France, and Spain agree to maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic coast of Europe and Africa
- 1918 - The Sedition Act of 1918 is passed by the U.S. Congress, making criticism of the government an imprisonable offense.
- 1936 - 1st British air hostess Daphne Kearley flies to France
- 1941 - Last great German air attack on Great Britain (Birmingham)
- 1945 - Violent battles around Sugar Loaf and Half Moon, Okinawa
- 1948 - Chaim Weizmann elected 1st President of Israel
- 1948 - Egyptians enter Gaza
- 1956 - Egypt recognizes People's Republic of China
- 1957 - US launches its 3rd atomic submarine, USS Skate, at Groton Conn
- 1960 - Big 4 summit in Paris collapses as USSR levels spy charges against US
- 1960 - Theodore Maiman operates the first optical laser, at Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu, California.
- 1965 - Bomb destroys USAF base Bien Hoa South Vietnam
- 1968 - Earthquake kills 47 in Japan
- 1969 - Venera 5 lands on Venus, returns data on atmosphere
- 1974 - USSR performs nuclear Test at Eastern Kazakh/ Semipalatinsk
- 1975 - India annexes Principality of Sikkim
- 1975 - Junko Tabei from Japan becomes 1st woman to reach summit of Mt Everest
- 1983 - Lebanese parliament accepts peace accord with Israel
- 1989 - Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping meet in Beijing and formally end a 30-year rift
- 1991 - Queen Elizabeth II becomes 1st British monarch to address US congress
- 1992 - US space shuttle STS-49 lands (maiden voyage of Endeavour)
- 2003 - In Casablanca, Morocco, 33 civilians are killed and more than 100 people are injured in the Casablanca terrorist attacks.
- 2007 - Nicolas Sarkozy becomes the 23rd President of France
- 2011 - Space shuttle Endeavour launches for its final commission in space
- 2013 - Human stem cells are successfully cloned
- 2013 - Bill Gates regains his position as the world's richest man with \$72.7 billion after losing the position in 2008
- 2019- New DNA research showing bedbugs are older than humans - 115 million years old and outlived dinosaurs, published in "Current Biology"
- 2019- South African Saray Khumalo is the first black African woman to climb Mt Everest
- 2019- US President Donald Trump declares a national emergency over IT threats, banning US companies from using foreign technology without a license
- 2022- Sweden formally announces it will seek to join NATO after 200 years of neutrality, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine



## Delhi HC Seeks NIA's Stand on Er Rashid's Bail Plea

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the NIA's stand on a bail plea by Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid in a terror funding case.

A Bench of Justices Subramonium Prasad and Harish



Vaidyanathan Shankar issued notice on the parliamentarian's appeal against a trial court order which refused to grant him bail on March 21.

The Bench also asked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to respond to a separate plea by Rashid challenging the framing of charges in the case.

It clarified that the NIA's reply shall be filed only with respect to the question of a



**The Bench also asked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to respond to a separate plea by Rashid challenging the framing of charges in the case.**

delay of around 1,100 days in mounting the challenge against the charges.

The court listed both cases for hearing on July 29.

Rashid has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after he was arrested by the NIA under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the 2017 terror funding case.

## 10 Militants Gunned Down In Manipur's Chandel, Operation Underway



Agencies

Imphal: Operations were underway on Thursday morning after Assam Rifles gunned down 10 militants in an encounter in Manipur's Chandel district, officials said.

The site of the encounter is close to the India-Myanmar international border in the hilly terrain of Chandel district, an official said, adding it is 130 km from the state capital Imphal and has scant human inhabitation.

Kohima-based Defence PRO told PTI, "The operation is still underway on Thursday morning and more information will be shared only when it is over."

When asked about the identity of the militants involved, a central security official said, "The troops are

still conducting operations and the identity is yet to be confirmed."

The Army's Eastern Command said in a post on X on Wednesday, "Acting on specific intelligence on movement of armed cadres near the New Samtal village, Khengjoy tehsil, Chandel district, close to the Indo-Myanmar border, Assam Rifles unit under Spear Corps launched an operation on May 14."

"During the operation, the troops were fired upon by suspected cadres to which they quickly reacted, redeployed and retaliated in a calibrated and measured manner. In the ensuing firefight, 10 cadres were neutralised and a sizeable quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered," it added.



**The operation is still underway on Thursday morning and more information will be shared only when it is over**



## New Israeli Strikes Kill Over 100 In Gaza Amid Trump's Tour Of Region

Agencies

Gaza City: Thursday has been another bloody day for Gaza residents as the Israeli military pressed ahead with its unrelenting attacks across the blockaded territory.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump on Thursday doubled down on his controversial scheme to displace Palestinians from their homeland.

Palestinian rescuers reported Israeli strikes across the besieged region had killed at least 103 people, the majority of them children and women, since early morning Thursday.

The fatalities came after airstrikes and shelling targeted several areas across the besieged territory, including the cities of Beit Lahia, Khan Younis and Jabalia.

The latest fatalities include Palestinian journalist Hassan Samour and his family. This brings 216 the number of journalists killed in Gaza since October 2023.

Residents and witnesses reported "intense Israeli shelling all night."

"Tank shells are striking around the clock, and the area is packed with people and tents," Amir Selha, a 43-year-

old Palestinian from north Gaza, was quoted as saying.

Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed this week in intensified Israeli airstrikes.

This comes as Trump is on the last leg of a trip to some Arab states of the Persian Gulf region. He has mainly skirted the issue of the war in Gaza in his public remarks during the trip, but made comments to reporters after a roundtable with business leaders in Qatar.

"Gaza has been a territory of death and destruction for many years," Trump said. "I have concepts for Gaza that I think are very good — make it a freedom zone. Let the United States get involved and make it just a freedom zone."

Trump described aerial images of the widespread destruction from Israeli airstrikes on Gaza.

"There's practically no building standing. It's not like you're trying to save something," he said.

Israel's far-right ruling coalition, led by prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has embraced Trump's proposals on Gaza to displace Palestinians permanently outside the territory and turn it into a seaside real-estate development.

Trump's remarks about Gaza came on the same day

the number of Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks in the war surpassed 53,000 people — a third of them children.

All Arab states have rejected the plan, and the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has called it ethnic cleansing.

Israel also carried out the latest strikes on the day Palestinians commemorate the Nakba, or "catastrophe", when around 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes by armed Zionist militias to make way for the creation of Israel in 1948.

With most of the 2.3 million people in Gaza internally displaced, some residents of the besieged strip say suffering is greater now than at the time of the Nakba.

"What we are experiencing now is even worse than the Nakba of 1948," said Ahmed Hamad, a Palestinian in Gaza City who has been displaced multiple times.

Most Gazans have been displaced at least once during 19 months of war between Israel and Hamas.

Israel blocked all aid from entering Gaza on March 2, before resuming a brutal military campaign on March 18 after talks to prolong a six-week ceasefire collapsed.

## Trump Lands in UAE for Last Leg of Middle East Tour

Agencies

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — US President Donald Trump arrived at Abu Dhabi on Thursday for the last leg of his tour of American allies in the Middle East.

Trump was met at Abu Dhabi International Airport by UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and headed to visit the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

AI is likely to be a focus of Trump's UAE visit.

UAE leaders seek US assistance to make their nation a global leader in artificial intelligence. Reuters reported on Wednesday that the US has a preliminary

agreement with the UAE to allow it to import 500,000 of Nvidia's NVDA.O most advanced AI chips a year, starting this year.

The deal would boost the UAE's construction of data centers vital to developing artificial intelligence models. However, the sources said that the agreement has provoked national security concerns among sectors of the US government, and the terms could change.

Former US President Joe Biden's administration had imposed strict oversight of exports of US AI chips to the Middle East and other regions. Among the Biden administration's fears was that the prized semiconductors would be diverted to China and buttress

Beijing's military strength.

Trump has made improving ties with some Gulf countries a key goal of his administration. If all the proposed chip deals in Gulf states, and the UAE in particular, come together, the region would become a third power center in global AI competition after the United States and China.

Deals, diplomacy Before arriving in the UAE, Trump gave a speech to US troops in Qatar at the Al Udeid Air Base — the largest US military facility in the Middle East — located southwest of Doha, where he announced that the Qatari government will invest \$10 billion over the coming years in Al Udeid.

## Rajnath Seeks Int'l Monitoring of Pak Nukes

Press Trust of India

Srinagar: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday questioned the safety of nuclear weapons in the hands of Pakistan, and said they should be taken under monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Interacting with troops here in his first visit to Jammu and Kashmir since Operation Sin-

monitoring of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), he demanded.

IAEA is a global nuclear watchdog.

The Defence Minister is on a visit to Jammu and Kashmir to take stock of the overall security situation, especially along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border.

Top military officials will brief the Defence Minister on various aspects of the prevailing



door, he said the operation has made it clear to terror outfits and their masters in Pakistan that they should not consider themselves safe anywhere.

"I want to raise question before whole world: are nuclear weapons safe in hands of Pakistan, a rogue and irresponsible nation," he said.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons should be taken under

security situation, officials said.

The Defence Minister will review the overall situation as well as combat readiness of the frontline troops at the Indian Army's XV Corps in Srinagar.

India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure early on May 7 following which Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10.

## Iran Will Never Bow To Threats, Pressure, Pezeshkian Tells Trump

Agencies

Tehran; President Masoud Pezeshkian says Iran will never bow to threats and pressure, rebuking US President Donald Trump, who has accused Tehran of being a destabilizing force in the region

Speaking at a meeting with economic actors and investors in the western province of Kermanshah on Thursday, Pezeshkian criticized the United States for pursuing double-standard policies toward Iran.

"Trump thinks that he can sanction us, threaten us, and then sit back and talk about human rights ... All the crimes in the region are because of these policies and these individuals," he said.

"We seek peace, not war. We have always been seeking to live in peace and [based on] mutual respect, both when it comes to internal issues and also in relations with our neighbors."

During his visit to Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, Trump labeled Iran as the "most destructive force" in the West Asia region. He accused Iran of fueling regional instability and said the United States would not allow the country to develop a "nuclear weapon," rebuffing Tehran's total rejection of such non-conventional arms.

Trump, meanwhile, threatened to deploy "massive maxi-



mum pressure" against the Islamic Republic.

Pointing to the Israeli regime's crimes in the Gaza Strip, Pezeshkian said those who massacred 60,000 people in Gaza, buried them under rubble, and deprived the defenseless people of water, medicine, and food now falsely claim to advocate for human rights.

They commit genocide before the eyes of the world and brazenly speak of peace and tranquility, the Iranian president emphasized.

He asked, "How can one believe that someone who overtly produces bombs, missiles, and weapons, and takes pride in it, can claim to promote security and peace? By what logic do they say that we are a threat while they themselves manufacture weapons for the mass killing of human beings?" Pezeshkian emphasized that world powers are encouraging wars by selling weapons and missiles to the region, saying, "If there is no war, there will be no market for them. They need to create tension in order to sell their military equipment."

### NEWS MAKERS

## Waiter from Kashmir Asked Me to Thank President Trump: WH Press Secy

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt claimed that a waiter, who hailed from Kashmir, asked her in Doha to thank US President Donald Trump for bringing an end to the military confrontation between India and Pakistan.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border strikes. Trump, however, claimed that the US brokered the "ceasefire" between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Indian government sources in New Delhi have maintained that the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, without



the involvement of any third party.

Advertisement

"This morning at breakfast in Doha, my waiter told me to thank President Trump for him. I asked him why. He told me he is from Kashmir, and he has been unable to

return home in recent weeks due to the India-Pakistan conflict," Leavitt posted on X.

Saying the waiter was notified that he'd be able to return, she claimed it was "thanks to the ceasefire mediated by President Trump, @VP & @SecRubio. He said President Trump is not receiving enough credit for literally preventing a nuclear war — and he is right!" Leavitt claimed.

"President Trump inherited so many conflicts around the globe, and he is tackling them one at a time. This historic trip to the Middle East has marked a significant turn in US foreign policy in the region that will finally usher the Golden Age of the Middle East! Peace, through strength, is being restored!" she said.

## CRPF sniffer dog killed in bee attack during Korgotalu hills anti-Naxal operation

Rolo, a two-year-old female sniffer dog of the CRPF, was the only casualty suffered by the security forces during their biggest anti-Naxal operation at the Korgotalu hills as the four-legged soldier was attacked and stung around 200 times by a swarm of bees.

Officials told PTI that the canine was tasked with sniffing out explosives and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) during the mega 21-day operation that concluded on May 11. Rolo was killed in action on April 27, they said.

The CRPF DG has awarded a commendation medal to the dog posthumously.

The security forces led by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Chhattisgarh Police units have claimed to have killed 31 Maoists, a "deadly blow" to the armed cadres of the Naxalites.

A total of 18 troops were injured, including some who underwent leg amputation due to blast injuries, in this operation that the forces said was

the "biggest coordinated" operation against the Maoists till date.

The Korgotalu hills lie on the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border (Bijapur and Mulugu districts of the two states respectively) and are home to wild animals, including bears, insects and bees, apart from water bodies and natural caves. The dense jungle makes them an ideal hideout for the Naxals.

