

Kashmir's Big Travel Year Came With A Catch

The Valley's tourist rush collapsed overnight. For 3 million people, the wait to recover has just begun

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: On a warm May morning, Farooq Ahmad waited by the Dal Lake waters with his wooden shikara boat moored close, oar balanced across his knees. The spring sunlight danced off the water. The flowers in the nearby

gardens were in full bloom. But the tourists never came.

"They canceled everything," he said, pointing to a row of empty boats stretching toward the horizon. "Before, I didn't even have time to drink tea between rides. Now, we wait all day for no one."

Just three weeks ago, the



The tourism spirit of Kashmiris is unmatched. We've rebuilt many times. We will again"

season was looking historic. Kashmir had broken tourism records in 2024, with 2.36 crore visitors. It was more than seven times the number from just four years ago.

In April alone, over 8 lakh people visited Srinagar's tulip garden, a number that made local authorities beam with

optimism. Hotels were booked solid. Taxis were scarce. Everyone, from airport porters to pony wallahs in Pahalgam, was working overtime.

Then came April 22. Twenty-five tourists, including a foreign national, were killed in a terror attack in Baisaran, a | [More on P10](#)



MHA Orders AGMUT Cadre Reshuffle

J&K CEO, Director Info Transferred

Observer News Service

Srinagar:The Union Home Ministry on Friday carried out a reshuffle of AGMUT cadre transferring 9 IAS and 3 IPS officers to Jammu and Kashmir while 6 IAS officers, including Divisional Commissioner Kashmir V K Bidhuri, have been shifted.

Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu and Kashmir P K Pole, a 2004 batch IAS officer, is also among the officers who were transferred.

Besides Pole and Bidhuri, other IAS officers to be transferred out of Jammu and Kashmir are Sanjiv M Gadkar, Shakeel Ul Rehman Rather, Pardeep Kumar, Rahul Sharma, Choudhary Mohammad Yasin, and Rakesh Kumar.

The IPS officers posted out of Jammu and Kashmir include Umesh Kumar, S K Yadav and Narra Chaitanya.

The IAS officers who have been posted to Jammu and Kashmir include Ashish Chandra Verma (1994), Anil Kumar Singh (1995), Naveen S L | [More on P10](#)

India Has Put Pakistan On Probation: DM Rajnath

» Presses IMF Against Funding Terror Infrastructure In Pak » 'New India Does Not Tolerate Terrorism, We Retaliate'

Observer News Service

Gujarat: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday delivered a strong message to the international community, warning that Pakistan's close ties with terrorist groups pose a serious threat not only to India but to global security. Speaking at the Indian Air Force station in Bhuj, Singh cautioned that it would be no surprise if nuclear weapons in Pakistan fell into the hands of terrorists.

"It has been proven beyond doubt that there is a strong nexus between Pakistan and terrorists. In such circumstances, if nuclear weapons fall into the hands of terrorists, no



one should be surprised. It is not just a threat to India, but to the entire world," Singh said, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

His remarks come days after 'Operation Sindoor'—a swift military retaliation launched in response to the April 22

terror attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 civilians, mostly tourists. Singh said the operation, carried out under the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, showcased India's firm resolve against terror.

'New India Doesn't Tolerate, It Retaliates' Lauding | [More on P10](#)

Op Sindoor Reflects PM's Firm Political Will: Shah

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Operation Sindoor was a reflection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's firm political will, precise intelligence gathering by various agencies and unmatched strike capability of the country's armed forces.

He said this after inaugurating an upgraded multi agency centre in Delhi for intelligence sharing among various agencies.

"Operation Sindoor is a unique symbol of Prime Minister Modi's firm political will, the precise intelligence of our agencies and the unmatched strike capability of our three armed forces," Shah said.

The multi agency | [More on P10](#)

'Ease Tensions With Pakistan'

Indian Army To Pursue Confidence Building Steps

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Indian Army on Thursday said it will pursue confidence building measures to reduce the "alertness level" in line with the May 10 understanding on cessation of hostilities with the Pakistani side.

The remarks by the Indian Army came hours after Islamabad said the India-Pakistan arrangement on stopping the military actions has been extended till May 18.

The Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan firmed up the arrangement on stopping military actions on May 10 after four days of fierce offensives between the two sides that triggered fears of a wider conflict.

"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," the Indian Army said.

"As the situation develops further, we shall intimate

you," it said in a statement.

In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told the Senate that the DGMOs of Pakistan and India talked over the hotline on Wednesday to discuss the "ceasefire".

However, the Indian military chose not to comment on Dar's claim.

Dar said the two DGMOs in their conversation on May 10 had firmed up the "ceasefire" till 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," the Pakistan foreign minister was quoted as saying by Geo News.

The two DGMOs on Monday deliberated on ways to avoid "inimical" military actions and agreed on considering immediate steps to reduce troops of the two militaries from the borders and forward areas.

In the conversation over the hotline, the two officers focused on | [More on P10](#)

IWT Suspended Til Pak Ends Terror Support: Centre

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Indus Waters Treaty will remain suspended "until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism", the Union Jal Shakti ministry has conveyed to the cabinet secretary.

In its monthly report to Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan on Tuesday, Debashree Mukherjee -- secretary in the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation under the ministry -- said the government announced that the treaty would be held in "abeyance" with immediate effect in the aftermath of the "Pakistan-sponsored" terror attack on civilians in Pahalgam.

"The key water-sharing treaty will remain suspended until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support

for cross-border terrorism," Mukherjee said in her report.

Brokered by the World Bank in 1960, the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan.

According to sources, Pakistan's Water Resources Secretary Syed Ali Murtaza had expressed his government's readiness to discuss specific objections raised by New Delhi.

However, the Indian government remains firm on its decision to hold the accord in abeyance.

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

Water from this river system is crucial for | [More on P10](#)

6 Terrorists Killed In South Kashmir In 3 Days

Agencies

Srinagar: Security forces turned the focus of their anti-terror operations to specific south Kashmir areas in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam attack and eliminated six terrorists in the last three days, officials said on Friday.

"The security agencies reviewed their strategy according to the situation in the wake of terror activities in the last one month and our intensified focus was on operations," V K Birdi, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, said.

The IGP was addressing a press conference with General Officer Commanding, Victor Force, Major General Dhananjay Joshi and CRPF Inspector General Mitesh Jain at the headquarters of the Victor Force here in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Birdi said due to the



intensified focus of various security agencies and the co-ordination between them, two successful operations were conducted and six terrorists killed in the last three days. He termed the elimination of the ultras "significant achievements".

"These successful operations

were possible because of the coordination and synergy among the security and intelligence agencies. We are duty-bound to end any terror activity in Kashmir and we are always ready to stop such acts," the IGP said.

The encounters took place in the Keller area | [More on P10](#)

Omar, Mehbooba Trade Barbs Over Tulbul Project

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A decades-old abandoned water project has sparked a fresh political slugfest between Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and former CM Mehbooba Mufti. What began as a policy-level disagreement over reviving the long-stalled Tulbul Navigation Barrage project has spiraled into a bitter political spat between the two.

The war of words erupted after Omar Abdullah, citing the Centre's recent decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan, floated the idea of restarting work on the Tulbul project—abandoned in the 1980s under pressure from Islamabad.

Posting a video of the incomplete structure on X, Omar wondered if the suspension of the IWT had cleared the way to complete the project, which, he said,



would allow Jhelum river navigation and boost power generation in winter. "It will give us the advantage of allowing us to use the Jhelum for navigation... especially in winter," he said.

But Mehbooba Mufti was quick to call the remark "deeply unfortunate," accusing the National Conference leader of stoking tensions between India and Pakistan at a fragile time.

"Such statements are not only irresponsible but dangerously provocative. Our people deserve | [More on P10](#)

Amarnath Yara Over 3.5L Pilgrims Registered Online

Agencies

Jammu:As the tension between India and Pakistan is normalising gradually and the shelling on the borders has stopped, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has geared up to welcome the pilgrims for this year's Amarnath Yatra starting from July 3 and ending on August 9.

More than 3.5 lakh devotees from across the country have registered themselves online for the yatra. However, the Yatri Niwas with a capacity to accommodate 2000 pilgrims will get a facelift and be ready for the yatries by mid of June.

"Situation on borders is peaceful and normalcy has restored," officials said.

They said that very soon the repair work will begin at Bhagwati Nagar based Yatri Niwas—the base camp of Amarnath Yatra at Jammu and the | [More on P6](#)

Flight Disruptions Leave 1,895 J&K Haj Pilgrims Stranded

CM Urges Centre To Arrange Additional Flights, Clear Backlog

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Flight disruptions caused by recent tensions between India and Pakistan have left 1,895 Haj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir stranded, delaying their journey to Saudi Arabia.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has urged the Government of India to arrange additional Haj flights from Srinagar to clear the backlog. "I have taken up with the Government of India the urgent need to arrange extra Haj flights from Srinagar to clear the backlog of pilgrims caused by recent flight disruptions. Ensuring a smooth and timely pilgrimage is the Government's priority," he said in a post on X.



The Jammu and Kashmir Haj Committee is actively working to address the issue. Dr Shujhat Qureshi, Executive Officer of the committee, said they are waiting for approval from the Haj Committee of

India (HCoI) to operate additional flights. "We expect a schedule in the next 2-3 days," he said.

The Haj Committee has urged the pilgrims and their families to | [More on P10](#)

JAKEDA-KPDCL Transition

PM Surya Ghar Scheme Hits Roadblock In J&K

Agencies

Srinagar: The ambitious PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, launched by the Union Government to promote rooftop solar adoption, appears to have entered a state of stagnation in Jammu and Kashmir. Over six months have passed since the scheme's introduction, yet applicants who had previously registered on the JAKEDA (Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency) portal continue to remain in limbo—awaiting a seamless transfer to the Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) portal.

Despite early promises of integration and expedited implementation, there has

been little to no movement in streamlining the application process, leaving both customers and vendors frustrated.

"Nothing has changed in six months. Our applications are still stuck. There is no clarity, no updates," said a local vendor who wished to remain anonymous. "The lack of coordination has demotivated vendors and discouraged potential adopters."

This delay has created a vicious cycle—vendors are unable to fulfill customer expectations due to bureaucratic hurdles, which in turn sours public interest and participation.

Observers are now drawing parallels with previous solar initiatives | [More on P10](#)

Nilofer Khan Gets 2 Yrs Extension



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Prof. Nilofer Khan has been reappointed as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Kashmir for a period of two years, starting May 19, 2025.

According to an order issued by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the Chancellor of the University, "In exercise of powers vested in me, under Section 12(5) of the Kashmir and Jammu Universities Act, 1969, I, Manoj Sinha, Chancellor, University of Kashmir, hereby re-appoint Prof. Nilofer Khan as the Vice Chancellor of University of Kashmir, for a | [More on P10](#)



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2

UNICEF India Launches 'Meri Thali Sehatwali' Campaign To Promote Healthy Diets

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- UNICEF India on Friday launched 'Meri Thali Sehatwali' (my plate is a healthy plate), a digital campaign to promote healthy eating and healthy food choices for the whole family. This initiative is part of a nationwide effort to improve food environments and diets toward realising the vision of a well-nourished India.

The digital campaign aims to reach a wide range of audiences with targeted messages through engaging content i.e. static posts,



videos and jingles.

"Our food choices, what we eat, are significant drivers of our growth and well-being across lifecycle. A healthy and balanced diet is important for children and youth to thrive and grow. Different stages of life have different dietary needs such as during childhood, adolescence and pregnancy," said Cynthia McCaffrey, UNICEF India Representative.

"Yet not everyone is well informed about what healthy diets constitute for different age group members in the family. Through this digital campaign, UNICEF aims to complement government and partner efforts that bridge the awareness gap and promote healthy eating for the whole family," she said.



IIT-KGP Introduces Robotic System To Detect Plant Diseases, Apply Pesticides

Press Trust Of India

Kolkata- In a boost to smart farming, the Mechanical Engineering Department of IIT Kharagpur has developed a robotic system to detect plant diseases and help farmers spray pesticides automatically, an institute spokesperson said on Friday. The Semi-Automatic Tracked Mobile Manipulator cum Agricultural Robotic System uses camera-based image analysis for accurate disease detection and automatic spraying of appropriate pesticides, he said.

While drone-based agricultural

robots have gained popularity, they struggle to capture high-quality images of plant leaves, and this robotic system will overcome this limitation, he said. The robotic system, developed by a team led by Prof. Dilip Kumar Pratihari of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, has been granted 'India Patent', the official said.

The system aims to address the recurring challenges faced by farmers in identifying plant diseases and ensuring appropriate and safe pesticide application, he said.

Recognising that agricultural terrains are neither completely smooth nor entirely rough, Prati-

har and his team proposed a tracked mobile manipulator as the ideal solution, the spokesperson added.

The development of this system, funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, not only aims to reduce the health risks faced by farmers during manual pesticide spraying but also significantly enhances food quality and agricultural productivity.

By minimising crop loss due to diseases, it supports improved yield and cost efficiency, contributing positively to the country's GDP, the official said.

The robot has been manufactured by an OEM named Technido.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No:-770-W/169/WA-1/FZR-13-2025-26-DRM-JAT & 14-2025-26-DRM-JAT (to be opened on 06.06.2025) acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.irops.gov.in with closing date 06.06.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to the closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through payment modes available on the IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card, etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker cheques, Deposit receipts, FDR, etc. are not allowed.

Tender Type		Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open		Works	Single Packet System
Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
15.05.2025		23.05.2025	06.06.2025
S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender	
1	13-2025-26-DRM-JAT	Provision of 03 no. 100 KL RCC OH water Tank in lieu of old abandoned steel overhead water storage tank with plumbing pipes with pump house, with bore at BDHY, KTHU & JWLS under ADEN/JAT and ADEN/PLMX respectively.	
Advertised Value (Rs.)		Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1,54,97,103.11		60 Days	06 Months
2	14-2025-26-DRM-JAT	Provision of G+1 Floor over the existing ADRM Complex JAT and Improvement of office building in the 2nd entry Side of Jammu Tawi in the jurisdiction of ADEN-JAT	
Advertised Value (Rs.)		Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1,77,09,445.72		60 Days	06 Months

NOTE: Contractors are advised to check the IREPS website for any corrigendum issued against this tender before submitting the bids. 1443/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Chief Medical Supdt. Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Expression of Interest on the prescribed form for the following work:-

1.	Name of Work	Expression of interest from reputed, registered and licensed diagnostic centres for empanellment for providing Pathology diagnostic services for patients of Health Unit Ludhiana.
2.	Completion period	Two years from the Date of starting.
3.	App. Cost of the work	N/A
4.	Earnest money	N/A
5.	Cost of application form on cash/By post	N/A
6.	Date and time availability & Place of procuring application form	Any working day from office of Chief Medical Supdt., N.Rly.Firozpur and can be had from the office of Chief Medical Supdt., N.Rly. Firozpur from 19.05.2025 to 11.06.2025 up to 11:00 Hrs.
7.	Place of submission of bids	Chief Medical Supdt., N.Rly.Divisional Hospital, Firozpur.
8.	Date and time of submission of application form	Up to 11:00 Hrs. on 11.06.2025. Opening of bids at 11:30 Hrs. on 11.06.2025.

No.: 15-Med/Lab Investigation Dated: 16.05.2025 1444/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The name and DOB of my ward has been wrongly written in his adhaar card as Ibrahim Bin Umar & DOB 01-02-2020 in While his correct name and DOB is Muhammad Ibrahim Koka & DOB 01-03-2021 which needs to be corrected. if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Rukaya M/O Muhammad Ibrahim Koka
R/O Kargam Shopian **FKO**

PUBLIC NOTICE

The name and DOB of my ward has been wrongly written in his adhaar card bearing no: 2957 8004 1356 as Mutakeen Jan , DOB 01-12-1980 while his correct name and DOB is Malik Mutakee, DOB 16-03-2012 which needs to be corrected. if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned Adhaar centre within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Khursheed Ahmad Malik F/o Malik Mutakee
R/O Chowdrigund Shopian **fko**

PUBLIC NOTICE

My parentage in my Secondary class records (class 10th) has been wrongly entered as late Dr. Khalid Mir, whereas my actual parentage is late Dr. Khalid Rashid Mir. Now the same is required to correct in my Board records in this regard objection/s if any may be filed in the office of JK Board of School Education, New Campus Bemina Srinagar, within the period of (7) days after stipulated time no objection shall be entertained.

Arsalan Khalid Mir
S/o Late Dr. Khalid Rashid Mir.
Session: Annual Regular 2019, Roll No. 8178299 **inf**

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have Lost RC of my Bike Royal Enfield under Vehicle number JK05L 7478 from Lolipora Pattan, now i want to apply for its duplicate, if anyone have any objection he/she can contact concerned department within the period of seven days from this date.

Owner Name: Ishfaq Ahmad Mir
S/O: Ghulam Ahmad Mir
R/O: Lolipora Pattan
Vehicle Number: JK05L 7479 **fko**

Public Notice

I want to correct My Name in my driving licence bearing No. JK0420090007205 from Syed Inayat Ulla Rashi Indrabi to Syed Inayat Ullah Rashid Indrabi. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file the same before the concerned authorities (ARTO KUPWARA) within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Syed Inayat Ullah Rashid Indrabi
S/o Syed Ab Rashid Indrabi
R/o Gowherpora Chadoora Budgam **inf**

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PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed that the name of my wife has been incorrectly recorded as Fahmeeda Akther instead of her real name Fahmeeda Akhter in the school records of my ward, Mohammad Zargham Mir.

Now, I am applying for its correction in the office of the Principal, The Kashmir Valley School, Humhama. In case anyone has any objection may file same in the said office within a period of seven days.

After this period, no objections or claims regarding this correction shall be entertained.

Liyaqat Ali Mir
Father of: Mohammad Zargham Mir (Class UKG – Green)
R/o: Sebdan, Budgam **inf**

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed Death.
Public Notice

The registrar birth BDO Khore Sherabad has submitted a case file pertaining to death of Gh Qadir Baba s/o Mohammad Maqbool Baba R/o Sheerpora bangil tehsil pattan with verified date of death 02/10/2024 occurred at home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained..

fko **SD**
Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub... issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth...
Public Notice

The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Showkat Bashir S/o Bashir Ahmad Ganie R/o Ganiepora Buran tehsil pattan with verified date of birth 04/05/2009 occurred at home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

fko **SD**
Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

Sub.. issuance of registration order in respect of delayed birth..
Public Notice

The registrar birth BDO pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Showkat Bashir S/o Bashir Ahmad Ganie R/o Ganiepora Buran tehsil pattan with verified date of birth 04/05/2009 occurred at home in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD
Naib Tehsildar Pattan

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.

Ground Water Division Srinagar

Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

E- mail: - phegwd@yahoo.com,

Tel./ Fax No:- 0194-2411285

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailed e- NIT No: - 05/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2025-26.