Rolo, a Belgian Shepherd, was carrying out a search operation when the party was suddenly attacked by the swarm of bees on April 27, a senior CRPF official said.

Rolo's handlers covered it with a polythene sheet but the bees slipped inside and bit it. Due to intense pain and irritation, the dog went berserk and came out of the cover, making it vulnerable to more stings, the officials said.

The dog was stung around 200 times and fell unconscious. She was evacuated from the spot and emergency treatment was given to her by the handlers, the officials said.





**DEFENSE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH**, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah pose with Army personnel at Badami Bagh Cantonment, Srinagar.

## Army Chief Lauds Role Of Troops In Operation Sindoor



Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** Army Chief General Udaya Kumar Singh, on his visit to the forward areas in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday, lauded troops for dominating the Line of Control during Operation Sindoor.

He asked them to always remain prepared to respond to any challenge with decisive force.

In an X post, the Army said the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited the Dagger Division of Chinar Corps.

"General Udaya Kumar Singh, COAS, visited forward locations of the Dagger Division, Chinar Corps and interacted with all ranks.

Addressing the troops, he commended them for their valour, josh and vigilant actions towards dominating the Line of Control during Operation Sindoor," Additional Directorate General of Public Information said in the post.

It said the Army chief lauded the role played by the troops in destruction of terror camps in Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

"The COAS appreciated the role played by the Dagger Division in providing succour to the civilians subjected to dastardly trans-Line of Control shelling by Pakistan. He emphasised the need for troops to remain ever prepared to respond to any challenge with decisive force," the Army said.

## Javed Rana Meets People Of LoC villages; Lauds Their Courage

Observer News Service

**BALAKOT:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana commended the unwavering courage of the people living along the Line of Control, who have consistently stood strong in safeguarding the nation's security.

The Minister visited villages along the Line of Control (LoC), for the third consecutive day, and met with the residents who have been severely affected by the ongoing hostilities.

During his visit, the Minister heard heart-wrenching stories of untold sufferings, loss of livelihood, livestock and homes.

The Minister expressed deep concern about the losses and also expressed concerns about the psychological impact of these hostilities on children and elderly, who are among the

most vulnerable in these situations. He emphasized the need for immediate attention and support to mitigate the trauma and stress being experienced by the affected villagers.

While interacting with the people, Minister Rana directed the Sub-Divisional Administration to conduct frequent visits to the affected areas.

The administration has been tasked with assessing the extent of damages and ensuring that compensation is provided to those who have suffered losses.

The Minister called upon the officers to demonstrate exemplary commitment in supporting the people living along the LoC and addressing their pressing needs. He instructed them to focus on providing relief and rehabilitation to the affected communities, while also undertaking long-term planning to ensure their safety and well-being.

## J&K Bank Felicitates Entrepreneur Featured In PM's Event

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** J&K Bank on Thursday felicitated one of its remarkable customers namely Mudasir Hussain Naqshbandi – founder of M/s Bake My Cake – for his inspiring entrepreneurial journey that recently saw him as sole representative from the Union Territory of J&K, and J&K Bank, during a live interaction with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the national event marking 10 years of PM Mudra Yojana.

In recognition of his participation in the prestigious event, the Bank's General Manager (CAM) Ashutosh Sareen along with Zonal Head (Baramulla) Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat and Deputy General Manager Rakesh Magotra presented a memento to him today at the Bank's Zonal Office (Baramulla). The felicitation cer-

emony was attended by the Cluster Heads Sheikh Mohammad Muzaffar and Abdul Majeed Bhat besides other senior officials.

Speaking on the occasion, GM (CAM) Ashutosh Sareen said, "Mudasir's journey is a shining example of how a determined entrepreneur with a vision can utilise timely credit to transform lives while inspiring many others. We at J&K Bank take immense pride in having supported his rise and remain committed to empowering many more such stories across the region."

Notably, starting with a modest Mudra loan of ₹3 lakh under the Bank's Start-Up Scheme in January 2022, Mudasir Naqshbandi's credit support had grown sufficiently to enable his venture to scale operations and increase its workforce from 3 to over 40 employees.,

# Govt Stands Firmly With Its People: Dy CM

### Visits Border Villages Of Nowshera; Assures Full Support To Affected Families

Observer News Service

**RAJOURI:** Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, on second consecutive day, visited around 15 villages of Nowshera constituency to assess the impact of recent cross border shelling.

He expressed the commitment of the government and unwavering support to the people residing in border areas.

The two day tour was conducted in view of recent cross-border shelling incidents with an aim to assess the ground situation, interact with the affected families and address the public grievances on the spot.

During the visit, the Deputy Chief Minister inspected the damaged houses and met with families impacted by the shelling. He assured the border residents that the government is fully committed to their safety and well-being. The administration is mobilizing all the necessary resources to ensure they do not face further hardships.

During a series of public outreach camps at multiple locations, the Dy CM listened to the concerns of the local residents. He reiterated the government's resolve to stand by shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of the border belt.

"The safety of every single resident living near the LoC is our topmost priority and best possible measures are being implemented in this regard," maintained the Dy CM.

Several delegations met the Deputy Chief Minister and raised key issues including the construction of individual



“The safety of every single resident living near the LoC is our topmost priority and best possible measures are being implemented in this regard.

and community bunkers, compensation for losses sustained during shelling, water scarcity, unscheduled power cuts, and demands for improvement of link roads.

Responding promptly, the Dy CM issued on-the-spot instructions to concerned officials for immediate redressal of grievances. He assured the public that their genuine demands will be addressed in a phased and time-bound manner.

The Dy CM affirmed that the Omar Abdullah led gov-

ernment stands firmly with its people and will leave no stone unturned for the holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir, especially its border and remote areas.

Emphasizing the importance of protective infrastructure, the Deputy Chief Minister also announced that additional individual and community bunkers would be constructed at strategically identified locations. These bunkers are vital for providing immediate shelter during instances of cross-border shelling and form an integral part of our border protection strategy," he added.

The visit highlighted the government's steadfast commitment to the safety, security, and welfare of people residing in the border areas.

The Deputy Chief Minister was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, Pritam Lal Thapa, along with other senior district and sectoral officers.

## Allegations Of Service Rule Violations Surface Against MS, GDC Sgr

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Concerns have emerged over alleged violations of service conduct rules by the Medical Superintendent of Government Dental College and Hospital, Srinagar, who is currently holding two key positions simultaneously. Official sources and documents suggest that the individual is not only serving as the Medical Superintendent but also heading the Department of Dental Materials and guiding postgraduate students as a member of the teaching faculty.

According to Jammu and Kashmir government service norms, medical faculty roles are full-time responsibilities, with defined teaching, clinical, and administrative duties. Critics argue that holding three significant posts may compromise the efficiency and accountability expected from each role.

"It raises serious questions about how much time is being allocated to core responsibilities like clinical supervision, OPD patient care,

and academic duties such as delivering lectures and mentoring students," said a senior faculty member on condition of anonymity.

Furthermore, the officer in question has reportedly been allotted an official vehicle—an entitlement typically reserved for the Principal of the institution as per established norms. This has also drawn criticism, with some alleging preferential treatment in violation of government protocols.

Dr. Sandeep Kaur, Principal of Government Dental College and Hospital, Srinagar, said, "He has been working on these posts for the last six years—who are we to challenge it?"

She further stated that the decision was made by the government and that the institution has no role in the matter.

When contacted, Secretary Health and Medical Education J&K, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, declined to comment on the issue, citing ill health.

In a related controversy, an internal inquiry was reportedly initiated following a for-

mal complaint of harassment lodged by a female engineer from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department. The inquiry committee had reportedly found the Medical Superintendent guilty of misconduct, but sources suggest that the matter was quietly shelved without any visible disciplinary action.

The episode has reignited calls for stricter enforcement of service rules in medical institutions and a transparent mechanism to address internal complaints. Stakeholders are urging the administration to clarify the allocation of roles and ensure that academic and clinical duties are not compromised due to administrative overlaps.

Public health advocates stress that the integrity of teaching hospitals depends heavily on maintaining clear separations of responsibility and avoiding conflict of interest—particularly in leadership positions. The situation continues to unfold, and stakeholders await a formal response from the authorities.

## CS Inspects Rattle, Dul Hasti Hydroelectric Power Projects

Observer News Service

**KISHTWAR:** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Thursday visited Kishtwar district to inspect the ongoing works and operational status of two major hydroelectric power projects including 850 MW Rattle Hydroelectric Power Project and 390 MW DulHasti Hydroelectric Power Station.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by Principal Secretary, Power Development Department, H. Rajesh Prasad; Managing Director, JKPDC, Rahul Yadav; Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan along with senior officers from the civil administration and representatives of the power project authorities.

At the Rattle Hydroelectric Power Project, located in Drabshalla Block, the Chief Secretary was briefed on the current status and progress on the project through a PowerPoint Presentation. He also reviewed progress on construction works, visited Power Intake Structure,

CofferDam, Underground Powerhouse Complex, Tail Raised Tunnel and assessed implementation status of various project components.

The Chief Secretary issued on the spot directions to the concerned authorities to expedite the pace of work and ensure project's timely completion. He emphasised on maintaining quality standards while effectively addressing the key operational challenges.

The Chief Secretary also visited the DulHasti Hydroelectric Power Station and inspected its ongoing operations. He interacted with the project officials, reviewed operational efficiency and issued necessary directives to enhance the performance and resolve the pending issues.

Later, the Chief Secretary held a meeting with the officers of NHPC, CVPPL and HOPs of all power projects in Kishtwar.

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Rajesh Kumar Shavan besides other senior officers of district administration were present on the occasion.

## DC Gbl Reviews Preparations For Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

**GANDERBAL:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore visited Baltal Base Camp to inspect and take a firsthand appraisal of ongoing preparations for the Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

During the visit, DC inspected key infrastructure projects including the Yatri Niwas Baltal, fencing work, upgradation of frisking points and other essential arrangements. On-spot instructions were issued to the concerned departments and executing agencies to expedite the completion of these works within a fixed timeline.

During the visit, DC was accompanied by Additional CEO SASB, Director Information, SSP Ganderbal, ADC Ganderbal, and other officers.

Later, the DC chaired a joint meeting with concerned officers and representatives of various service providers to

finalize the rates for key services provided to the pilgrims, including ponies, pithus, dandies, palkis, and tents during the Yatra.

The meeting, held at Sonamarg, aimed to ensure fair pricing and quality service delivery during the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2025 (SANJY) via Baltal route.

A detailed discussion was held with stakeholders to prevent overcharging and enhance the overall experience for Yattris.

Representatives from different service groups actively participated in the meeting and assured full cooperation for the smooth and successful conduct of SANJY-2025.

Kishore urged all stakeholders to strictly adhere to the approved rates and assured that necessary mechanisms would be in place to ensure compliance and facilitate a safe and comfortable pilgrimage.

## Registration Camp For Amarnath Yatra Service Providers Concludes

Observer News Service

**REASI:** A two-day registration camp for service providers for the Shri Amarnath Yatra concluded successfully at Dak Bungalow, Mahore. The camp, held under the supervision of Assistant Labour Commissioner Reasi, Annie Vaid, aimed to register Pithuwalas, Ponywalas, and Palkiwalas, enabling them to offer their services during the upcoming pilgrimage.

Acknowledging the financial and logistical challenges faced by residents of Mahore in traveling to the Labour Department's office in Reasi, the department took the proactive step of setting up the camp locally. This effort aimed to provide easier access to the registration process and

alleviate the burden of travel expenses for the service providers.

As part of the registration process, service providers were required to submit the documents like Police Verification Report, Animal Fitness Certificate (for Ponywalas), Aadhar Card, E-Shram Card, Bank Account Details, Blood Group Test Report.

Speaking on the initiative, ALC Annie Vaid highlighted that this camp not only streamlines preparations for the Yatra but also creates meaningful economic opportunities for the registered workers. She emphasized the critical role these service providers play in the logistical success of the pilgrimage and highlighted the administration's commitment to supporting their welfare.



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KO VIEW

Climate Change  
Hits Children

A recent study published in Nature warns that over half of the children born in 2020 and beyond will face “unprecedented lifetime exposure” to extreme climate events—heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires - regardless of whether global warming is limited to the 1.5°C target set by the Paris Agreement.

Let that sink in: even if humanity does everything right from this point forward, the youngest among us will still live through climate conditions far harsher than any previous generation. In Brussels, the capital of the European Union, a child born in 2020 is expected to experience 11 heatwaves in their lifetime. Contrast that with someone born in the pre-industrial era, who would likely endure just three.

It's about the lived future of billions of young people. It's about children inheriting a planet where “summer” increasingly means searing, suffocating heat, where a week of clean air is a luxury, and where the very act of stepping outside carries health risks.

Kashmir is not safe from this turn for worse in the climate. The unseasonably warm weather has become a recurring phenomenon in the Valley, in turn, impacting both people and agriculture. The temperature has fluctuated wildly but remained largely warm. Last year, Jammu and Kashmir recorded its lowest precipitation in over five decades in 2024, with rainfall plunging to just 870.9 mm—29% below the annual average of 1232.3 mm. This surpassed the previous 50-year low of 1974, raising serious concerns about water scarcity and its impact on agriculture, hydropower, and daily life in the union territory. This erratic weather in the region aligns with the global climate trends.

The phrase “unprecedented lifetime exposure” for children is not hyperbole. The study defines it as a level of climate risk so extreme it would have had just a one-in-10,000 chance of occurring before industrialization. It marks a crossing over from the known into the unknown. It is a metric of climate injustice—because the youngest, who have contributed least to the problem, will bear the heaviest burden.

The study underlines that children from socioeconomically vulnerable communities - often in the Global South—face an even greater risk of exposure. They lack access to air conditioning, healthcare, or even clean water—basic protections that wealthier societies can still offer their citizens. These are children who will not only face extreme heat but will face it unshielded.

There is a sobering truth here: we have already failed to prevent this future. The question now is whether we will fail to protect those who must live through it. We owe it to the generation of 2020 - not just to speak of climate change in terms of degrees and deadlines, but to act with the urgency that their lives demand.



Own Property  
Without Buying It

*REITs are changing how people invest in real estate, offering dividends, growth, and zero landlord headaches.*

Irshad Mushtaq

Real estate investing isn't what it used to be, and maybe that's a good thing.

In India, a big change is underway. Real Estate Investment Trusts, or REITs, are letting everyday investors own a slice of the country's commercial property market without the paperwork, maintenance, or massive upfront cost that comes with buying property.

Think of REITs like mutual funds for real estate. Instead of buying an apartment or office outright, you buy shares in a company that owns income-generating buildings: offices, malls, industrial parks. These companies collect rent, and most of that income flows back to shareholders in the form of regular dividends.

There are only three REITs listed on Indian exchanges right now—Embassy Office Parks, Mindspace Business Parks, and Brookfield India—but they've already shown promise.

These trusts typically offer yields of around 6-7% annually, and their units trade on stock exchanges just like any other equity, offering liquidity and transparency.

That's a big shift from traditional real estate, where investments are illiquid, paperwork is a hassle, and income isn't guaranteed. With REITs, minimum investment requirements are low, disclosures are mandated by SEBI, and the assets are managed professionally.

India's REIT market is still young, but the direction is clear. As more assets are securitized and listed, REITs could become a mainstream option for investors looking to diversify their portfolios, and generate passive income without becoming landlords.

In a country where property ownership has long been prized but often out of reach, REITs may finally make real estate investing a realistic goal for more people.

*The writer is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.*



The In-Law Question

In a living room in Kashmir, a dispute between a young couple turned into a lesson on care, culture, and what religion really asks of us.

Bilal Ahmad Khanday



When clerics or elders declare that someone is “not bound” to care, they may be technically correct in a narrow sense. But they risk encouraging apathy in a society that already struggles with disconnection.

Not long ago, I sat in a modest living room in Ganderbal, shoulder to shoulder with elders, relatives, and a local cleric. We had gathered for what seemed like a straightforward mediation between a married couple.

Their conflict wasn't unique. It was based on misunderstandings, hurt feelings, perhaps a bit of mistrust. But what caught me off guard was how quickly the discussion veered into deeper territory: the question of whether a daughter-in-law is obliged to care for her husband's parents.

“She's not bound to,” the cleric said flatly. “Not by religion, not by ethics. Her husband can't ask it of her either.”

Heads nodded around the room. No one argued. No one even flinched. It was as if someone had read a verdict from a sealed book.

But I sat uneasily. Something about the confidence of the statement, and the silence that followed, troubled me.

I've spent most of my life in a culture where family ties are sacred. I've also studied enough religion to know that what's written in our texts is often more nuanced than how it's preached. That day, I couldn't stay silent.

I asked the cleric, respectfully, to consider whether such an interpretation reflected the full picture. We cannot reduce a religion like Islam, a faith that speaks so widely about compassion, kinship, and care, to one-liners devoid of social context.

The Quran, after all, is not just a book of rules. It speaks to the heart of human relationships. It emphasizes duties toward others, Huqooq-ul-Ibaad, even more

than duties to God.

And the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, often reminded us about the importance of maintaining family ties, what we call Silah Rehmi. In what world do those ties exclude in-laws?

I wasn't arguing that daughters-in-law should be treated like unpaid caretakers. Far from it, I was saying that family, especially in Kashmir where generations often live under one roof, runs on mutual respect and shared responsibility.

To say a daughter-in-law has no duty toward her husband's parents, not even on ethical grounds, risks hollowing out the very idea of family.

Later that evening, I thought about my own sisters. If one of them didn't support her in-laws when they aged or fell ill, would her husband be expected to care for our aging parents? If everyone shrugged off these responsibilities as someone else's problem, what would be left of our social fabric?

The truth is, this isn't just about religion. It's about logic. It's about decency. We live in a time where families are changing, and not always for the better.

With migration, stress, and rising individualism, the old social bonds are fraying. We should be working to strengthen them, not cut them off because of a poorly interpreted ruling.

Even if we accept that there may not be a direct scriptural command obligating a daughter-in-law to serve her in-laws, there's a deeper message within our tradition that can't be ignored: kindness begets kindness. Care begets care. Love, when given sincerely, often returns in

unexpected ways.

I made these points calmly that day, not to win an argument, but to reframe the question. And to my surprise, people listened.

Some nodded thoughtfully. The atmosphere shifted. We stopped seeing the couple's dispute as a tug-of-war over rights and started seeing it as a mirror reflecting bigger issues in our community.

It's easy to take a literal verse or a religious opinion and use it to end a conversation. It's harder, but more necessary, to ask what our traditions are trying to build. Are they building love, stability, understanding? Or are they drawing rigid lines around people and calling it divine will?

I don't claim to have all the answers. But I do believe we owe it to ourselves and to our communities to think deeper before we speak in absolutes.

When clerics or elders declare that someone is “not bound” to care, they may be technically correct in a narrow sense. But they risk encouraging apathy in a society that already struggles with disconnection.

So much of our religion is not just about what we are told to do, but who we choose to be. And maybe, just maybe, we should choose to be a little more responsible toward one another. Not because we have to, but because it's right.

*Bilal Ahmad Khanday hails from Shalabugh, Ganderbal. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.*



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The Cost of Being a Daughter in Kashmir

In many Kashmiri households, the birth of a daughter brings both joy and jinx. Not because she's unloved, but because her future comes with a cost.

Much of it has to do with the dowry system. Technically banned since 1961, it still thrives beneath the surface of everyday life.

What was once a cultural gesture of support has now twisted into a transaction.

Grooms' families often expect, and demand, gifts in the form of cash, gold, vehicles, or property.

These demands vary depending on the groom's job or status. A government officer or doctor may come

with a dowry tag of ten lakh rupees or more.

This isn't just about weddings. Many brides continue to receive dowry-linked expectations long after marriage.

At festivals, childbirth, or anniversaries, in-laws quietly, or openly, push for more. For parents, the financial strain begins early and never quite ends.

The damage is deep. Poor families rush into early marriages to avoid dowry inflation. Those who can't meet demands see their daughters returned home, humiliated, or worse, mistreated in their marital homes.

Some women suffer silently. Others

take their own lives.

Dowry deaths are reported across India. Over 6,900 in a recent year, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. In Kashmir, most cases go unreported. Stigma keeps families from filing police reports. Shame ensures silence.

Government campaigns like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao aim to change mindsets, but progress is slow. Laws exist, but customs are stronger.

The real change must come from within. Families need to reject the idea that a woman's worth lies in what she brings.

Boys must be taught to say no to dowry, and mean it. Girls must be

raised with the confidence to walk away from a transactional match.

I recently met a father in Baramulla who refused dowry for his son. “We're marrying into a family, not buying one,” he said simply. That's what dignity sounds like.

Until more people think like him, many girls in Kashmir will keep growing up with a marital fear: that no matter who they are, they'll be judged by what they bring. Not their voice, not their dreams, but a dowry.

That needs to change.

*Sincerely,  
Nazim Mushtaq*



# When Newsrooms Meet Classrooms

A visit by journalism students to top newsrooms in Srinagar reveals why closer ties between academia and the media industry could help reshape Kashmir's mediascape

Syed Mohammad Burhan

In a small but telling moment on a spring afternoon, a group of journalism students stepped into the buzzing newsroom of Kashmir Observer. The air inside felt different from their campus at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST). It was less theoretical, more immediate.

This wasn't just another academic field trip. It was a glimpse into the living, breathing heart of the media industry they are preparing to enter.

The visit, part of IUST's "Industry Connect" initiative, took the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication students into two influential newsrooms: Kashmir Observer, one of the region's most-read English dailies, and The Hindu, a national paper with a strong presence in Kashmir.

The experience was designed to show students what their future might look like, and how to get there.

Inside Kashmir Observer's office, students didn't just tour the premises. They sat across from senior editors, online journalists, and visual designers who broke down the real-world mechanics of modern journalism.

The conversations were plain but full of perspective. Each editor, in their own way, highlighted how fast the industry is moving and how important it is for students to move with it.

There was talk of story pitching, editorial judgment, and the fine line between breaking news and misinformation. The students saw how social media has become both a newsroom tool and a challenge.

They learned that while AI may change the way headlines are generated or layouts are



designed, the core of journalism—curiosity, accuracy, and empathy—remains human.

At The Hindu bureau, the tone was reflective. The students heard about the importance of critical reading and why the best reporters aren't just skilled writers, they're sharp observers of society. They explored how a newspaper's job is no longer just to report an event but to explain why it matters and what happens next.

These lessons can't be learned from textbooks alone.

In Kashmir, where news often unfolds at the edge of conflict and complexity, the stakes of good journalism are high.

And yet, many young reporters are still launched into the field without ever having stepped into a working newsroom.

This gap, between campus and newsroom, is where talent can get lost, and potential can go unshaped.

The IUST tour hinted at a solution. What if this kind of real-world exposure wasn't the exception but the norm? What if every journalism student, before writing their first official story, had already watched editors debate a headline, seen designers shape a front page, and heard journalists discuss the ethics of a difficult scoop?

There is a clear argument here for deepening ties between media institutions and journalism departments in Kashmir. It's not just about creating job-ready graduates. It's about nurturing thoughtful, capable journalists who understand the ecosystem they're entering.

Students don't just need skills, they need perspective, access, and mentorship.

For Kashmir's evolving media landscape, this connection could be transformative. With the region's complex realities, and changing reader habits, journalism is not only a profes-

sion but a public service.

Young journalists must be prepared not just to report but to understand, challenge, and contextualize.

Tours like the one IUST organized are a start. But what Kashmir needs now is a sustained model: newsroom internships, guest lectures, field mentorships, collaborative projects.

It's time to institutionalise the connection, not just celebrate it once a semester.

Back in their classrooms, the students may return to theory. But now they have stories from inside the newsroom. Stories that might shape their choices, their ethics, and their voice.

In the end, that's what journalism needs more than anything: people who know where they stand, and how to tell the truth from there.

*The writer is a Special Correspondent at Kashmir Observer*

# The Rise of a Village Boy

In Kashmir's Pulwama district, a once-aimless student has become a writer, reformer, and community force—proof that persistence and purpose can rewrite any story



Gowher Bhat

The village of Pingalgam in south Kashmir doesn't often make news. It's the kind of place where time feels slow, schools are modest, and young people often carry more doubt than direction. But every now and then, someone quietly rewrites that script.

Asif Majeed Bhat grew up here, in a setting far removed from the polished classrooms and promising resumes that usually shape success stories.

As a boy, he struggled to focus in school. Teachers saw him as just another distracted student, someone unlikely to go far. But something inside him resisted that label, even if he couldn't articulate it then.

Over the years, that resistance turned into a steady determination. Asif didn't just pass through the education system, he transformed his relationship with it.

Today, he holds two postgraduate degrees, one in Urdu and another in Mass Communication and Journalism. He is preparing for his PhD and aiming to qualify for the National Eligibility Test.

For someone once written off as below average, the academic milestones are remarkable. But they're only part of the story.

Asif's life today is shaped less by his CV and more by his choices. He helps his neighbours get to hospitals when they have no one else. He negotiates with doctors, stays through treatments, and follows up after.

Often, the people he helps are strangers. But for Asif, it's all part of being present in his community.

One of the causes closest to him is girls' education. In a region where old attitudes still influence whether daughters finish school, Asif often intervenes. Not with loud arguments, but with calm conviction.

Parents who once planned to pull their daughters out of school say they changed their minds after he visited their homes. He doesn't offer pressure, he offers perspective.

His social activism doesn't end there. In nearby villages, he speaks to young people

about the value of sports, clean water, trees, and waste reduction. He makes time for small gatherings and big ideas, hoping that even one changed mind might ripple outward.

Still, his favorite medium is language. Urdu isn't just something he studied, it's something he lives.

Asif writes poetry, runs podcasts, and organizes informal literary events where young writers are encouraged to read their work aloud, often for the first time. For many, it's the first time they've been told their voice matters.

He's helped friends go from scribbling poems in private to publishing their first books. He uses social media, recordings, streaming, to keep a centuries-old language alive and relevant. Through podcasts, he brings scholars, officials, and everyday people into the conversation, connecting tradition with contemporary challenges.