For and on behalf of Government of UT of J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Machine Drilled Hand Pump Wells having good experience of ground water drilling" as per details given below. The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

S. No	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion	Class of Contract	Major Head /Tender Sub-Head	Tender Call
1.	AMC for Repairs to Damaged/ non-functional machine drilled hand pump wells at various Districts of Kashmir Province for the year 2025-26.	As per Ceiling	Rs. 60,000/-	Rs.2000/-	05 Days each well	Registered for Machine drilled Hand Pump Wells	M&R Detailed Head 023 (2215)	1st

Position of Funds: - Available

Ref: Superintending Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Mechanical Circle North Srinagar's Letter No: PHE/MCN/125/135-36, dated: 12-04-2025. The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website:

<https://www.jktenders.gov.in>

From 16.05.2025 (10:00 AM) UPTO 26.05.2025 (11:00 AM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in> As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

Table-II	
1.	Publishing Date
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids
3.	Period of Submission of bids
4.	Date of opening of Tender.
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer , Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011
6.	Cost of Tender Document : Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/e-challan deposited to Account Head 0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar(at Saddar Treasury Srinagar) (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)

NOTE: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of DD/e-challan, the hard copies shall have be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT.

7. Bid Validity Period: 180 Days

8. The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www.jktenders.gov.in

Bids must be accompanied by bid security viz: Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR and (The date of CDR/FDR etc must not be prior to 03 months from the date of issuance of this e-Nit and Treasury Receipt (mentioning therein the NIT No., S.No. of work and Advertised Cost as per the NIT) as cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 27.05.2025 at 11:00 am. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

SD/=
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/24-25/Camp./ 12923-1301
DIPK-1513/25 Dated: 16-05-2025



Srinagar Airport Records Uptick In Flights

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Srinagar International Airport, Kashmir's only operational airport, is witnessing a gradual but steady revival, with increased flight operations and passenger traffic indicating growing confidence in the valley's connectivity.

According to data accessed, on May 15, the airport handled a total of 44 flights—22 arrivals and 22 departures, carrying approximately 6,844 passengers, including 641 pilgrims heading for Hajj.

The airport's activity

continued to rise on Friday, with reports of 40 flights - 20 arrivals and 20 departures - serving around 5,720 passengers.

A local visitor said, "It feels good to see the airport picking up pace again. Travel has become easier, and it encourages more people to visit Kashmir."

It is noteworthy that Srinagar Airport had experienced reduced flight operations and cancellations over the past week amid tensions between India and Pakistan. Now, the airport is gradually regaining normalcy—(KNO)

Passengers Get Warm Welcome

SRINAGAR: As a gesture of goodwill and respect, the defence personnel and civilian passengers arriving at the Srinagar International Airport were welcomed with flowers on Friday.

The warm reception, shared by the airport authorities on social media, is being seen as part of a broader outreach and a gesture of goodwill.

Airport officials handed out flowers as a mark of welcome, with many passengers moved by the gesture.

"It was a beautiful welcome. In times of tension, such small acts of kindness go a long way," said Anjali Verma, a tourist arriving from Delhi.

Another person, Rajat, travelling with Anjali, said they were not expecting such a warm welcome. "After all the negative news recently, this gesture reassured us that Kashmiris still hold onto their tradition of warmth and hospitality," he said.

Moreover, the step comes in the backdrop of the recent Pahalgam terror attack

in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed on April 22, 2025.

Another person, who was arriving at the airport, said this kind of gesture makes them feel respected and valued. "This gesture helps us bridge gaps that may emerge," he said.

Srinagar Airport authorities also posted photos of the floral welcome on X (formerly Twitter), tagging the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and its Northern Region wing, adding, flowers were presented as a token of gratitude and goodwill, reflecting their deep respect and appreciation for their service and presence.

An official from Srinagar Airport said that the floral welcome was a small gesture to show our appreciation and promote a sense of harmony. "We wanted to convey that Kashmir welcomes everyone with respect and open hands and it is the real heaven on earth," he said.

Pertinently, the step is being welcomed by civil society as a timely reminder of Kashmir's famed hospitality.

CM Omar Meets Several Delegations At His Raabita Office

'Public Concerns Need Redressal With Sincerity & Urgency'



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday listened to grievances and issues of public at the Chief Minister's Outreach Office, Raabita in Srinagar.

The programme witnessed participation of several public delegations, representatives and individuals from diverse sectors who apprised the Chief Minister of various pressing problems and concerns requiring his attention.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani was also present during the outreach programme.

Among the prominent delegations was one representing the residents of Saderkoot Payeen, Ajas area Bandipora, seeking the Chief Minister's intervention for the expeditious disbursement of compensation to Wular land dwellers affected by developmental works. Another delegation raised the matter of delayed release of withheld recommendations for Class IV posts, urging the CM for immediate redressal.

A deputation of Junior Anesthesia Assistants from the Health & Medical Education Department urged the finalization of the long-pending selection process.

In an important academic interaction, Professor Fayaz Ahmad Nika, Dean & Head of the School of Business at Central University of Kashmir, presented key findings from a study on the NRLM/UEED programmes, underlining their role in enhancing women's empowerment and employment generation in the Ganderbal district.

The Jhelum Riverside House Rehabilitation Union from Habba Kadal Ganpatyar submitted a memorandum seeking allotment of land at Rakhi Aarth for the permanent rehabilitation of landless families displaced along the Jhelum river.

Likewise, a delegation from the Local Youth Coordination Committee, Chattabal, requested the construction of a playground in their area, emphasizing the need for sports infrastructure.

A deputation from the Sangarmal Traders Welfare Association called for the resolution of multiple pending issues affecting traders at the Sangarmal Shopping Complex. Representatives of both private

Raabita Reflects Continued Commitment Of Govt: Itoo



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In line with the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah's Public Outreach Programme Raabita, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo met scores of public delegations and individuals at Civil Secretariat here.

During the interactions, the Minister patiently listened to a wide range of public grievances, developmental issues and other concerns raised by the visiting delegations.

These delegations, hailing from various districts and constituencies, raised matters pertaining to road connectivity, healthcare facilities, water supply and social welfare schemes before the Minister and sought timely redressal of the same.

Interacting with the public delegations, Sakeena highlighted that Raabita reflects the continued

commitment of our government to public welfare and responsive governance. "These Public Outreach engagements are essential for bridging the gap between the government and the people", the Minister stated. She added that such engagements provide a unique platform to the public to raise their genuine issues and concerns with the government.

The Minister further reaffirmed the dedication of the Government towards public welfare, adding that the public voices are being heard and acted upon during the present government.

Sakeena further assured the visiting delegations that their genuine concerns would be promptly taken up for immediate redressal.

Meanwhile, MLA Pampore, Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi also met the Minister and apprised her of various public issues pertaining to Pampore constituency.

and cooperative Kerosene Oil Dealers, under their president, appealed for the restoration of kerosene supplies—particularly for horticulturists and agriculturists operating power-driven machinery.

Mechanical engineering graduates and engineers highlighted the need for assured career progression.

The Tempo Travelers Association, Srinagar, sought a temporary waiver of EMI payments on vehicles in light of the ongoing financial stress on transport operators.

Ms. Khair-ul-Nisa, Principal Advisor to the World Trade Center Association in New York and World Trade Center India, held a high-level discussion on major investment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir

and proposed the establishment of a World Trade Center in the region.

Academicians Prof. Hanief and Prof. Talat discussed the critical issue of NAAC accreditation for Islamia College and sought the government's support in strengthening institutional standards.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah gave a patient hearing to all deputations and assured sympathetic consideration of their demands.

He reiterated his government's unwavering commitment to participatory governance, inclusive development and responsive public administration.

"We remain committed to responsive governance and to addressing public concerns with sincerity and urgency," Omar Abdullah said.

RED DELIGHT

Gassoo Farmers Begin Strawberry Harvest

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As the early morning sun warms the fields of Kashmir's famous 'Strawberry Village' in Gassoo, located near Dargah Hazratbal on the outskirts of Srinagar, the farmers have begun harvesting their first bunch of vibrant red strawberries, marking the start of the much-awaited season.

The village, known for its fertile soil and favourable climate has emerged as a hub for strawberry cultivation over the past few years.

With baskets in hand and hope in their hearts, farmers say the harvest brings not just income but a deep sense of satisfaction.

"This is the time we wait for all year," said Fayaz Ahmad, a local farmer. He said the strawberries have

grown, and the yield looks promising this season.

Locals from the Gassoo area say the seasonal fruit has also started attracting visitors and photographers, who come to witness the beauty of the fields.

One of the photographers said the essence of the harvest is a unique charm through his lens. "There is a unique charm in these strawberry fields. The morning light adds to the beauty and it is truly a photographer's delight," he said.

While strawberries are being harvested now, farmers are also preparing for the cherry season, which usually begins in late May and runs till early July. The Makhmali and Double cherry varieties are picked from mid-May, while the sweet Mishri variety is ready by the first week of June—(KNO)

DLSA To Hold 2nd National Lok Adalat On May 31st

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar is going to hold 2nd National Lok Adalat of the year on 31st May 2025 at District Court Complex Srinagar.

During the Lok Adalat, both pre-Litigation and post Litigation Cases shall be taken up for amicable resolution. Pre-Litigation cases comprise Bank Recovery matters, Labour dispute cases, Electricity and Water bills (excluding non-Compound-

able) and other (Criminal Compoundable, Matrimonial, other civil disputes etc).

Among those Pending in Courts include Criminal Compoundable offence, NI Act cases under Section 138, Bank Recovery matters, MACT cases, Labour disputes cases, Electricity and Water bills (excluding non-Compoundable), Matrimonial cases (Except Divorce matters), Land Acquisition cases and other civil cases (rent, easementary rights, injunctions suit, specific performance suit) etc.