And while he may be known in his district as a reformer and a thinker, in his home, he's simply a son who helps his mother in the kitchen and his father in the garden. Neighbours often mention how grounded he remains. Despite his workload, he still carries groceries, tends to chores, and stays connected to village life.

What stands out about Asif isn't just his service, it's his consistency.

He doesn't lead a campaign or an NGO. He simply shows up, day after day, choosing to help, choosing to learn, and choosing to lift others as he climbs. His work is stitched into the rhythm of rural life: quiet, steady, and deeply human.

He recently published his first book and is working on a second. But writing, for him, isn't about recognition. It's about reflection. He sees it as a way to preserve voices and challenge injustice, especially in a place where silence often surrounds social issues.

In a time when many young people feel stuck between pressure and confusion, Asif's story offers an alternative: growth through effort, meaning through service, and change that begins at home.

*The writer is a Pulwama-based English language instructor.*

# Hope in the Hurt

A searing meditation on what it means to stay true in a world that punishes authenticity and rewards pretense

Newsheen Mushtaq

There comes a time in life when unexpressed feelings, misinterpreted actions, and hidden scars begin to weigh you down.

There is a struggle that is silent instead of loud. It plays out through muted nods and forced grins. I currently reside in that quiet place. I am bent, but not broken. I am perilously close.

Lately, I've found myself mentally exhausted by the emotional chaos that surrounds me. I can no longer endure the politics, the power plays, the whispers masquerading as conversations, and the masks people wear so effortlessly. It is tiresome walking into places where truth is uncomfortable and bluntness is labelled as insurgence.

My dichotomy makes me feel like a pendulum — collapsing and fighting, panicking and being patient, frustrated and faithful.

Each day, I find my patience eroding. I used to think of it as the anchor of my being. Now, it has outstripped all manners of optimism. I am enduring, but each passing day diminishes me.

I have chosen silence — not from a lack of words, but because each word feels like a burden. I feel as if every thought is under scrutiny. Each effort feels like treading a tightrope, where one misstep could lead to catastrophe.

I feel immobile — caught in a loop that drags me back no matter how hard I try to break out. Like yelling into a void and watching your value diminish in the eyes of those who see only what they wish.

The sensations do not end there. To further elaborate, I quote Dostoevsky:

"One may insist that life, in all its



suffering, is still worth living, yet there comes a moment when the soul, wearied and wounded, must ask whether endurance is truly a virtue or merely a slow surrender."

It's as if something is choking me nebulously. If I attempt to rise, life notices and tightens its grasp.

"Why me?" — again, the questions nag at my conscience. I wonder: "Do I deserve this?"

"What precedes this insanity?"

"In what way am I being punished for being sincere, while those playing with strings of manipulation seem to be rewarded?"

"How is it that those who put in less effort celebrate success, while those who pour their heart and soul into everything are rendered invisible?"

This leads me into a spiral of reflection, searching for inconsistencies in my actions in the hope of rectifying myself. But what if the imbalance isn't within me, but in the very paradigms where integrity is questioned and independence is capriciously branded as arrogance? A completely different kind of grief — one that stems

from losing faith in fairness.

When I see myself in the mirror, I quietly whisper, "Hold on to your promises," but even the echo sounds weary, drained.

This isn't a cry for help. It is a message for someone who doesn't feel the same as me — so they may be compelled to see life differently. If you, too, have gone mute... if you, too, are questioned for simply being you, know this:

You are not alone.

Life has moulded us into a specific shape. The goalposts of life do imprison us — but have they shattered us? Not yet.

The tempest we find ourselves in now is training us not to fit in, but to outgrow our circumstances, our conditions, and everything else that dares to defy us.

For now, one step at a time, I proceed. One breath: "I wish things were different." One muted howl. One silent prayer.

*Newsheen Mushtaq writes from the quiet corners of struggle, where words become her way of surviving what silence cannot carry.*

# The Book That Hears You Back

Decades after its release, Mitch Albom's "Tuesdays with Morrie" remains a compelling classic, recommended by therapists, embraced by readers, and rediscovered in moments of grief, pause, and healing

Shereen Naman

When life gets loud and messy—emails piling up, messages left unread, emotions shelved—some people turn to meditation, others to music. But a surprising number return to an old friend tucked away on a bookshelf: Tuesdays with Morrie.

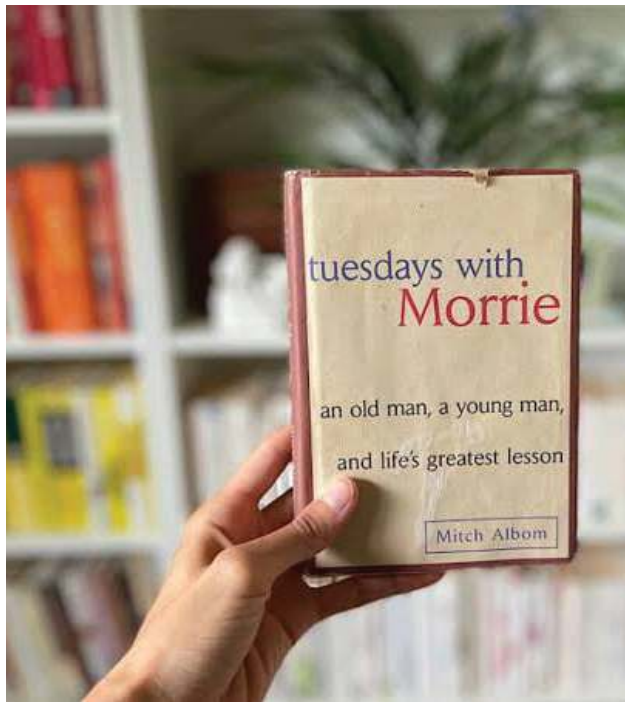
It's a slim memoir with a simple cover and an even simpler promise: to sit with you, not fix you.

Written by sports journalist Mitch Albom and first published in 1997, the book has sold more than 17 million copies worldwide. But numbers don't quite explain its staying power. What gives the story its unique grip is not fame or formula, but feeling.

At its heart, Tuesdays with Morrie is about a former student who visits his dying professor every Tuesday. What starts as a casual reunion becomes a series of emotional check-ins, each one peeling back a layer of what it means to be alive and aware.

Morrie Schwartz, the professor, is living with ALS. He's losing control over his body but not his mind. In his living room, propped up with pillows, he speaks freely about death, regret, aging, love. Albom records these conversations, and the reader is invited to listen in.

But this isn't a story of grand revelations. It's not a lecture. It feels more like sitting in a room with someone who's not afraid to cry in front of you. Someone



who teaches by feeling rather than telling. The pages don't rush. They breathe.

That pace is part of why therapists love it.

Ananya Rao, a grief counselor based in Delhi, says she's recommended the book to more clients than she can count. "Some people are afraid to open up in therapy," she explains. "But they come back quoting Morrie. They begin to speak, not because they're pushed, but because the book shows them how."

The book doesn't offer steps or strategies. It offers companionship. It gives permission to

be lost, to feel grief, to ask uncomfortable questions.

Morrie doesn't judge. He just listens. He tells Mitch, "Don't let go too soon, but don't hang on too long." Simple, but profound.

That kind of gentle wisdom has kept the book alive in therapy rooms and hospital waiting areas, long after bestseller lists moved on. It's often handed to people dealing with loss or facing burnout. For them, Morrie becomes a temporary guide. Not to answers, but to better questions.

Even its structure—the weekly Tuesday meetings—mirrors a kind of ritual. A rhythm. In a culture that rewards urgency,

Morrie's conversations reward pause. They remind readers that it's okay to slow down, to reflect, to not be okay for a while.

And perhaps most of all, the book invites emotional honesty. Morrie doesn't hide his sadness or fear. He talks about it. He weeps. He laughs. He holds nothing back. And in doing so, he becomes a kind of mirror. You don't just watch him change, you wonder how you might, too.

"Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live," he tells Mitch. It sounds dramatic at first. But Morrie's point is that accepting life's limits allows us to live more fully within them. We stop measuring worth by productivity. We call our friends back. We pay attention to the sky.

You don't need to be grieving to read this book. You don't need to be old or unwell. All you need is the urge to feel a little more human again.

That's what's kept the book constantly circulating: through therapy offices, between friends, across hospital bedsides. It's not something you binge. It's something you return to. A slow conversation for when the world feels like too much.

In the end, Tuesdays with Morrie isn't a guidebook. It's a seat across from someone who cares. And if you're quiet enough, you'll hear it: not just the voice of Morrie, but maybe, finally, your own.

*Shereen Naman writes about books, emotions, and the moments that shape human experience.*



# NIT-Rourkela Designs Breakthrough ECG Lead System For Enhanced Diagnosis Of Atrial Arrhythmias

Press Trust Of India

Researchers at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela have developed an effective upgrade to electrocardiography (ECG), one of the most commonly-used techniques to monitor heart activity, according to officials.

The new system helps easily detect subtle electrical signals from the upper chambers of the heart, which are often too indistinct to be seen clearly in regular ECGs. These signals play a key role in identifying abnormal heart rhythms that can lead to serious conditions, such as atrial fibrillation that can further lead to a stroke, they said.

Atrial arrhythmias are irregular heart rhythms originating from the heart's upper chambers (atria).

The research has been published in international journals "Biomedical Signal Processing and Control", "Medical Hypotheses" and "Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine".

The NIT team has also filed a patent application for the Atrial Lead System (ALS). The project has received financial backing from the government's Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF).

According to J Sivaraman, Assistant Professor, Department of Biotechnology and Medical Engineering, NIT-Rourkela, irregular heart rhythms, or arrhythmias, are responsible for a large number of cardiac-related deaths around the world.

"Irregular heart rhythm in the heart's upper chambers, known as atrial arrhythmias, are among the most common, especially in patients who have been hospitalised. Identifying these arrhythmias in



an early state can help doctors begin timely treatment and prevent complications," he said.

An ECG records the electrical activity of the heart using electrodes placed on the body. In an ECG, doctors check the "P-wave", which reflects the electrical activity in the upper chambers of the heart.

However, P-waves are often small and easily lost in background noise or obscured by stronger signals from other parts of the heart. As a result, detecting atrial arrhythmias can sometimes be difficult, particularly in busy clinical settings or with low-cost monitoring equipment.

To address this challenge, the NIT-Rourkela research team has designed the ALS, a novel lead-placement system.

"In an ECG, leads refer to specific patterns of electrical measurement created by placing

electrodes on different parts of the body. Lead placement involves positioning these electrodes to capture clear signals from the heart. The ALS uses a modified arrangement to improve how electrical activity from the atria is recorded.

"By strengthening these signals, especially the P-wave, the system helps improve the accuracy of arrhythmia detection, both by doctors and by computer-based diagnostic tools. We introduced novel electrode placements that significantly increased the visibility of atrial activity on ECG readings. The improved signal clarity allows for quicker analysis and better clinical decision making," Sivaraman said.

He explained that one of the most promising aspects of this work is that it requires no change to the ECG machine itself.

"The innovation lies entirely in the way the leads are placed,

which means the upgrade can be easily adopted in both public and private healthcare settings, without additional cost," he said.

The research was led by Sivaraman, N Bala Chakravarthy and Kunal Pal, along with research scholars Prasanna Venkatesh and Arya Bhardwaj from the NIT-Rourkela, with clinical collaborations and validation provided by R Pradeep Kumar, Senior Interventional Cardiologist, MIOT International Hospital, Chennai, and visiting consultant at the Jaiprakash Hospital and Research Centre, Rourkela.

Highlighting the clinical importance of the research, Kumar said, "A clearly-appreciated P wave in ECG gives a clue to the diagnosis of atrial pathology. To distinguish atrial fibrillation from other supraventricular arrhythmias, P-wave morphology needs to be taken into consideration."

# 'Bhool Chuk Maaf' Will Now Release In Theatres On May 23: Makers

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- "Bhool Chuk Maaf", the Rajkummar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi-starrer time loop comedy, will now release in theatres and not on OTT, producer Dinesh Vijan said on Thursday.

Vijan's production banner Maddock Films had recently announced that the movie will skip its theatrical release on May 9 and get a digital release on Prime Video on May 16 due to the recent events and the heightened security drills across the nation following Operation Sindoor.

The multiplex chain PVRINOX had moved the court challenging its producers' decision to release it on Prime Video directly.

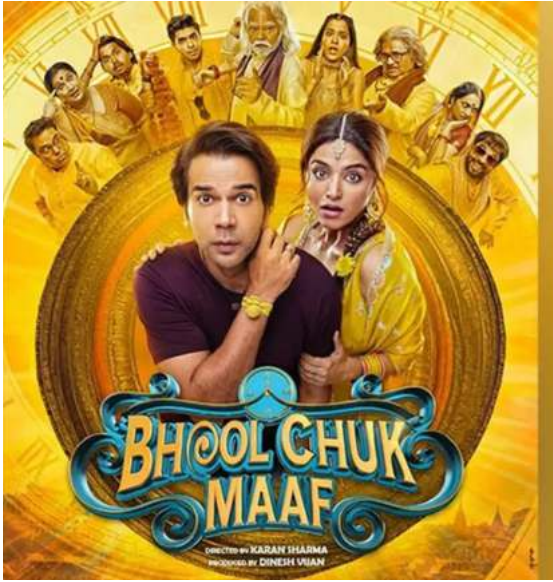
PVRINOX Limited (PVRINOX), Maddock Films Pvt. Ltd. (Maddock), and Amazon MGM Studios have reached an understanding and now the movie will be released in theatres on May 23.

"As our surroundings begin to heal, we're especially grateful to offer a theatrical experience for a film that speaks from the heart. In these times, when family means everything, we urge audiences to head to theatres with their loved ones, share a laugh, reflect on life, and enjoy a story that, we hope, brings joy.

"We're also incredibly thankful to our exhibitors as partners for their continued support, flexibility, and commitment to theatrical storytelling. The release environment

has changed for the better, and we're proud to collaborate once again with them for our film's release," Vijan said in a statement.

Kamal Gianchandani of PVRINOX said they remain deeply committed to the theatrical experience.



"We fully understand and respect the challenges faced by the team at Maddock Films in finalising the release of 'Bhool Chuk Maaf'. We are thankful for their continued faith in the theatrical model and their decision to bring this film to audiences where it truly belongs - in cinemas. Their support reinforces the strong bond between content creators and exhibitors, and we look forward to a successful release," Gianchandani added.

"Bhool Chuk Maaf", directed by Karan Sharma, revolves around a soon-to-be-married man who realises that he is stuck in a time loop and keeps reliving the day before his wedding.

# Study Shows How Allergies Differ In Urban, Rural Children

ANI

Scientists discovered that a previously uncharacterized subset of immune cells may play an important role in the development of allergy illnesses and explain disparities between urban and rural populations.

The study sheds light on how the immune system develops in early life and why urban children are more prone to allergies than rural children.

Led by researchers from the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) Department of Pediatrics, including MD/PhD student Catherine Pizzarello and senior author Kirsi Jarvinen-Seppo, MD, PhD, the study uncovered a unique subpopulation of T cells known as helper 2 (Th2) cells with distinct molecular characteristics.

T-cells are the foundational immune cells that fight off infections, but there is evidence that this specific subtype is recognizing certain foods as allergenic and attacking them, according to Jarvinen-Seppo.

"These pro-allergic T



cells are more inflammatory than anything previously described in this context," said Jarvinen-Seppo, chief of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology at UR Medicine Golisano Children's Hospital. "They were found more frequently in urban infants who later developed allergies, suggesting they may be a predictive biomarker or even a mechanistic driver of allergic disease."

The study compared blood samples from urban infants with those from infants in a farming community, specifically the Old Order Mennonites (OOM) of New York's Finger Lakes region-

known for their low rates of allergies. Researchers found that while urban infants had higher levels of the aggressive Th2 cells, OOM infants had more regulatory T cells that help keep the immune system in balance and reduce the likelihood of allergic responses.

While additional research is needed to identify a possible cause, Jarvinen-Seppo speculates that differences in the development of the gut microbiome between the two populations, and more exposure to "healthy" bacteria in rural children, may be a factor.

"The farming environ-

ment, which is rich in microbial exposure, appears to support the development of a more tolerant immune system. Meanwhile, the urban environment may promote the emergence of immune cells that are primed for allergic inflammation," said Jarvinen-Seppo.

The work is part of a broader, NIH-funded investigation into how early-life exposures influence long-term immune outcomes. In 2023, Jarvinen-Seppo's team received a \$7 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to study environmental, microbiome, and immune differences between OOM and urban infants. The goal is to continue this foundational work to uncover protective factors that could be translated into preventive therapies, including probiotics or microbiome-supporting interventions.

"If we can identify the conditions for this disparity between the different T cell subpopulations, we can potentially find solutions in allergic disease development," Jarvinen-Seppo said.

# Study Claims Online Plant-Based Diet Programme Can Help Manage Diabetes

IANS

A structured online nutrition programme may address India's diabetes epidemic by removing key barriers to dietary adherence, according to a study, led by an Indian-origin researcher.

The study, led by the US-based Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), showed that participants who followed a physician-led, plant-based nutrition programme ex-

perienced measurable improvements in health. This included reduced medication use, body weight, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels.

The findings offer potential insights for India, where diabetes currently affects more than 101 million adults, with an additional 136 million in the prediabetes stage, said the team in the paper, published in the American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine.

"India's diabetes crisis requires solutions that work within our healthcare realities," said lead author Dr. Vani-

ta Rahman, internal medicine physician with PCRM.

"While we've long known that dietary changes can effectively manage diabetes, implementation has been challenging due to limited consultation time, inconsistent follow-up, and accessibility barriers - particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities," Rahman added.

The study addressed common challenges Indian patients face when attempting lifestyle modifications such as accessibility; structured support; practical implementation; and consis-

tent follow-up.

The 12-week programme enrolled 76 adults with type 2 diabetes. Among the 58 participants who completed the programme 22 per cent of participants reduced diabetes medication dosages; average weight decreased by 3.7 kilograms (approximately 8 pounds); HbA1C (a measure of blood sugar control) decreased by 0.6 per cent.

Further, the total and LDL cholesterol levels decreased by 15 and 12 mg/dL, respectively, among participants not taking lipid-lowering medications

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## Exports Up 9% To USD 38.49 Bn In Apr



### Trade Deficit Widens To 5-Month High Of USD 26.42 Bn

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** India's exports rose 9.03 per cent to USD 38.49 billion in April, the highest in six months, driven by healthy growth in sectors such as electronics and engineering goods, while the trade deficit widened to a five-month high of USD 26.42 billion.

According to the commerce ministry data released on Thursday, imports increased by 19.12 per cent year-on-year to USD 64.91 billion in April due to a rise in shipments of crude oil and fertiliser.

The spurt in imports widened the trade deficit – the difference between the value of imports and exports – to the highest since November 2024 when it was recorded at USD 31.77 billion.

The sectors which recorded export growth during the month included tobacco, coffee, marine products, tea, ready-made garments of all textiles, rice, gems and jewellery, spices, petroleum products and pharmaceuticals.

The previous high exports growth was registered in October 2024 (16.6 per cent).

The outbound shipments of electronics and engineering goods rose 39.51 per cent and 11.28 per cent to USD 3.69 bil-

lion and USD 9.51 billion, respectively.

The shipments to the US increased 27.3 per cent during the month to USD 8.42 billion as exporters rushed their orders to beat the reciprocal tariffs announced by the Trump administration on April 2 that was later suspended till July 9.

The tariff differential between economies may have helped India boost shipments to the United States.

Crude oil imports in April rose 25.6 per cent to USD 20.7 billion while gold imports were up 4.86 per cent to USD 3.09 billion.

Commenting on the data, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said, "I hope India will maintain this export momentum and it should be a good year for us" despite global uncertainties.

"We have opened this year with a bang," he told reporters here adding exporters have achieved resiliency in their businesses.

The secretary also said that the strategy to focus on 20 countries and six commodities is yielding positive results and the commerce ministry will continue to focus on this.

He added that many free trade agreements are going to be concluded soon.

According to the data, the estimated value of services exports for April 2025 was USD 35.31 billion compared to USD 30.18 Billion in April 2024.

## President Trump Claims India Offers To Drop All Tariffs On American Goods

Press Trust Of India

**DOHA-** US President Donald Trump on Thursday claimed that India has offered to drop all tariffs on American goods.

Speaking at a business roundtable in Doha, Trump also said he had a "little problem" with Tim Cook, and he told the Apple CEO that he does not want him to build iPhones in India.

Trump, who is in Qatar as part of his four-day visit to the Gulf region, was talking about Apple's plans to make iPhones in India.

"I said to him (Cook), my friend, I am treating you very good. You are coming up with \$500 billion, but now I hear you are building all over India. I don't want you building in India. You can build in India, if you want to take care of India because India is one of the highest tariff nations in the world, so it is very hard to sell in India," Trump said.

"They [India] have offered us a deal where basically they have agreed to charge us literally no tariffs. I said 'Tim, we are treating you really good, we put up with all the plants you built in China for years. We are not interested in you building in India. India can take care of



themselves," he added.

There has been no such announcement from India.

Trump's comments came nearly two weeks after Cook said his company made quarterly records in several countries, including India.

Apple will source the majority of the iPhones sold in the US from India in the June quarter, while China will produce the vast majority of the devices for other markets amid uncertainty over tax tariffs, Cook said earlier this month.

According to an analysis by S&P Global, Apple's iPhone sales in the US were 75.9 million units in 2024, with exports in March from India equivalent to 3.1 million units.

Earlier this month, Trump had claimed that India "agreed" to drop its high tariffs "to nothing".

In the past, Trump has called India "tariff king" and a "big abuser".

Last month, Trump had said negotiations with India over a bilateral trade deal are "coming along great" and he thinks "we'll have a deal with India".

Trump announced sweeping reciprocal tariffs on several countries, including India and China, on April 2. However, on April 9, he announced a 90-day suspension of these tariffs until July 9 this year, except for those on China and Hong Kong, as about 75 countries approached America for trade deals.

**I SAID TO HIM (COOK), MY FRIEND, I AM TREATING YOU VERY GOOD.** You are coming up with \$500 billion, but now I hear you are building all over India. I don't want you building in India. You can build in India, if you want to take care of India because India is one of the highest tariff nations in the world, so it is very hard to sell in India"

## ‘India-US Trade Agreement Talks Progressing ‘Very’ Well; Team Visiting Washington’

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** Negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement between India and the US are progressing "very" well and a team will soon be leaving for Washington to further give an impetus to the talks, a top government official said on Thursday.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that an Indian team will be going to Washington for further discussions.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will lead the team of senior Indian officials to Washington for discussions, starting May 17, with their US counterparts on the agreement.

He will hold meetings with US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer and US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick during his visit.

While Goyal will be in Washington from May 17-20, India's chief negotiator Rajesh Agrawal will hold the deliberations with his US counterpart from May 19-22.

The talks come against the backdrop of both countries exploring the possibility of an interim trade arrangement in goods to secure "early mutual wins" ahead of finalising the first phase of the trade agree-



ment by fall (September-October) this year.

"The talks are continuing, they are progressing very well and a team is slated to go to the US to conduct further talks with the US team," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump in Doha has claimed that India has agreed to "zero tariffs" on several American goods as against its "highest" tariffs.

"India is one of the highest tariff nations in the world. It is very hard to sell in India. They have offered us a deal where basically they are willing to -- literally -- they charge us no tariff.

"We go from the highest tariff -- you could not do business in India, we are not even in the top 30 in India because the tariff is so high -- to a point where they have actually told us that there will be no tariff. Would you say that is the difference? They were the highest, and now they are saying no tariff,"

Trump said in Doha.

Interacting with reporters on the sidelines of an event here, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, these are complicated negotiations and nothing is decided till everything is.

"Between India and the US, trade talks have been going on, negotiations have been going on, in fact, I think, a team is just going, at this point. These are very complicated negotiations, they are very intricate, and nothing is decided till everything is.

"But, any trade deal has to be mutually beneficial, any trade deal has to work for both the countries, and I think that would be our expectation from the trade deal, and until that is done, I think any judgment on it would be premature," he said.

When asked about the deadline to conclude these negotiations, an official said that there is a target to conclude the first tranche by fall (September-October) of this year.

"Let's see, how fast we can get this deal done. We want to conclude it as early as possible," the official said adding there is also a target to double the bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030.

## First-Ever Monthly Job Data Shows India's Unemployment Rate At 5.1% In April 2025

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** The rate of unemployment in the country, measured in monthly term for the first time, stood at 5.1 per cent in April this year, showed the government data released on Thursday.

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation released the first monthly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) as part of efforts to monitor the proportion of unemployed people among those eligible for jobs in the country in real time.

Until now, the labour force survey was released on a quarterly as well as annual basis.

The latest data collected in current weekly status (CWS) showed that unemployment rate for persons of all ages during April 2025 worked out to be 5.1 per cent in April 2025. The pace of joblessness among men stayed slightly higher at 5.2 per cent compared to that of women at 5 per cent.

Joblessness among those in the age group of 15-29 was 13.8 per cent across the country. The rate of unemployment in urban areas stood at 17.2 per cent, while it was 12.3 per cent in rural areas.

CWS refers to the activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey.

The study further showed that unemployment rate (UR) among women in the age group



of 15-29 was 14.4 across the country (rural+urban), while it was 23.7 in cities and 10.7 per cent in villages.

Joblessness among men aged 15-29 years was recorded at 13.6 per cent in the country, while it was 15 per cent in cities and 13 per cent in villages.

The data also showed that Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) among people aged 15 years and above was 55.6 per cent during April 2025.

The participation rate in rural areas was 58.0 per cent while it was 50.7 per cent in urban areas.