- 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
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



PRAYERS

FAJR	3:52
ZUHR	12: 27
ASR	5:21
Magrib	7:30
ISHA	9:04

This Day In History

- 1756 -Britain declares war on France (7 Years' or French & Indiann War)
- 1803-John Hawkins & Richard French patent the Reaping Machine
- 1814- Denmark cedes Norway to Sweden (National Day)
- 1865- The International Telegraph Union (later the International Telecommunication Union) is established.
- 1897-The first successful submarine that can run submerged for any considerable distance and combines electric and gasoline engines is launched in the USA by its designer John Philip Holland
- 1902- Greek archaeologist Valerios Stais discovers the Antikythera mechanism, an ancient mechanical analog computer.
- 1940-Germany occupies Brussels, Belgium & begins invasion of France
- 1940- Nazis bombs Middelburg/B IJzerdrat begins illegal defiance
- 1948- Soviet Union recognized Israel
- 1949- British government recognises Republic of Ireland (previously Irish Free State)
- 1958- Emergency crisis proclaimed in Algeria
- 1960- 1st atomic reactor system patents, J W Flora of Canoga Park CA
- 1968- European Space Research Org launches 1st satellite
- 1969- Russian probe Venera 6 landed on Venus
- 1976- Earthquake in Uzbekistan: thousands killed
- 1983- Israel & Lebanon sign a peace treaty
- 1990- World Health Organization takes Homosexuality out of its list of mental illnesses

From KO Archives

Move To Shift Capital Sparks Debate

A M Sofi

SRINAGAR - Even as the proposal to shift the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir is yet to take off, controversy dogs the idea with debate raging for and against the government move.

Giving vent to the opposition to shifting of the capital, several political parties, including main opposition National Conference, said the massive expenditure needed for moving the secretariat and other offices could be diverted to building schools, hospitals and roads in the state.

"We need no new capital at an exorbitant expenditure of Rs 3,500 crore which could be utilized for the betterment of Kashmiris by constructing schools, colleges, hospitals and roads which are in a dilapidated condition across the valley," NC President Omar Abdullah told PTI.

Ridiculing the idea, another senior leader of the party Ali Mohammad Sagar said "Instead of finding ways and means to mitigate the problems of the people the PDP-led coalition government is trying to squander the funds for unproductive projects."

He asked the coalition government to desist from changing the capital for "petty political gains."

CPI(M), which supports the coalition government from outside, opposes the idea. State Secretary of CPI(M) M Y Tarigami said "I don't think it is a very serious move yet."

The government complexes should be moved a little away from the market and the beautiful city but not relocated in any other place. Why go there (Parihaspora) to Lalitaditya. The kings are buried there let them rest in peace.

"It is wrong to assume that government wants to benefit villagers by moving the capital city. The government has in fact done very little for the upliftment of rural areas," he said.

Author of the proposal to shift the capital and Finance Minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig said the basic objective behind a new capital was to decongest and develop Srinagar as an exclusive tourist resort "with heritage villages and other amenities to make it among the most attractive tourist destinations on the globe."

The proposal for a new capital has received the Centre's nod which would be ready within next three years at an estimated cost of Rs 3,500 crores, he said.

Opposing the idea, Chairman of National Democratic Front and former MP Abdul Rashid Kabuli accused the government of not attending to the problems of Srinagar, a city of 15 lakh people.

Shifting capital from Srinagar to Parihaspora and moving government offices to rural areas is like shifting of Union capital from Delhi to South India, Kabuli said.

The city of great antiquity has had a chequered history which dates back to 250 BC when King Ashoka founded Srinagar as capital which occupied the site of the present Pandrethan about five runs from Srinagar and named it as Srinagar.

The place was the venue of the Buddhist conference during the reign of Kanishka and Muslim preachers, Syed Sharfuddin Bulbul and Mir Syed Ali Hamdani chose this place to spread Islam, he said, adding the latter capitals of Kashmir founded by successive rulers lost their importance to the city.

It was during the Dogra rule (1846-1947) that Srinagar besides being the capital of Kashmir was elevated to the status of the summer capital.

Travellers and tourists have been drawn in numbers to see symbol of the paradise on earth and pilgrims and preachers have found the city a place for attainment of ultimate spiritual contentment.

(Kashmir Observer, 17 May, 2005)

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, myths and stigma, distress associated with OCD

KASHMIR 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), Daresh Kadal Chowk, Srinagar

9070806160

Russia, Ukraine Agree To Swap 1,000 Prisoners Of War

Agencies

Moscow: Russia and Ukraine agreed on Friday to exchange 1,000 Prisoners of War (POW) each, the head

the start of the war in 2022.

Medinsky also said Moscow and Kyiv agreed to provide each other with detailed proposals for a ceasefire.

Ukraine requested a meet-



Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan chairs a meeting between Ukrainian and Russian negotiators in Istanbul, Turkey. Reuters

of Russia's delegation Vladimir Medinsky said after their peace talks ended.

Such an exchange would be their biggest POW swap since

ing between heads of state, and Russia will take it under consideration, he said, adding that Russia is ready to continue talks.

'War For Taking Back PoK Should Be War Of Choice'

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Military conflict with Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack has brought into focus the importance of drones in modern warfare, which along with space and cyberspace will write the new paradigm of future wars, a former Director General of Military Operations, who oversaw the Doklam crisis, has said.

In an interview with PTI Videos on Thursday, retired Lt Gen Anil Kumar Bhatt also expressed his displeasure at suggestions in social media by many warmongers who were unhappy with the conflict ending in four days on the grounds that it was an opportunity to reclaim Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

War, he said, should be the last option and should not be waged since India had achieved its strategic aims.

"Let me tell you, a war or taking back Pak-occupied Kashmir, should be a war of choice, taken by a decision. That is not what was planned this time. Yes, the Indian military was prepared for it, if the escalating ladder took you there," said Bhatt, who is guiding the growth of the private space technology sector in the country after retirement in June 2020.

As DGMO, Bhatt was one of the most senior military officers in the hierarchy, in-charge of ensuring that the armed forces were operationally ready at all times. Reporting directly to the army chief, the DGMO is intimately involved in shaping strategies to deal with immediate and long-term security challenges, besides coordinating with the other two services as well as civilian and paramilitary secu-

rity forces.

In times of crisis and escalated tensions, it falls on the DGMO to communicate with his opposite number. Currently, the DGMO is Lt



Former Director General of Military Operations Lt Gen Anil Kumar Bhatt (Retd). PTI Photo

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Gen Rajiv Ghai.

Bhatt was DGMO in 2017 when India was locked in a 73-day military standoff with China in the Doklam tri-junction near the Sikkim sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). A four-star lieutenant general is the second highest rank in the army, below a five-star general. A field marshal is largely a ceremonial or war-time rank.

"So what I would tell all my fellow countrymen is, war is a serious business. A very, very serious business. And a nation goes for it when all possible options are over. We had options less than war (during the current crisis) and gave a sense to it," said Bhatt, who spent 38 years in the Army.



Global Hunger Hits New High Amid Conflict, Extreme Weather: UN

Agencies

United Nations: Global hunger hit a new high last year with the outlook for 2025 "bleak," according to a United Nations-backed report.

Acute food insecurity and child malnutrition rose for a sixth consecutive year in 2024, affecting more than 295 million people across 53 countries and territories, the 2025 Global Report on Food Crises (GFRC), released on Friday, warned.

Conflict, weather extremes and economic shocks were identified as the main drivers. The report, which provides its analysis through a collaborative effort with United Nations agencies, states that the rise in hunger levels of 5 percent over 2023 was the sixth in a row.

Overall, 22.6 percent of populations in the worst-hit regions experienced crisis-level hunger or worse. Conflict was the leading cause of hunger, affecting nearly 140 million people across 20 countries in 2024, including areas facing "catastrophic" levels of food insecurity in Gaza, South Sudan, Haiti and Mali. Sudan has confirmed famine conditions.

Economic shocks, such as inflation and currency devaluation, helped push 59.4 million people into food crises in 15 countries, including Syria and Yemen. Extreme weather, particularly El Nino-induced droughts and floods, shunted 18 countries into crisis, affecting more than 96 million people, especially in Southern Africa, Southern Asia, and the Horn of Africa. "Empty stomachs, empty hands, turned backs" UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the report an "unflinching indictment of a world dangerously off course".

"From Gaza and Sudan, to Yemen and Mali, catastrophic hunger driven by conflict and other factors is hitting record highs, pushing households to the edge of starvation," Guterres said. "This is more than a failure of systems – it is a failure of humanity. Hunger in the 21st century is indefensible. We cannot respond to empty stomachs with empty hands and turned backs," he added.

Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen were among the countries with both the highest numbers of people and the highest share of their populations facing acute food insecurity.

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Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen were among the countries with both the highest numbers of people and the highest share of their populations facing acute food insecurity.

Food insecurity eased in 15 countries, including Ukraine, Kenya and Guatemala, last year due to scaled-up humanitarian aid, improved harvests, easing inflation and a decline in conflict.

The report found that "the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity almost tripled" in 2024. Moreover, 26 countries with high acute food crises were also detected as having a nutrition crisis.

Middle East and North Africa hardest hit

Sudan, Yemen, Mali and Palestine faced the "most severe nutrition crises" last year.

In July 2024, famine was confirmed in the ZamZam camp in Sudan's North Darfur. It was later identified in four more areas of the country from October to November and "another five [areas] from December 2024 to May 2025".

In Palestine, while famine was projected in March 2024, it was averted due to a scale-up of humanitarian aid. However, as the war in Gaza continues and the Israeli blockade on aid remains, the report found that "acute food insecurity, malnutrition, and mortality" are likely to pass famine thresholds by September.

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Yemen Target Ben Gurion Airport with Hypersonic Missile

Agencies

Tel Aviv : Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesperson for Yemen's military, stated on Thursday night that Yemeni missile units targeted Ben Gurion airport, located 20 kilometers (12 miles) to the southeast of Tel Aviv, with a homegrown hypersonic ballistic missile.

Saree noted that the retaliatory strike attained its desired objectives successfully, sending hundreds of thousands of illegal settlers into shelters.

He emphasized that Yemeni armed forces, together with the country's freedom-loving nation, consider it a religious, moral, and humanitarian responsibility to demonstrate solidarity with Gazans in light of unfolding developments in the region, the daily massacre of ordinary people there, the weeks-long aid blockade, and the inaction of Muslim states.

The senior Yemeni military official stated the country will continue to beef up and expand their military operations until the bloody aggression against Yemen stops, and the crippling siege on Palestinians in the coastal sliver is

completely lifted.

Yemen launches third 'hypersonic' strike on Tel Aviv airport in 24 hours

Yemeni Armed Forces, for that sake, will impose a complete aerial blockade on Ben Gurion International Airport, and will continue to prevent Israeli-linked ships from navigating in the Red and Arabian Seas, Saree pointed out.

As the genocidal war on



Gaza escalated, the Yemenis enacted a strategic blockade on essential maritime routes to obstruct the delivery of military supplies to Israel and urge the international community to take action regarding the ongoing humanitarian emergency in Gaza. The Yemeni Armed Forces have declared they will continue their assaults until Israel ceases its ground and aerial offensives in Gaza.

UK To Allow Foreign States To Own A 15 Percent Stake In Newspapers



Britain's previous Conservative government last year banned foreign state investment in British newspapers, blocking RedBird IMI from owning the Telegraph. (REUTERS/File)

Agencies

LONDON: Britain plans to allow foreign state-owned investors to own up to 15 percent of British newspaper publishers, the government said on Thursday, as part of media reforms that could end long-running uncertainty over ownership of the Telegraph newspaper.

The government will also expand its powers to scrutinize media mergers to include news websites and news magazines.

"These important, modernizing reforms are about protecting media plurality and reflect the changing ways in which people are consuming news," Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said.

"We are fully upholding the need to safeguard our news media from foreign state control whilst recognizing that news organizations must be able to raise vital funding."

The ownership of the Telegraph, one of Britain's best-known newspapers, has raised questions about the independence of the media and foreign states buying political influence.

The government said "targeted exceptions" allowing certain sovereign wealth funds or pension funds to invest up to 15 percent in British newspaper and periodicals would help sustain the titles while also limiting any foreign influence in media.

The government does not plan to exempt debt financing, but warned that if a foreign power gains control through a default, it could trigger a ministerial intervention under existing rules.

Britain's previous Conservative government last year banned foreign state investment in British newspapers, blocking Red Bird IMI, run by former CNN boss Jeff Zucker and with the majority of its funding from Abu Dhabi, from owning the Telegraph.

Abu Dhabi-backed Red Bird IMI took control of the Telegraph titles and the Spectator magazine in 2023 when it helped repay the Barclay family's 1.2 billion pound (\$1.6 billion) debt to Lloyds Bank.

It put the titles up for sale nearly a year ago. The Spectator was sold to hedge fund founder Paul Marshall in September, but the Telegraph has not found a buyer.

Israeli Strikes Kill 100 in Gaza as Trump Wraps Up Gulf Tour

Agencies

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza: At least 93 people were killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza on Friday as US President Donald Trump wrapped up his regional trip.

Strikes overnight hit across Gaza, including the outskirts of Deir Al-Balah and the city of Khan Younis. Gaza's health ministry said hundreds more were injured in addition to those killed.

The widespread attacks come as Trump finishes his visit to Gulf states but not Israel. There had been widespread hope that his regional trip could usher in a ceasefire deal or renewal of humanitarian aid to Gaza. An

Israeli blockade of the territory is now in its third month.

Speaking to reporters at a business forum in Abu Dhabi on the final day of his trip, Trump said he was looking to resolve a range of global crises, including Gaza. "We're looking at Gaza," he said. "And we've got to get that taken care of. A lot of people are starving. A lot of people are — there's a lot of bad things going on."

Israel said Friday it was continuing its operations against militants in Gaza and that it struck 150 targets in the past day, including anti-tank missile posts and military structures. In northern Gaza, it eliminated several militants who were operating in an ob-

servation compound, it said.

The strikes lasted for hours into Friday morning and sent people fleeing from the Jabaliya refugee camp and the town of Beit Lahiya. They followed days of similar attacks that killed more than 130 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

After the strikes, dark smoke was seen rising over Jabaliya as people grabbed what they could of their belongings and fled on donkey carts, by car and foot.

"The army entered upon us, bombing, killing. ... We got out of the house with difficulty, killing and death, we did not take anything," said Feisal Al-Attar, who was displaced from Beit Lahiya.

From Ex-CM's Wife to Vidya Balan: MP Minister Often in Controversy

For Madhya Pradesh Tribal Affairs Minister Vijay Shah, currently under fire for his comments aimed at Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, this is not the first time he has been embroiled in a controversy.

In the past, the tribal leader was accused of making offensive comments on former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's wife and kicking up a row with a dinner invite to Bollywood actor Vidya Balan during a film shoot in MP.

On the orders of the MP High Court, police



have booked Shah for making objectionable remarks about Col Qureshi, who gained nationwide prominence along with another woman officer, Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, during media briefings on Operation

Sindoor.

During a public event in Indore district on Monday, Shah tried to present Col Qureshi as the "sister of terrorists", prompting the HC to take suo motu cognisance of it.

In April 2013, Shah

had made crass remarks on Chouhan's wife while addressing a public function in the tribal-dominated Jhabua district. The unpalatable comments created a political firestorm and cost him his job as a minister.

Abhay Tiwari, state Congress general secretary in-charge of media and research, said Shah was forced to resign from the MP cabinet in 2013 over his tasteless talk concerning the then CM's wife.

"Now, when he has made a shameless comment on the Army, the BJP is silent. Is this their nationalism," he asked.

Indian climber refuses to descend from Mt Everest summit point; dies

A 45-year-old Indian climber died on Mt Everest after showing signs of altitude sickness while descending from the summit point of the world's highest peak, according to a media report on Friday.

The deceased climber has been identified as Subrata Ghosh from West Bengal. Ghosh is the second foreigner to die on the 8,848.86 metres-high Mt Everest this season, The Himalayan Times newspaper reported.

Bodhraj Bhandari, Managing Director at Snowy Horizon Treks, said that Ghosh died just below the Hillary Step, near the summit point of Mt Everest on Saturday, according to the paper.

Ghosh was late in making his summit push and reached the top with his guide around 2 pm, the paper said.

During the descent, he became exhausted and showed signs of altitude sickness, eventually refusing to continue, he said.

"Ghosh refused to move while descending from the summit," Bhandari quoted Champal Tamang, his guide, as saying. Champal returned to Camp IV late last



night and informed about the incident this morning, he added.

Ghosh was part of the Mountaineering Association of Krishnanagar-Snowy Everest Expedition 2025, the paper said.

Efforts are underway to bring his body to the base camp, Bhandari said.

Earlier, 45-year-old Philipp II Santiago from the Philippines died while preparing for the summit push on May 14.

N E W S M A K E R S

MS GDC Sgr Denies Service Rule Violations

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Medical Superintendent (MS) of Government Dental College (GDC), Srinagar, Professor Shabir Ahmad Shah has dismissed allegations of holding dual posts and service rule violations, calling them "baseless and driven by professional jealousy".

In a written rebuttal shared with this newspaper, Prof. Shah submitted what he described as "documentary evidence" to counter the claims.

"I have much more supporting material in my defense," he said, asserting that his additional charge as Medical Superintendent is officially sanctioned in light of administrative gaps.

Shah said that his additional charge as MS, alongside his primary role as Professor of Prosthodontics, is in accordance with existing government practices, especially in the absence of recruitment rules for administrative posts like MS, Deputy MS, and others.

"I am officially Professor of Prosthodontics with additional charge/duty of MS because, in the absence of recruitment rules for positions like MS, Deputy MS, and others, several faculty members in our institution have been assigned additional roles," Shah noted.

He pointed out that such dual or multiple responsibilities are common practice across both Govt Medical Colleges (GMCs) and Dental Colleges in Srinagar and Jammu. "Scores of other faculty members are handling various portfolios—academics, sports, disciplinary committees, NABH, PG Review Programs, and more," he added.

On the controversy surrounding the Department of Dental Materials, Shah clarified that there is no formal position

of Head of Department (HoD) in such institutions. "Official designations are restricted to Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, and Principal. There's no post of HoD," he said.

He further pointed out that there are no officially designated HoDs in GDC Srinagar, and the official ranks remain limited to Lecturers, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Professors, and Principal. Shah added that the department of Prosthodontics is the only one with two sanctioned professors.

"The government assigned the MS responsibility to one of the two professors of prosthodontics, so that academic work in the department doesn't suffer. All the other 17 departments in GDC Srinagar and Jammu have only one Professor each," he said.

He also addressed the use of official transport, stating that all officials—including MS—use government vehicles strictly for duty-related purposes like attending official meetings. "Such usage is in line with established norms and not for any personal purpose," he clarified.

Referring to the harassment allegations reportedly probed earlier, Shah highlighted his professional record. "I have consistently received 'Excellent' remarks from my Head of Institution—Principal/Dean—since my joining in 2002," he said.

Earlier, Dr. Sandeep Kaur, Principal of Government Dental College and Hospital, Srinagar, told Kashmir Observer that Shah has been working on these posts for the last six years. "Who are we to challenge it?" she said, adding that the decision was made by the government and that the institution has no role in the matter.

Pahalgam Terror Attack Leaves Pampore Traders Counting Losses

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam has dampened the tourism sector in the Kashmir Valley, leaving local traders and vendors in Lethpora and Pampore in south Kashmir's Pulwama district struggling to survive.

Small-scale traders who depend heavily on visiting tourists, especially those selling dry fruits, saffron and the renowned Kashmiri Kehwa, are now facing a severe decline in customers and income.

The once-bustling Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, where tourists traditionally stopped to enjoy a warm cup of kahwa or purchase local produce, is now eerily deserted. Peak season trading, which usually brings lively activity and prosperity, has abruptly turned into a period of silence and mounting concern.