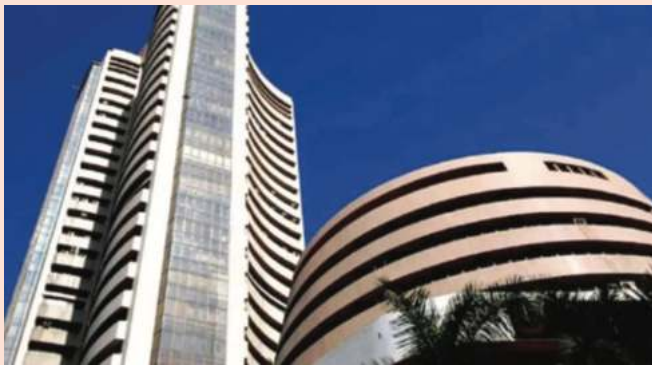
LFPR among males aged 15 years and above in rural and urban areas were 79.0 per cent and 75.3 per cent, respectively.

Among females aged 15 years and above, the rate of labour force participation was 38.2 per cent for rural areas during April 2025.

LFPR refers to the percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.

Worker Population Ratio (WPR) defines the proportion of those who are employed among total population.

## Two Days Of Market Rally Makes Investors Richer By Rs 9 Lakh Cr



Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** Investors' wealth surged Rs 9 lakh crore in two days of market rally, with the BSE benchmark Sensex climbing nearly 1.50 per cent on Thursday alone.

Rallying for the second straight day on Thursday, the 30-share BSE benchmark gauge jumped 1,200.18 points, or 1.48 per cent, to settle at a seven-month high of 82,530.74. The index rallied 1,387.58 points, or 1.70 per cent, to hit the day's high of 82,718.14 in the second half of the trading session.

In two days, the benchmark has surged 1,382.52 points, or 1.70 per cent.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged Rs 9,08,725.11 crore to Rs 4,40,19,512.13 crore (USD 5.14 trillion) in two days.

US President Donald Trump on Thursday claimed that India has offered to drop all tariffs on American goods.

"The market staged a robust rebound, closing with substantial gains, driven by a decline in

domestic inflation and positive signals from the US regarding a potential trade agreement with India," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Motors was the biggest gainer, climbing 4.16 per cent. HCL Tech, Adani Ports, Eternal, Maruti, Reliance Industries, and Asian Paints were among the gainers. IndusInd Bank emerged as the only laggard.

"Benchmark indices posted sharp gains on Thursday, hitting seven-month highs, following positive remarks by US President Donald Trump on a potential trade deal with India," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemmon Markets Desk, said.

Broader markets also ended higher with the BSE smallcap gauge climbing 0.94 per cent and midcap index rallying 0.67 per cent.

All sectoral indices ended higher, with realty surging 1.87 per cent, auto (1.86 per cent), services (1.85 per cent), industrials (1.62 per cent), metal (1.60 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.57 per cent) and commodities (1.51 per cent).

## Pakistan Offers Zero-Tariff Bilateral Trade Deal To US: Report

In a major development, Pakistan has offered a zero-tariff bilateral trade agreement to the United States, according to a media report on Thursday. Geo News reported the development, quoting government sources.

"Pakistan is offering to enter into a bilateral agreement with zero tariffs on selected tariff lines, with mutual interests, to expand bilateral trade across multiple sectors," a high-level source told the channel when asked about the new policy offered to the US.

The development comes after US President Trump claimed that he brokered a "ceasefire" between Pakistan and India.

He also lauded the leadership of both countries and said he would be doing "a lot of trade" with both.

The nuclear-armed neighbours ended their worst military conflict in nearly three decades after reaching an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Indian government sources in New Delhi have maintained that the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, without the involvement of any third party.

On April 2, Trump announced sweeping reciprocal tariffs on several countries, including India and China. However, on April 9, he announced a 90-day suspension of these tariffs until July 9 this year, except for those on China and Hong Kong, as about 75 countries approached America for trade deals. – (PTI)

## Congress Questions PM Modi's 'Silence' On Trump's 'Zero-Tariffs' Remarks

The Congress on Thursday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on US President Donald Trump's remarks in Doha, where he claimed that India has agreed to "zero tariffs" on several American goods as against its "highest" tariffs, asking what linkage does it have with the stopping of Operation Sindoor?

"The Commerce Minister is in Washington DC and President Trump has made yet another grand announcement from Doha. There is total chuppi from our PM. What has he agreed to and what linkage is there between this and the stoppage of Operation Sindoor?" AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked in a post on X.

He also tagged a report quoting Trump that India has offered "zero tariffs" on several American goods as part of its trade deal with the United States.

"India is one of the highest tariff nations in the world. It is very hard to sell into India. They have offered us a deal where basically they are willing to -- literally -- they charge us no tariff. We go from the highest tariff -- you could not do business in India, we are not even in the top 30 in India because the tariff is so high -- to a point where they have actually told us that there will be no tariff. Would you say that is the difference? They were the highest, and now they are saying no tariff," Trump said in Doha. – (PTI)

## Gold Plunges Rs 1,800 To Rs 95,050/10 Gm Amid Weak Global Demand

Gold prices plunged Rs 1,800 to Rs 95,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a decline in precious metal rates in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity slumped Rs 1,800 to Rs 94,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

Gold of 99.9 and 99.5 per cent purity had closed at Rs 96,850 and Rs 96,400 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

"Gold prices are declining as investors move away from safe-haven assets. The recent agreement between the US and China to reduce tariffs for 90 days has eased fears of a full-scale trade war," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said.

As uncertainty fades, investors are shifting towards riskier assets, leading to a drop in short-term demand for gold, Mehta added.

Silver prices also continuing its losing streak for the fourth straight day, declining Rs 1,000 to Rs 97,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had settled at Rs 98,000 per kg in the previous market session.

According to Axis Securities, the decline in bullion prices was reinforced by the stabilisation of geopolitical risks, notably the easing of India-Pakistan tensions and growing optimism surrounding potential US sanctions relief on Syria.

Globally, spot gold fell USD 16.81, or 0.53 per cent, to USD 3,160.71 per ounce. – (PTI)

## BCAS Revokes Security Clearance For Turkish Firm Celebi Citing National Security Interest

Aviation watchdog BCAS on Thursday revoked the security clearance for Turkish company Celebi Airport Services India Pvt Ltd in the "interest of national security", days after Turkiye backed Pakistan and condemned India's strikes on terror camps in the neighbouring country.

Celebi, operating in the Indian aviation sector for over 15 years and employing over 10,000 people, offers its services at nine airports. Civil Aviation Minister K Ram-mohan Naidu, who is personally monitoring the situation at airports, said national interest and public safety are paramount and non-negotiable.

"... the security clearance in r/o Celebi Airport Services India Pvt Ltd is hereby revoked with immediate effect in the interest of national security," the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) said in an order.

The security clearance to the company, part of Turkiye's Celebi, was given in November 2022.

Celebi handles around 58,000 flights and 5,40,00 tonnes of cargo annually in India, as per its website. It is present at Mumbai, Delhi, Cochin, Kannur, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Goa (GOX), Ahmedabad and Chennai airports.

The decision of BCAS comes against the backdrop of Turkiye backing for Pakistan and its condemnation of India's recent strikes on terror camps in the neighbouring country and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under 'Operation Sindoor'. Pakistan had also used Turkish drones on a large scale in the military conflict with India. – (PTI)



# Trump's stance against South Africa is not just about white farmers. It's also about Hamas and Iran

Agencies

Cape Town, May 15 (AP) U.S. President Donald Trump's claim this week that there is an unreported "genocide" happening against white farmers in South Africa was his harshest accusation yet against a country he moved to punish over a range of issues soon after returning to office.

Trump's criticism has focused mostly on his allegations that South Africa's government is fueling anti-white racism in the majority Black country, leading to the killing of white farmers. That has been denied by the South African government.

But Trump has also strongly criticized South Africa's foreign policy, and especially its decision to take Israel to the United Nations' top court and accuse it of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.

Trump has cited that case against a U.S. ally as an example of what he

referred to as a larger anti-American position from South Africa. The U.S. president has now accused South Africa, once a key partner in Africa, of the same crime of genocide.

Israel and HamaS  
South Africa launched its highly contentious genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice in early 2024, putting a developing nation that's not a diplomatic heavyweight at the forefront of the pro-Palestinian movement at an especially divisive time. South Africa's decision caused tensions with the U.S. under the Biden administration and other Western countries, which rejected the accusation that Israel was committing genocide.

But Trump's reaction has been much stronger, citing the case against Israel in an executive order on Feb. 7 that sanctioned South Africa and stopped all U.S. aid and assistance. The order said South Africa had taken "aggressive

positions towards the United States and its allies" and the case showed its support for the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

The U.S. government under Trump has also cracked down on pro-Palestinian or anti-Israel protests at home.

South Africa has long been a supporter of the Palestinian people and a critic of Israel. But while the government has attempted to draw a line between that and any support for Hamas, the distinctions have become blurred, like when the grandson of former South African President Nelson Mandela hosted Hamas officials on a visit to South Africa in 2023.

Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the U.S., the European Union, the U.K. and others.

Ties with Iran  
Trump's executive order also accused South Africa of strengthening its ties with Iran through commercial, military and nuclear arrangements.

South Africa holds diplomatic ties with Iran but said it does not have any agreements with Iran over nuclear weapons, though it is allowing Iran to bid, alongside other countries, for a commercial contract to build a nuclear reactor to provide electricity.

South Africa's Institute for Security Studies, a nonprofit research institute, said that Trump was "overreacting" to South Africa's relationship with Iran, but South Africa "also shouldn't be surprised if they are judged by the company they keep."

Boycotting South Africa's G20 presidency

The U.S. has decided to effectively boycott South Africa's presidency of the Group of 20 developed and developing nations this year, the first time an African nation has held the rotating presidency.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio skipped a G20 foreign ministers meeting in Johannesburg in February,

saying South Africa's theme of "solidarity, equality and sustainability" was effectively DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) and climate change and he wouldn't waste American taxpayer money on it. The Trump administration has moved to dismantle DEI programs in the U.S.

Shortly after Rubio skipped the meeting, the Trump administration suspended all cooperation with South Africa related to its hosting of G20 events, according to a U.S. official.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal administration deliberations, said the decision was because Trump does not support South Africa's G20 agenda. The official said the move would not affect the U.S.'s presidency of the G20 next year.

The rebuff by the U.S. will likely undermine South Africa's efforts to make progress on issues it has prioritized for its presidency.

The Trump administration brought more than 50 white South Africans to the U.S. this week as refugees, saying they are members of the minority Afrikaner group and are being persecuted by their Black-led government and exposed to race-based violence.

South Africa says it condemns the relatively small number of killings of white farmers, but the cause is being mischaracterized and they are a result of its problems with violent crime and not racially motivated.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has not criticized Trump directly but said the U.S. president is being fed false information by some Afrikaner lobby groups in South Africa and some conservative commentators in the U.S. who have elevated the issue.

Ramaphosa's office said he will meet with Trump at the White House next week in an attempt to "reset" the countries' relationship.

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Op Sindoor India's

PoK. Operation Sindoor was a commitment demonstrated by India of not just carrying out defence, but taking bold decisions whenever needed."

'Nation Stands With Forces'

The government and the country's people stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the armed forces at every step, in every situation, he said.

Singh also exuded confidence that with the cooperation of the military, India will soon eradicate terrorism from the region, "so that no one dares to cast an evil eye on the sovereignty of the nation".

During his visit, the defence minister paid homage to the civilians killed in the terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22, and the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice for the country following Operation Sindoor.

He also commended the courage of the injured soldiers and wished for their speedy recovery.

Expressing gratitude to the soldiers for the cross-border strikes, Singh said, "I come here today with a message from the people of India -- 'we are proud of our forces.'"

He also reiterated the government's commitment to continue equipping the forces with advanced weapons, platforms and modern infrastructure.

Forces to Get Cutting-Edge Equipment

"Our government has ensured that our forces are prepared for every situation. Many new-generation equipment, such as modern rifles, missile defence shields and drones, are being rapidly manufactured in India. "Connectivity has been ensured along the LoC (Line of Control) and the LAC (Line of Actual Control) like never before. The government is trying to serve the soldiers for the devotion and readiness with which they serve the country," Singh said.

Terming 'Operation Sindoor', as the most decisive anti-terror action in the past 30 years, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday warned Pakistan that it would have to "pay a heavy price" if it continues to support terrorism.

He said, "Pakistan has repeatedly backstabbed India. But this time, we have ripped apart their chest in response to the assault on our innocent citizens in Pahalgam."

He reiterated that "talks and terror" cannot go together and if talks are held any time these will focus on Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and terrorism.

He warned Pakistan of dire consequences if any terror attack takes place in India saying, "PM Modi has made India's position unequivocal, any terror act will be considered an act of war."

He reaffirmed India's commitment to peace but issued a stern warning: "India has never favoured war, but when it comes to giving a befitting reply, we do not hesitate. Our armed forces are respected across the world. We have ensured they are equipped with the latest technology and weaponry."

The Defence Minister lauded the courage, precision, and professionalism displayed by Indian soldiers during 'Operation Sindoor'. "Under PM Modi's leadership the forces carried out Operation Sindoor with "unmatched intensity and purpose."

"You did not just defend — you attacked. And you attacked with full intensity when the need arose," he told the soldiers.

Referring to April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, which left 26 civilians, mostly tourists, dead, Singh said, "The entire nation stood united in grief and anger. What was more heartening was how the people of Jammu and Kashmir took to the streets to condemn the terror attack. They sent a clear message: terrorism will not be tolerated," he added.