"We are barely making even one percent of what we used to sell before the terrorist attack," said Manzoor Ahmad, a dry fruit stall owner in Lethpora. "There used to be dozens of tourist vehicles stopping here daily. People loved our kahwa and bought it in bulk. Now, hardly anyone slows down or stops."

Shabir Lone, who runs a kahwa stall near Pampore, expressed similar worries. "The attack has not only instilled immediate fear but has also shattered tourist confidence. Even those who had already booked their travel plans are cancelling. Nobody feels safe coming here anymore," he said



“

There was a time when dozens of tourist vehicles would stop here every day. People adored our kahwa and would buy it in bulk. Now, hardly anyone even slows down, let alone stops.”

with a worried look.

The economic repercussions are compounded by the emotional toll on these people. For many vendors, this seasonal income is their primary livelihood. "We have children to feed, loans to repay, and no savings to fall back on," said Gulzar Ahmad, a saffron seller. "If this situation persists, we may be forced to shut down our stalls permanently."

Javid Dar Reaffirms Commitment To Rural Empowerment

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister of Rural Development Department (RDD) & Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar reaffirmed the government's commitment to rural empowerment, stating that ensuring eligible individuals benefit from RDD schemes without obstacles is a government obligation.

During a review meeting chaired at the Civil Secretariat here, Javid Dar emphasized the need for prompt and transparent implementation of rural development initiatives. He instructed officials to accelerate ongoing projects while maintaining quality standards, noting that efficient grassroots governance is essential for community welfare.

Minister directed Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs) and Assistant Commissioners Panchayats (ACPs) to collaborate closely with legislators on works and financial planning matters.

"We must support and work alongside legislators to ensure cooperation at the grassroots level," Dar said, stressing the importance of taking elected representatives into confidence during project planning and execution.

The Minister evaluated progress on key programs, including the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin. Discussions also covered the construction and enhancement of Panchayat Ghars for 2023-2025 and the co-location of Common Service Centers (CSC), UT capex budget.

The Minister was informed that under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-



G), a record 1.12,000 houses were completed in FY 2024-25, the highest ever in J&K. Additionally, 5 Marlas of land were provided to 498 landless beneficiaries.

Under MGNREGA, 407.04 lakh person-days were generated, and 1.84 lakh works completed, marking record achievements in employment and rural infrastructure.

Through the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), 42,146 Lakhpati Didis were formed, and over 6,000 rural SHG women received skill training.

Under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), 330 Panchayat Ghars have been completed, with 272 more allotted for FY 2024-25.

Under Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin (SBM-G), 43,280 Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) were constructed, surpassing the target of 36,000 by 120%.

Javid Dar directed officers to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive timely assistance under PMAY-G, which aims to provide affordable housing in rural areas. Additionally, he highlighted the need for well-equipped Panchayat Ghars to strengthen grassroots governance and public service delivery.

The Minister called for regular field visits and community engagement, encouraging officials to hold public "dabars" for grievance redressal. "We must focus

on our strengths, work for the welfare of the people, and maintain a transparent and accountable system," he emphasized.

Javid Dar also praised RDD efforts in clearing irrigation channels (Khuls) in the Chenab and Pir Panjal regions and other parts of Kashmir valley. He urged officials to rejuvenate natural water sources and develop them into potential Amrit Sarovars to enhance rural water availability.

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, highlighted the need for unity among government officials and elected representatives, noting that rural development must focus on awareness and highlighting government achievements in India's largely rural-centric democracy.

Nasir Aslam acknowledged challenges faced by women's self-help groups under the "Lakhpati Didi" initiative, particularly high-interest rates on loans. He proposed connecting these groups with corporate banks to reduce interest rates and increase financial stability, enabling women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.

Secretary, RDD, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, briefed the Minister on the status of ongoing initiatives and schemes aimed at rural development and improving rural life in Jammu and Kashmir.

DIPR Artists Promote Awareness On Dengue Prevention

Observer News Service

JAMMU: To mark National Dengue Day, a street play was organized at Yatri Niwas, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu, by the artists of the Cultural Unit Jammu, Department of Information and Public Relations, in collaboration with the Directorate of Health Services, Jammu.

The event was aimed at creating mass awareness causes of Dengue, preventive measures,

and effective control strategies.

The impactful street play captured the attention of the gathered audience with its engaging performances and clear messaging on the importance of maintaining cleanliness, avoiding stagnant water and taking personal precautions to prevent the spread of the dengue virus. Through humour, drama and educational storytelling, the artists successfully conveyed critical public health messages.

On the occasion, State Malariaologist J&K, Dr. D. J. Raina emphasized the need for community participation in the fight against dengue. He elaborated on the symptoms of the disease, the significance of early diagnosis, and the role of timely medical intervention. Dr. Raina also highlighted the continuous efforts of the Health Department in controlling vector-borne diseases and urged the public to stay vigilant and informed.

Misappropriation Of Funds

ACB Registers Case Against Teacher, Others

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday said to have registered a case against the then Teacher, Incharge Headmaster of Government Middle School, Jandrel, Zone Chassana, Contractor and others for misappropriation of funds.

A spokesman in a statement issued to Kashmir Observer said that ACB has registered a case under FIR number 01/2025 in Police Station ACB Udhampur under sections 5(1) (d) r/w 5 (2) of J&K P.C Act, Svt. 2006 and section 120-B RPC against a public servant Sajjad Hussain, then Teacher (Incharge Headmaster) of Govt. Middle School Jandrel, Zone Chassana, District Reasi, Abdul Aziz, Contractor and others started investigation.

"An enquiry was conducted by ACB against the above named Govt. Official after receipt of a report from Director School Education Jammu substantiating therein the allegations of misappropriation of funds and use of substandard material in school building of Middle School Jandrel, Zone Chassana," the statement reads.

It surfaced during the course of the probe that funds to the tune of Rs 11.50 lakhs were released in favour of Sajjad Hussain, then Teacher (Incharge Headmaster) of Govt. Middle

School Jandrel, Zone Chassana under SSA scheme for construction of School Building of Middle School Jandrel by then ZEO Chassana during the period 2016-17.

"The construction work was carried out by Sajjad Hussain through contractor Abdul Aziz without observing codal formalities/norms meant for the purpose, besides withdrawal of funds etc," the statement added.

During spot visits by the Engineering Wing of ACB, many shortcomings were observed like cracks between slab and beams, non-execution of electric work, face lifting, cement flooring, and fixing of glass strips, door/window/shutter etc. "Apart from, non-maintenance of cash books as well as payment made without following the codal procedure etc. are also observed as a result of which a loss to the tune of Rs 1,65,634.86 has been caused to Govt. exchequer," ACB spokesman said.

By acting in the manner, Sajjad Hussain, teacher (I/C Headmaster), by abuse of his official position and in league with contractor Abdul Aziz and others executed the substandard work of said school building, thereby conferred undue benefit to contractor and others and corresponding gain to himself, he said, adding that further investigation in the case is going on.

Satish Sharma Conducts Tour Of Chamb Constituency



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Science and Technology, Satish Sharma on Friday conducted an extensive tour of Chamb constituency, during which he laid the foundation stone of key infrastructure projects as well as inaugurated several public utility projects, reaffirming Government's commitment to the welfare of public.

During the visit, the Minister laid foundation stone for construction of Block Public Health Unit (BPHU), to be built at an estimated cost of Rs. 45.00 lacs, in the premises of PHC Maira Mandrian. This Unit shall cater to the increasing health demands of not only Maira Mandarin but adjoining areas of district Reasi as well.

The Minister inaugurated a Community Hall built at an estimated cost of Rs. 9.76 lacs village Godhan of Kandi Panchayat. He also inaugurated GMS Payan built under District Capex Budget at an estimated cost of Rs.22.94 lacs.

The Minister on the occasion also made available open coolers for public use at Maira Mandrian Bus Stand, of Nardi Panchayat and Government Ayurvedic College, Akhnoor.

These installations are aimed at enhancing public amenities by providing access to clean drinking water for travellers, students and the general public.

As part of his outreach efforts, Satish Sharma also addressed large public gatherings at Panchayat Godhan, Payan and PHC Maira Mandrian, where he directly engaged with residents and listened to their concerns and suggestions.

During his visit, he also interacted with several public delegations and community representatives raised in Khuga Morh, Govt Ayurvedic College and Maira Mandrian Bus Stand. Key issues raised included improvements in local infrastructure, healthcare, education and water supply.

Satish Sharma issued immediate directions to departmental officials to take action on the issues raised, emphasizing the need for prompt and effective solutions, especially for matters requiring urgent attention.

He also paid obeisance at Gurudwara Nardi Balla, where he offered prayers for peace, unity and the prosperity of Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister was accompanied by district and sectoral officers from various government departments.

Guidelines Issued To Ensure Discipline In Health Sector

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: In a bid to streamline the functioning of health institutions unless they are properly qualified in the relevant field and have completed a recognised course from an accredited institution.

The circular, issued on May 16, emphasises that no officer or official shall visit the office of the Director of Health Services, Kashmir (DHSK) or the CMO Bandipora frequently without prior permission from the concerned DDO.

It also mandates that all employees must perform only those duties that are part of their official job roles and refrain from engaging in unauthorised assignments.

Highlighting another key

concern, the CMO's circular strictly prohibits volunteers from undertaking any task in health institutions unless they are properly qualified in the relevant field and have completed a recognised course from an accredited institution.

"Any non-compliance found in this regard in any health institution is a violation of rules and will be the sole responsibility of the concerned DDO," the circular reads.

The directive has been circulated to the Director of Health Services, Kashmir, the Medical Superintendent of the District Hospital Bandipora, and the Block Medical Officers of Bandipora, Hajin, and Gurez for strict compliance.

It is seen as a move to enhance accountability and ensure that healthcare delivery in the district remains uninterrupted and professional.