Referring to the moral contrast between Indian soldiers and terrorists, Singh said, "They asked the religion of innocent civilians before shooting them. But we hit them back on the basis of their karma."

"It was a dream of every soldier that we will reach every terrorist hideout and destroy them. Terrorists killed Indians based on their religion, we killed them for their deeds. It was our dharma to eliminate them. Our forces gave the right direction to their anger and took revenge for Pahalgam with great courage & discretion," he added.

As Defence Minister, Singh said during all these years he has felt proud to "know brave forces better" and assured them of the nation's unwavering support. "You have avenged

the Pahalgam attack. You've made the nation proud," he said.

Singh said that through the Pahalgam incident, an attempt was made to break the social unity of India but the armed forces gave them a befitting reply.

The Defence Minister recalled Pakistan's declaration about 21 years ago in front of the then Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee that terrorism will no longer be exported from its land. "Pakistan has been deceiving India, and it must stop sheltering anti-India and terrorist organisations & not allow its land to be used against India," he said.

The Defence Minister said he had come to Srinagar "to feel the power of your energy, the power through which you destroyed enemy shelters with pinpoint precision."

He praised the forces for maintaining their composure during the operation, saying, "Even in josh, you kept your hosh."

Operation Sindoor, Singh said, has sent a loud and clear message to terror masterminds that they are not safe anywhere. "This operation has proven that India can go to any extent to protect its people. India has not succumbed to any nuclear blackmail and never will," he added, in a clear message to Pakistan.

### Armed Forces

ensured that now we will enter deep into Pakistan's heartland and kill the terrorists and we'll also treat future acts of terror as an act of war," he said.

Sinha seconded the defence minister's call for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to take the nuclear weapons of Pakistan under its supervision.

"As Hon'ble Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh Ji said, Pakistan's nuclear blackmail won't work now and its nuclear weapons should be taken under the supervision of International Atomic Energy Agency," he added.

### 3 JeM Terrorists

the significant developments in our resolve and fight against terrorism," he said.

### India-Pakistan Ceasefire

claimed on Thursday.

India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes.

Pakistan's DGMO Maj Gen Kashif Abdullah and his Indian counterpart Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai spoke over a hotline on Wednesday afternoon, Dar told the Senate.

There was no response from the Indian side on Dar's claim.

"Further to the understanding between the two DGMOs on 10th of May 2025, it has been decided to continue the confidence building measures so as to reduce the alertness level," an Indian Army official said in New Delhi.

In his address, Dar said the two DGMOs would again get in contact on May 18.

No details of the talks were shared, except that they agreed to respect the ceasefire.

However, Geo News quoted Dar as saying that talks on May 14 led to the ceasefire being extended until May 18.

"During the DGMOs' conversation (on May 10), the ceasefire was extended until May 12. When the DGMOs spoke again on May 12, the ceasefire was extended until May 14. Further talks on May 14 led to the ceasefire being extended until May 18," Dar was quoted as saying by the channel.

India carried out precision strikes under 'Operation Sindoor' on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people.

Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10. The Indian forces launched a fierce counter-attack on several Pakistani military installations.

### Pak Signals Willingness

Water Resources Secretary Syed Ali Murtaza has responded to the Indian government's formal notification on the treaty's suspension.

In the letter to his Indian counterpart Debashree Mukherjee, Murtaza expressed his government's readiness to discuss specific objections raised by New Delhi.

He also questioned the legal basis of India's move by pointing out that the treaty contains no exit clause.

However, the Indian government remains firm on its decision.

When contacted, officials from the Jal Shakti Ministry refused to officially comment on the

development but government sources indicated that under the current circumstances, India's position is unlikely to change.

The sources reiterated that the decision to suspend the treaty was prompted by "sustained cross-border terrorism targeting Jammu and Kashmir".

In a letter dated April 24, Mukherjee had informed Murtaza that "Pakistan's refusal to engage in negotiations as envisaged under the treaty and its continued sponsorship of terrorism, constituted a breach of the treaty".

Significantly, Pakistan's latest appeal -- described in the letter as a call to reconsider the decision due to the dependence of millions on the regulated waters -- was delivered even as India carried out flushing and desilting operations at the Baglihar and Salal hydropower projects on the Chenab river.

While Murtaza's letter shows Pakistan has softened its stance, the sources said the tone of the communication remains combative with Islamabad terming India's move "unilateral and illegal".

But Indian officials said the principle of "change of circumstances", as seen through repeated acts of terrorism and climate change, provides grounds for a review of the treaty.

Previously, India issued notices to Pakistan in January 2023 and September 2024.

The Indus Waters Treaty, brokered by the World Bank, has governed the distribution and use of the water of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan since 1960.

The Indus river system comprises the main river, the Indus, and its tributaries. Ravi, Beas and Sutlej are collectively referred to as the eastern rivers, while the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab are known as the western rivers.

The water of this river system is crucial for both India and Pakistan.

### Robust Tourism

pressure due to bank loans."

He expressed particular concern for small-scale entrepreneurs who have recently taken loans to purchase tourist taxis, deluxe minibuses or built guest accommodations in their homes.

"In this regard, I plan to engage with the Tourism Department and relevant authorities to advocate for a dedicated relief package from the Government of India," he said.

"A comprehensive package should cater to individuals affected in the border areas, where homes and shops have been damaged. For the tourism sector, we will explore the possibility of loan deferments for at least two quarters, which would provide temporary relief and reduce financial stress on stakeholders," the Chief Minister stated.

Highlighting the ongoing interest in J&K as a tourism destination, Omar Abdullah said there is already enthusiasm for promotional activities and FAM (Familiarization) tours.

"I have been receiving calls from individuals and organizations eager to promote Jammu and Kashmir and bring back tourists in large numbers," he said, adding that he would personally participate in joint promotional campaigns as the situation stabilizes.

The Chief Minister assured the gathering that he would take up the issue of financial support and interest relief directly with the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, and other senior central government officials.

"We will approach this in a structured and result-oriented manner," he affirmed.

Earlier in the meeting, tourism stakeholders put forward several suggestions, including organizing FAM tours, inviting the corporate sector to avail LTCs and host meetings in the region, holding government conferences in J&K, and seeking reductions in airfares to make travel more affordable.

They emphasized that with the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, it is an opportune time to send a strong message to the rest of the country that Kashmir is peaceful and ready to welcome tourists with warmth and brotherhood.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Inspector General of Police Kashmir VK Birdi, Commissioner Secretary Tourism Yasha Mudgal and Director Tourism Kashmir Raja Yaqoob.

Also present were prominent tourism stakeholders, including Chairman of the J&K Hoteliers Club, Mushtaq Ahmad Chaya, who represented various sub sectors of the tourism

industry.

### Will Make Every

which resumed operations on Wednesday following suspension of hostilities between India and Pakistan. The union minister later interacted with the locals at the Polo View market in the heart of the Srinagar city.

"I wanted to visit places outside the airport as well. So, I went to the Polo View market and interacted with the locals. They are worried about the harm tourism has suffered. Tourism has ebbed after the incident (Pahalgam attack) and we have to work to revive it," Naidu told reporters here.

He said tourism in Kashmir had witnessed a boom in the past five years which could be figured from the arrivals at the Srinagar airport.

"Airport arrivals increased from 25 lakh passengers in 2019 to about 45 lakh in 2024. That has benefited the people here. The government will try to restore tourism as it was (before the attack) as soon as possible and also boost it further," Naidu said.

"We will provide whatever support is required from the civil aviation ministry. We are working under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has taken Kashmir forward with a vision and people have benefited from it," he added.

The civil aviation minister said connectivity between Srinagar and other parts of the country has been restored after a temporary halt in the wake of Operation Sindoor.

"I have come to review (the functioning of) Srinagar airport as we want normalcy to return... We have resumed Srinagar airport's connectivity with the other parts of the country."

"We interacted with all officers and staff and thanked them for their display of courage in such tiring times. The entire nation is proud of our armed forces for giving a befitting reply to terrorists with a targeted approach through Operation Sindoor," the Union minister added.

### President Seeks

prescribed time limit and the manner of exercise of powers by the governor, can time-lines be imposed and the manner of exercise be prescribed through judicial orders for the exercise of all powers under Article 200 of the Constitution of India by the governor? \* Is the exercise of constitutional discretion by the President under Article 201 of the Constitution of India justiciable? \* In the absence of a constitutionally prescribed timeline and the manner of exercise of powers by the President, can timelines be imposed and the manner of exercise be prescribed through judicial orders for the exercise of discretion by the President under Article 201 of the Constitution of India? \* In light of the constitutional scheme governing the powers of the President, is the President required to seek advice of the Supreme Court by way of a reference under Article 143 of the Constitution of India and take the opinion of the Supreme Court when the governor reserves a bill for the President's assent or otherwise? \* Are the decisions of the governor and the President under Article 200 and Article 201 of the Constitution of India, respectively, justiciable at a stage anterior into the law coming into force? Is it permissible for the courts to undertake judicial adjudication over the contents of a bill, in any manner, before it becomes law? \* Can the exercise of constitutional powers and the orders of/by the President/ governor be substituted in any manner under Article 142 of the Constitution of India? \* Is a law made by the state legislature a law in force without the assent of the governor granted under Article 200 of the Constitution of India? \* In view of the proviso to Article 145(3) of the Constitution of India, is it not mandatory for any bench of this court to first decide as to whether the question involved in the proceedings before it is of such a nature which involves substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of Constitution and to refer it to a bench of minimum five judges? \* ... (Are) the powers of the Supreme Court under Article 142 of the Constitution of India limited to matters of procedural law or Article 142 of the Constitution of India extends to issuing directions/passing orders which are contrary to or inconsistent with existing substantive or procedural provisions of the Constitution or law in force? \* Does the Constitution bar any other jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to resolve disputes between the Union government and the state governments except by way of a suit under Article 131 of the Constitution of India? The Supreme Court's April 8 verdict set a timeline for all governors to act on the bills

passed by the state assemblies and ruled that a governor does not possess any discretion in exercise of functions under Article 200 of the Constitution in respect to any bill presented to them and must mandatorily abide by the advice tendered by the council of ministers.

It said the state governments can directly approach the Supreme Court if the President withholds assent to a bill sent by a governor for consideration.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said reserving a bill on grounds such as "personal dissatisfaction of the governor, political expediency or any other extraneous or irrelevant considerations" is strictly impermissible by the Constitution and would be liable to be set aside forthwith on that ground alone.

### Trump Wants Apple

said Indian officials spoke to executives of the Cupertino-based firm on Trump's statements.

"Apple has said that its investment plans in India are intact and it proposes to continue to have India as a major manufacturing base for its products," the source said.

Cheaper skilled labour and availability of precision engineered product supply chains have driven Apple to China and India for manufacturing iPhones. American labour and manufacturing in comparison is expensive.

Trump suggested that Apple could make its products in India for the Indian market. But Made in India iPhones being sold in the US has to stop. "You can build in India if you want, to take care of India."

Cook had previously stated that Apple will source the majority of iPhones sold in the US from India in the June quarter while China will produce the vast majority of the devices for other markets amid uncertainty over tariffs.

India-made iPhones are assembled in Taiwanese contract manufacturer Foxconn's factory in Tamil Nadu. Tata Electronics, which runs Pegatron Corp's operations in India, is the other key manufacturer. Tata and Foxconn are building new plants and adding production capacity to raise iPhone production.

Apple assembled 60 per cent more iPhones, worth an estimated USD 22 billion, in India in the year ended March 31.

Foxconn has also started manufacturing Apple AirPods in Telangana for exports.

According to an analysis by S&P Global, iPhone sales in the US were 75.9 million units in 2024, with exports in March from India at 3.1 million units, suggesting a need to double shipments either through new capacity or redirecting shipments bound for the domestic market.

"Apple's Indian exports already headed predominantly to the United States, which represented 81.9 per cent of phones exported by the firm in the three months to February 28, 2025. That increased to 97.6 per cent in March 2025 as a result of a 219 per cent jump in exports, likely reflecting the firm looking to preempt higher tariffs," S&P Global Market Intelligence report said.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had in April announced that iPhones worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore were exported from India in fiscal year 2025.

The Apple ecosystem in India is one the biggest job creators in the country. It is estimated to have employed around 2 lakh people across various vendors in the country.

India's smartphone exports are growing at a healthy rate and has become a "consistent and significant" player in the sector, an official said, adding that the country has become a major mobile manufacturing hub today.

Companies like Apple base their investment decisions on locations that offer strong manufacturing competitiveness.

"I feel that we have shown to the world that we are highly competitive in terms of doing assembly work, which is a labour-intensive work and we have created an ecosystem which is good for the modern and sophisticated assembly units which Apple like firms require for modern mobile phones," the official said.

India is coming up as a country that can give a good competitive edge to high-tech companies in the world and the country will attract these companies to make in India, the official added.

### Court Sentences

both sides, the court found the accused guilty under various sections of the NDPS Act and handed down the sentence. Police officials welcomed the verdict, stating it sends a strong message against drug trafficking and efforts to protect youth from narcotics in the region.



# GT Set To Miss Buttler In Playoffs, Moeen Ali Not To Return For KKR

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** England T20 stalwart Jos Buttler will leave for national duty after completing Gujarat Titans' last three league engagements as the IPL playoffs are clashing with his country's white ball series against the West Indies starting May 29.

Titans are poised to finish among the top two teams post league stages with 16 points from 11 games with three remaining games against Delhi Capitals (away, May 18), Lucknow Super Giants (May 22) and Chennai Super Kings (May 25). As per ESPNcricinfo report, Sri Lankan left-hander Kusal Mendis will replace Buttler during the play-off stages.

Among the other notable English players, Moeen Ali from Kolkata Knight Riders is also not coming back along with Jofra Archer (Rajasthan Royals), Sam Curran



and Jamie Overton (both CSK). "All KKR Players and Support Staff have arrived in Bangalore, except Rovman Powell and Moeen Ali. Both Powell and Ali

couldn't come back due to medical reasons. Rovman is undergoing a procedure, while Moeen and his family are down with a viral infection. We wish them

good health and a quick recovery," said KKR in a statement.

Meanwhile, star batter Virat Kohli, who had retired from Test cricket on May 12, joined the RCB camp on Thursday.

England all-rounder Liam Livingstone is also rejoining RCB for the remainder of the tournament along with Aussie Tim David..

## Mustafizur-DC Deal Stuck Due To NOC Issue

As reported by the PTI on Wednesday, Bangladesh left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman's participation in the IPL remains doubtful even though Delhi Capitals signed him as Jake Fraser McGurk's replacement. The left-arm pacer is yet to get a No Objection Certificate from Bangladesh Cricket Board and is currently in UAE to play five T20Is against UAE and Pakistan between May 17 to 30. The com-

mitment to international cricket is sacrosanct and it will be interesting if BCB sanctions Mustafizur's absence from international cricket. There is still some time and DC are hopeful that with help of the BCCI, a certain agreement could be reached.

## Marco Jansen To Go Back After League Stages

Meanwhile, South African seamer Marco Jansen will be rejoining Punjab Kings squad but will only play the remaining league matches before joining the national squad for the World Test Championship final preparation against Australia.

All Proteas players have been asked by the CSA to report back by May 26, a day after the original date of the final. The IPL final has been shifted to June 3 after a week-long suspension due to a military showdown between India and Pakistan.

## Inter-School Zonal Level Sports Competitions Ongoing Across Budgam



Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** Under the directions of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Gh. Hassan Lone, Inter-School Zonal Level competitions are being conducted across all zones.

Zonal Physical Education Of-

fice Beerwah organized Kho-Kho and Kabaddi for Girls (U-14 & U-17) at DIET Ground Beerwah. As part of the wellness initiative, a Yoga Event for Girls (All Age Groups) was held at Open Ground, Ranger, in Zone Chadoora. Zone Nagam held Inter-school competitions in Volleyball,

Kabaddi and Kho-Kho for Girls (U-17) were held at GHSS Nagam. The event was inaugurated by Principal GHSS Nagam.

Zone Narbal organised Badminton (Boys) competition at GMS Razwan.

In Zone B.K. Pora, Kabaddi (Boys, AAG) competition was conducted at Jamia-ul-Uloom.

Girls Kabaddi competitions (U-17 & U-19) were successfully conducted at HSS Parnewa inaugurated by principal Kifayat Hussain in Zone Dreygam.

In Zone Magam, Kho-Kho for Boys (U-17 & U-19) was held at PS Hazarpora. Over 116 students participated.

In Zone Hardpanzoo, Martial Arts (Taekwondo, Boxing, Karate, Judo) selection trials (Boys, AAG) were held at HS Arizal.

Zone Soibug held Martial Arts selection trials (Boys, AAG) at Masters Martial Art Academy.

In Zone Khansahib, Kho-Kho competitions (Boys, U-14 & U-17) were held at GDC Khansahib.

## JD YSS Inaugurates Zonal District Level Competitions In Srinagar

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Department of Youth Services and Sports has launched the Inter Zonal District Level Competitions for the session, bringing together young athletes from across the region. The events, which include Badminton, Chess, Table Tennis, Softball, and Baseball, are being held at the Indoor Sports Complex Wazirbagh and BHS Sonwar, Srinagar.

The competitions kicked off as Joint Director YSS Kashmir, Mohammad Rashid Kohli, inaugurated the events in the presence of Deputy Director YSS Srinagar, Ghulam Hassan Lone, and other senior officials. Over 350 boys are participating in the competitions.

During the inauguration, the participants took a pledge to make Srinagar drug-free. Kohli encouraged the participants to



strive for excellence not only in sports but also in academics.

In a notable achievement, Zone Batamaloos teams secured spots in the finals of Badminton and Chess across all age groups.

In a parallel event, Zone Batamaloos successfully concluded the Inter-School Zonal Level Kho-Kho

and Volleyball competitions for girls in the Under-17 category, held at GHS Chatabal. IMI Bemina Girls wing emerged victorious in both disciplines, with trophies awarded to the winning teams. Over 200 girls from government and private institutions participated in the competitions.

## WTC-Bound SA Players To Miss Playoffs After BCCI Asks Teams To Release Them By May 26



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The BCCI on Thursday instructed the IPL franchises to release eight WTC-bound South African players latest by May 26, making them unavailable for the play-offs.

In an advisory to teams, the BCCI also informed that the West Indies players will be available for the remainder of the tournament which was suspended last week due to the India-Pakistan military conflict.

Following the ceasefire announcement, it was decided to resume the IPL from May 17 with the final pushed back to June 3 from May 25, clashing with international commitments of players from South Africa, England and the West Indies.

Facing an unforeseen situation, the BCCI had tough negotiations with foreign boards including CSA over player availability but the governing body from South Africa has not relented in light of the WTC final against Australia beginning at Lord's on June 11.

It is worth mentioning all six teams in South Africa's flagship T20 league are owned by IPL franchises.

South Africa are supposed to assemble in the UK on May 31 while the play-offs begin on

May 29, and the date also marks the start of England's home white-ball series against the West Indies.

"The South African players must return to South Africa at the latest by Monday, May 26. West Indies players will be available throughout the tournament," BCCI conveyed to teams in an official communication.

The absence of eight South African players including Tristan Stubbs (DC), Wiaan Mulder (SRH), Kagiso Rabada (GT), Corbin Bosch (MI), Ryan Rickelton (MI), Marco Jansen (PBKS), Lungi Ngidi (RCB), Aiden Markram (LSG) may adversely impact the teams which are in the race for play-offs.

SRH has released Mulder early as they are already eliminated and in all likelihood Markram too could be freed after the league stage with LSG unlikely to make the play-offs.

But Jansen has made a big impact for Punjab Kings and the same stays true for MI opener Ryan Rickelton. Stubbs is an important member of Delhi Capitals and so is speedster Kagiso Rabada for Gujarat Titans.

Titans will also miss the services of in-form Jos Buttler who is set to miss the play-offs for England duty.

## Short TAKES

### Inter Zone U-17 Girls Handball Competition Held At GCOPE Gadoora

The Department of Youth Services and Sports Ganderbal conducted an Inter Zone Handball competition for U-17 girls at GCOPE Gadoora. The event witnessed participation from all four zones of the district.

DYSSO Ganderbal Sheikh Shafqat Iqbal was present on the occasion and interacted with the student players. He encouraged them with insightful suggestions about the game and ensured the availability of essential sports equipment for their development.

In the end, Zone Kangan emerged victorious, while Zone Tullamulla secured the runner-up position. Both teams were felicitated with trophies by DYSSO Ganderbal.

In addition to the district-level event, multiple zonal level competitions were held across Ganderbal.

### At \$3.6 million, ICC Doubles Prize Money For WTC Winners

The winners of the 2025 World Test Championship will be richer by USD 3.6 million, more than double of what was awarded in the previous edition.

Australia had received USD 1.6 million for winning the final against India in 2023.

The 2025 final will be played between Australia and South Africa at Lord's from June 11.

The losing finalists will earn USD 2.1 million while runners-up of the previous two editions got USD 800,000.

"The increase in prize money exhibits the ICC's efforts to prioritise Test cricket as it looks to build on the momentum of the first three cycles of the nine-team competition," said the ICC in a statement on Thursday.

The WTC cycle saw South Africa finish on a high with 2-0 home series wins over Sri Lanka and Pakistan, ending with 69.44 percentage points. Defending champions Australia finished with 67.54 points while India finished with 50.00 after leading the table for majority of the time.

### Europa League Final Will Not Influence Selection For Chelsea Trip: Amorim

Manchester United's starting lineup for Friday's Premier League match at Chelsea will not be influenced by the upcoming Europa League final, but players susceptible to injuries will not be risked, manager Ruben Amorim said.

United play Tottenham Hotspur in the Europa League final next Wednesday in Bilbao with both clubs knowing that winning the trophy is their only hope of qualifying for next season's Champions League after dismal domestic campaigns left them 16th and 17th, respectively, in the league standings.

"If there is a player that can get an injury (and is) not recovered for this game, so (playing on Friday) will put him in risk for the final, he will not play," Amorim told reporters.

"The best thing to prepare the final is to play the game. The players have to understand that if you play or don't play against Chelsea, it means nothing to the final, that is important."

### Messi Returns For Argentina In World Cup Qualifiers v Chile, Colombia

Argentina will have captain Lionel Messi back for its World Cup qualifiers against Chile and Colombia, the national team announced Thursday.

The 37-year-old Inter Miami star missed the March doubleheader because of an adductor injury but the team still clinched qualification for next year's tournament by beating Uruguay and Brazil.

Defending champion Argentina will visit struggling Chile on June 5 and then will host sixth-place Colombia in Buenos Aires on June 10.

Messi will then return to the United States to play in the opening match of the FIFA Club World Cup, when Inter Miami plays Egyptian team Al Ahly on June 14 in Miami.

Manchester United forward Alejandro Garnacho, who had been omitted from previous games for tactical reasons, was also included in Argentina's 28-man squad called by coach Lionel Scaloni.

For the first match, Scaloni will be without defender Nicolás Otamendi and midfielders Enzo Fernández and Leandro Paredes, who are suspended. All three are in the squad.

## Everything About Serie A Is Uncertain Heading Into The Final Two Rounds

Agencies

**MILAN:** Almost everything in Serie A is still uncertain heading into the penultimate round this weekend.

Two teams are fighting for the title, six sides are trying to avoid relegation, and four clubs are vying for the final Champions League spot — with another two still in with a slim chance of snatching fourth spot.

That is why all but one of the 10 matches on Sunday are kicking off simultaneously, at 9:45 p.m. local time (1945 GMT).

Only Atalanta's match against Genoa has nothing at stake, with Atalanta having already secured third spot and Genoa Serie A safety.



So uncertain is the title race that when some matches in the final round will be played is anyone's guess.

It is a race between defending champion Inter Milan and league leader Napoli, which is trying to reclaim

the crown it won two years ago followed by one of the worst title defenses in history last season, when it went through three coaches and finished 10th.

Antonio Conte has brought stability and disci-

pline to Napoli and is looking to steer a third team to the Serie A title, having won it at Inter and three times at Juventus.

Napoli visits relegation-threatened Parma on Sunday with a one-point advantage over Inter. The Nerazzurri host fifth-placed Lazio.

That raises the very real possibility that, for the first time in more than 60 years, a playoff will decide the destination of the championship.

### Playoff Decides Title?

In 2022, Lega Serie A introduced a rule that if two teams competing for the title or to avoid relegation finish level on points, the matter must be settled with a playoff.

Those playoffs (which in the past also included teams tied for a European qualification spot) were scrapped in 2005.

Coincidentally, Inter was involved on the only previous occasion that a Serie A title was decided by a playoff. It lost to Bologna 2-0 in 1964.

The final round is set for May 24-25. But if it is needed, a playoff match would be difficult to schedule with the Nerazzurri also involved in the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain a week later.

One idea that has been mooted is to move Napoli's and Inter's final matches — against Cagliari and Como respectively — to next Thursday, freeing up the Sunday for a potential playoff. (AP)

## Man City's Haaland Hopes For FA Cup Success After 'Horrific' Season

Agencies

**MANCHESTER:** As "horrific" seasons go, Manchester City's could still end on a high note.

While English soccer's most dominant force for the past decade has been dispossessed of the Premier League crown, City's campaign could finish with the FA Cup and the title of world champion.

City plays Crystal Palace in the FA Cup final at Wembley on Saturday looking for some shine on a season that spectacularly unraveled late last year.

"This season has been tough," striker Erling Haaland told the BBC. "It is not nice to lose so many games, it is boring and not fun. That's why we need to finish well and get a trophy.



"We have the FA Cup final to play for and in a horrific season we still managed to do this and that says it all."

City's form has been so bad by its own remarkably high standards that Champions League qualification is still not certain with two rounds to go. But second place in the standings is still up for grabs, and

the expanded Club World Cup kicks off in the United States next month and provides another opportunity for major silverware.

But the club that won six of the previous seven Premier League titles — including an unprecedented four in a row and the Champions League as part of a trophy treble in 2023 — is not in the mood to celebrate.






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