Ghost Bunkers

Built without design thinking or community input, Kashmir's border shelters are failing the very people they're meant to protect.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

CHURANDA, URI — The concrete structure looked more like a grain storage shed than an emergency shelter. I bent low to enter, stepping into a damp, airless room with walls cold to the touch. Inside, there were no beds, no lights, no toilet — just a bunker, by official definition.

"This is what we got," said Laldeen Khatana, a former village head here near the Line of Control. "But would you hide your children in a place like this?"

I stood in that space longer than I needed to, trying to imagine a mother with three children crouched in the dark, the ground above shaking with the sound of shells. I couldn't. Not for more than a minute.

Over the past few months, I've traveled across forward areas of Jammu and Kashmir, from Uri in the north to Poonch in the south, to see what "civilian protection" looks like in a region where shelling is part of life.

The government of India, under a central scheme, has spent crores building thousands of bunkers in villages along the LoC. But many of these structures, I found, are ill-conceived, poorly built, and worst of all, unused.

In village after village, I asked the same question: Do you use the bunkers?

The answer, almost always, was a shake of the head.

In Degwar, a village in Poonch district, I met a family who told me that during a recent shelling, they fled their government-assigned bunker because a snake had entered through an uncovered drainage pipe.

"It was raining," the woman said. "The bunker was flooding. The children were crying. And then we saw the snake. We ran."

She said it without drama.



Not because it wasn't terrifying, but because such failures have become mundane here.

Each family I spoke to had their own story, of cracks in the walls, of no electricity, of suffocation, of fear not from the shelling outside but from the bunker itself.

I asked if any officials had ever returned to inspect the shelters. The answer, again, was no.

The biggest surprise was in Poonch town itself. For the first time since 1947, shells landed in the heart of the town this year. It's a worrying sign that the "safe zones" of the past are no longer so.

Yet, not a single bunker has been built in the town, which is now home to thousands of displaced villagers during border escalations.

People here, ironically, feel less safe than those in the forward areas. One social worker told me, "We're asking for one community bunker — just one. No one's listening."

He showed me a piece of land near a school. "Perfect spot for a shelter," he said. "But every file stops somewhere."

Not all stories, however, were bleak.

In Tangdhar, a rugged sector closer to the Kupwara district, I found a rare example of good planning.

A few years ago, large community bunkers, 30 by 20 feet each, were built under the watch of a young civil servant, Dr. Bilal Mohiudeen.

"They thought about space, about air flow, about people actually needing to live in these for days," said Riyaz Ahmad, a former local council head. "When the shelling started last week, everyone rushed in. No one was hurt."

It was the only place where I saw a bunker being swept, maintained, and respected like an extension of the home.

I asked what made the difference. "They came and asked us," Riyaz said simply. "They asked what we needed."

As someone who has tracked rural infrastructure projects in Jammu and Kashmir for years, I wasn't surprised by what I found along the Line of Control.

The bunkers, like so many government-built structures—compost pits, waste sheds, soakage units—are poorly planned

and barely functional.

These aren't life-saving shelters. They're concrete checkboxes. Built without design thinking, without community input, and without consulting defense engineers.

Most lack ventilation, sanitation, or even basic usability. Many are too close to the border to be safe. Some flood during rain. Others remain locked or abandoned.

Despite crores spent, people still flee their homes when shelling starts. That should tell us everything. We've built structures to meet targets, not protect lives. It's a failure of planning, and it demands investigation.

As I left Churanda, I stopped at a small dhaba where a group of young men had gathered. One of them, Zahid, told me that during the last shelling, he and his friends didn't even try to enter the bunker.

"We took shelter where we could — in the mosque, behind walls, in ditches," he said. "Anything but that dark hole."

It struck me how normalized this has become. Not just the shelling, but the failure to protect people in meaningful ways.

I kept thinking about a phrase I had heard repeatedly during my reporting: "No one asked us."

Maybe that's where the story really begins. Not with cement, but with conversation. Not with a blueprint, but with empathy.

Until then, the bunkers will remain cold, empty, and waiting. Like silent symbols of a promise half-kept.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat is a transparency activist, policy analyst, and Acumen Fellow. He is the founder of the Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement and writes on governance, rural development, and public accountability.

Doctors Against All Odds

From remote villages to makeshift clinics, these healthcare workers show what it means to serve when no one is watching.

Mohammad Hanief

When Dr. Shabir Ahmad's phone rings at midnight, he doesn't wait to check if it's an emergency. He pulls on a worn jacket, grabs his old medical bag, and steps into the darkness.

Sometimes it's a heart attack, sometimes a baby on the way, and sometimes, just a neighbour too poor or too frightened to go to the hospital alone.

It has been like this for years in his corner of South Kashmir, a place where the nearest specialist is two hours away, and power cuts are so frequent that surgeries are often done under phone flashlights.

This isn't unusual. Across the Kashmir Valley, doctors have become more than just health workers. They are drivers, educators, mental health counselors, and lifelines. Their work begins long before their hospital shift and rarely ends with it. Even on days off, they respond to knocks on their doors and messages on their phones, answering not just medical queries but the unspoken expectation that they'll always be available.

"You can't say no," said Dr. Shabir, shrugging, as if the decision was obvious. "People trust you with their lives."

In urban Srinagar, where private hospitals hum with machines and staff, long hours and complex surgeries are part of the routine. But it's in Kashmir's rural belt—from Kupwara's high-altitude hamlets to the far ends of Kulgam—that the grit of the medical profession is most visible.

Doctors often travel miles on foot, cross rivers in makeshift boats, and wade through snow just to attend to patients who've never seen the inside of a hospital.

"I remember once being called to deliver a baby in a house with no electricity and no water," said Dr. Asma Jan, who serves in a government-run Primary Health Centre in Bandipora. "The only light we had was from a lantern. We used boiled water and cotton cloths. I didn't even think of fear. There was no time for that."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, such acts became commonplace.

In Kashmir, over 10,000 healthcare workers—including doctors, nurses, and paramedics—worked through lockdowns, often with minimal protective gear. Many didn't see their families for weeks. Some fell ill themselves. A few didn't survive.

Dr. Asif Mir, a young pulmonologist at a Srinagar Hospital, recalls losing a colleague during the second wave. "He was 32. We were working together the previous night. Next morning, he had symptoms. Within a week, he was gone. We didn't even get to say goodbye."

Still, none of them stopped. Volunteers stepped up. Retired doctors returned. Medical students fast-tracked their training just to be of use.

In Kashmir, where strife has shaped life for decades, the line between professional and personal duty has always been thin. Many doctors have seen their hospitals surrounded by security, their ambulances stopped at checkpoints, their patients caught between curbs and clampdowns. Yet they adapt.

Some run crisis-clinics during political tensions. Others organize health camps in schools and mosques. In Kupwara's Lolab Valley, Dr. Naseer Bhat sets up weekend clinics in community halls. He brings with him a stethoscope, a blood pressure monitor, and medicines he's bought himself.

"People come walking for hours," he said. "I can't turn them away."

What drives them isn't always clear. Some cite faith. Others say it's the sheer absence of alternatives. A few speak of an oath taken long ago that they still believe in, despite a system that doesn't always believe back.

Most government doctors in Kashmir earn modest salaries. Their workload is enormous, with doctor-to-patient ratios often exceeding 1:2,000 in public hospitals. Mental health support is rare. Facilities are underfunded. Equipment is outdated.

"You do what you can," said Dr. Ruhi Bano, a pediatrician in Anantnag. "Sometimes that means giving medicine. Sometimes it just means listening."

Kashmir's doctors are also its emotional first responders. In a place where trauma runs deep and psychological care is still a taboo, many patients show up with chest pains rooted in anxiety, or sleeplessness linked to decadal discord.

"We call it somatization, when mental stress becomes physical illness," said Dr. Irshad Rather, a psychiatrist. "You can't treat that with pills alone."

Over the last decade, Kashmir has seen a steady rise in stress-related disorders. In 2015, a study by Médecins Sans Frontières found that nearly 45% of adults in the Valley showed symptoms of significant mental distress. But the number of practicing psychiatrists remains under 50.

So general practitioners step in. They counsel. They comfort. They try to stitch together fractured hope with limited tools and even less time.

"I've hugged patients," said Dr. Ruhi. "Sometimes that's what they need most."

Beyond patient care, many doctors in Kashmir work as educators and researchers. They write medical papers in their off-hours, teach students without charging fees, and develop public health awareness campaigns on shoestring budgets.

Dr. Altaf Qayoom, an oncologist, has spent the last five years collecting data on cancer trends in Kashmir, tracking how dietary habits, genetic factors, and delayed diagnoses contribute to rising cases. His work helped push for a cancer registry.

"This isn't part of my job de-



Doctors often travel miles on foot, cross rivers in makeshift boats, and wade through snow just to attend to patients who've never seen the inside of a hospital.

scription," he said. "But how else do we understand what's happening to our people?"

Others push for systemic reform. They attend policy meetings, speak at international forums, and advocate for better rural health access, even when those efforts lead nowhere. Still, they keep trying.

"It's part of healing too," said Dr. Qayoom. "Fixing what's broken before more people suffer."

For all the challenges, there's also hope. Young doctors continue to enter the field. Community health is slowly gaining attention. And amid a fractured system, moments of care and courage continue to shine through.

Like when Dr. Asma stayed back during a flood to treat stranded families. Or when Dr. Naseer carried a child on his back across a flooded stream to get her to a district hospital. Or when Dr. Shabir spent his own savings to buy an oxygen cylinder for a COVID patient who couldn't afford one.

None of these stories made the news. None of these doctors asked for them to. But ask their patients, and they'll tell you: it mattered.

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Test of Friendship

On the eve of a crucial exam, two friends face the harsh reality of unpreparedness, testing the limits of trust, desperation, and loyalty in a high-pressure world.

Aisha Hasnain

I am not prepared for anything for tomorrow's paper. I need to hurry home," said an uneasy Arsalan as he and his below-average friend, Haris, walked back home from school.

"You know I solely count on you, Arsalan. Otherwise, I'll fail."

There was a pause before Haris added, "But we can make a deal. I'll learn one of the four chapters and you learn the remaining..."

"Thanks a million, but I reject an offer that is nearly fatal."

"Okay, fine." Haris quietly took his deal back.

Arsalan vividly remembers the first time Haris offered this kind of help to him.

Two years ago, in 7th standard, they were supposed to prepare a daunting volume of six chapters from their social studies subject for the mid-term exam. Haris came up with a plan: he would cover the first two chapters, Arsalan the last four, and then they would help each other copy in the exams.

For every term exam, five students from each class were intermixed and seated together to reduce the chance of cheating. Unit exams, however, were given without shuffling.

Haris felt lucky for this exam because their seating arrangements happened to be in the same classroom. Arsalan was hesitant and asked Haris if he could really learn the two chapters. "I already know a part," said Haris.

Every time there was a class test—first chapter, first two chapters, first three and so on—Haris would begin from the first chapter and never reach the end. He told his class topper best friend, Arsalan, that he would study till 11 PM and ask Abba for his phone so he could set an alarm to rise early the next morning to revise.

The exam day arrived. When they met in the morning, Arsalan failed to notice the horror in Haris' eyes, as it was always the same for Haris on exam mornings. As they reached the exam hall, something clicked in Arsalan's mind.

He asked Haris if he had really prepared anything and pleaded with him not to lie. Haris, with a terrified look, barely managed to shake his head. This was the first

surprise to Arsalan. Then came the senior ragging.

Arsalan and Haris were seated nearby, but two seniors in the class had to copy from each other on the same fateful day. There were three columns of desks in the room. The seniors moved Arsalan to the corner-most seat in the first column, while Haris sat in his usual second seat in the last column. Haris lost all hope.

The examiner, a new teacher at the school, came to the class. The exam began and the question

only and simultaneously tried to mimic Haris' handwriting.

The teacher began collecting the papers. He took Arsalan's and read aloud: "Haris Bashir, class 7th. Okay!"

The entire class looked on in surprise. They knew it was not Haris' paper. Arsalan nearly had a heart attack. But the teacher proceeded. He did not know either Arsalan or Haris.

Everyone left the hall, and Haris thanked Arsalan.

"You are a traitor, Haris! I

For every term exam, five students from each class were intermixed and seated together to reduce the chance of cheating. Unit exams, however, were given without shuffling.

papers were handed out. The paper looked like a death sentence to Haris.

Time and again, he looked toward Arsalan, who was writing his paper. Arsalan signaled subtly with his hand to wait for his help. Time ran out, and at one point, when Arsalan looked at Haris, his eyes were full of tears.

Arsalan hastened to finish his paper and waited for the examiner's attention to be diverted. And the diversion came: a student sent by the examiner to the other room. "Sir, Mushtaq Sir asks if you have extra answer sheets?"

While the teacher was busy with this student, Arsalan managed to exchange his answer paper with Haris' through the help of a student sitting beside him. Arsalan barely had half an hour to write Haris' paper. With his heart pounding, Arsalan filled the paper with answers to short questions

am very angry with you! You didn't just ensure our dismissal, you risked my life. I nearly had a heart attack!" Arsalan was fuming. "I thought someone would just yell that the paper didn't belong to me—and God knows what would have happened after that."

"I swear, I tried my best to study, but it seems as if it isn't meant for me. C'mon, calm down now. I wasn't doing any better. I nearly cried when the time was running out and I hadn't written anything," Haris tried to contain his friend's disappointment. "Shakir, as well, is a dummy. He was sitting in front of me and it seemed like he was writing back the question paper on his answer sheet."

"I had to try hard to make it look like your hand... My God, my hands are still sweaty," Arsalan looked at his bare hands.

"The teacher will know I cheated anyway."

"Not at least that some other person wrote it! You'll have me killed one day. The way the entire class looked at me when Sir took the paper and read your name—as if I had robbed those jerks of something!"

"They looked the same way toward me as well. My heart nearly stopped." Haris was calmer than Arsalan.

"What were you doing yesterday? Were you not going to set an alarm?" asked Arsalan, frowning.

"I reached home at 4, unwound, and took the notebook in my hands. I counted the number of pages I had to cover and suddenly felt tired, realizing I should rest before starting to study. I slept and woke up at 7, though I hadn't planned to sleep that long. I washed my face, ran to the kitchen, and had a quick cup of tea. By 7:30, I restarted but in vain, repeating line by line until 8:30 and not even completing one side of the page. Then mother called me for dinner. Abba was happy to lend me his phone. I set the alarm to 6 AM and chose my favorite tune as the alarm. At 9 PM, I took the notebook and resumed. That's the last thing I remember before I opened my eyes at 8:30 the next morning."

Arsalan was dumbfounded. "And what about the alarm?"

"Yes. When it rang in the morning, the tune was so soothing that it lured me back to sleep. You should never set your favorite tune as your alarm."

"Sleep, sleep, and more sleep! Did you do anything else?"

"Please don't say that. I know you can't relate to it, but it was the hardest I have ever tried. That's why I was so tired. Otherwise, I don't normally sleep by 9."

"I still can't understand what it was after all that made you so tired. Huh."

"The thought that I had to study was enough. I told you, ever since the day I ate that pastry cake for the first time, I can't memorize anything. Something was off about that cream."

Aisha Hasnain writes coming-of-age tales rooted in everyday moments of youth, exploring themes of friendship, fear, and fortitude. She can be reached at aishahasnain02@gmail.com

The Teacher With the Bag

From feeding lunch to healing wounds, this government school educator in Budgam redefines what it means to show up for children.

Muntashir Kifayat Hussain

I was recently on an academic visit to a small government primary school nestled in the hills of Budgam, my home district in Kashmir. It was meant to be a routine inspection, a check on foundational literacy and numeracy. I came in with a notebook, some questions, and, admittedly, a few assumptions. I left with something far deeper.

The first thing I noticed was an elderly teacher with a white beard, sitting comfortably on the floor with a group of tiny children. One leg stretched out, he looked like just another mystic figure in a meditative place.

I started asking the children questions about letters, numbers, shapes. To my surprise, they answered everything quickly and correctly.

Delighted, I looked at the teacher, half-expecting a modest smile. Instead, he burst out joyfully, "It is we who taught them!" That small "we" said everything.

As we talked, a small child ran up to him shouting something in broken Urdu. "Shar... shar... shirt ka button gir gaya!" The button of my shirt fell off. The words were rushed, childlike, adorable.

Without missing a beat, the teacher reached into a small bag slung over his shoulder, pulled out a needle and thread, and calmly stitched the button back on. No scolding. No fuss. Just quiet care.

I started noticing that bag more. We strolled through the school lawn: lush green, with a hill rising nearby. The teacher limped slightly. He told me he had gout, but brushed it off.

A boy, no more than four, had fallen on the grass and his face was dusty and streaked with tears. Again, the teacher hurried over. He didn't just wipe the child's face. He picked him up, carried him to the washroom, took out soap from that same handy bag, and gave him a bath. Clean clothes, gentle hands, no drama.

I realised then that I wasn't here just to monitor, I was here to learn.

The school had about 15 children in its pre-primary classes: nursery, LKG, UKG. When the lunch bell rang—than, than, than—they ran outside in a flurry and



sat in a half-moon formation on the soft grass.

The teacher rolled up his sleeves and started feeding them, one by one, with his hands. "Me first, me first!" they giggled and shouted, falling over each other in excitement. He smiled, feeding them patiently, lovingly. It was like watching poetry in motion.

I wondered how, in this tiny building with peeling paint and no fancy resources, the children looked so loved and happy. And then I saw why.

Just as we were settling for our own lunch, we heard a loud cry. The teacher rushed out, bag still on his arm, and I followed. A child had scraped his elbow on the fence. The teacher unzipped the bag and pulled out antiseptic, gently applying it as the child sobbed into his shoulder.

That bag, it wasn't just a bag. It was a toolkit of compassion.

Inside the school building, the walls were painted in bright colours with drawings and lessons on morals and discipline. Curious, I asked him how it was all funded. He looked at me as if the answer was obvious. "From my salary," he said. "I earn Rs 70,000. I can spare Rs 10,000."

Later, in a corner of the lawn, I noticed a small tin shed, just six by eight feet.

Inside were carefully arranged Kashmiri cultural artefacts: woven baskets, miniature samovars, old musical instruments. "I collected these from nearby villages," the teacher said. "Children should know where they come from."

Even the corridor walls had portraits of great personalities, each one with a short biography in simple words. He believed in teaching values, not just syllabi.

I didn't want to leave. But the final bell rang—than, than, than—and the children began to leave, one by one. Each one hugged him before stepping out of the gate. He kissed their foreheads, whispering something to each of them. Not one wanted to let go.

The bag was still there, hanging from his arm. Ready for the next bruise, the next broken button, the next tear.

As I left the school, the words of Khalil Gibran came to mind: Your children are not your children... they are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

I had walked into that school thinking I was the educator. But it was that white-bearded teacher with a limp, a gentle smile, and a small handy bag, who truly taught me what it means to teach.

Muntashir Kifayat Hussain is a teacher at Boys High School, Narbal.

The Day Science Came Alive

A student from the valley shares how a lab experiment transformed her idea of what science really is, and what it could be for others.

Seerat Maqbool

For most of my school life, science was something I memorized. Not explored. Not questioned. Just memorized.

We were taught to define terms, draw neat diagrams, and score well in exams. The system rewarded speed and accuracy: how quickly you could recall the structure of a cell or write down Newton's laws.

There was no time to stop and ask why anything worked the way it did.

That began to change when I stepped into a lab at the University of Kashmir. I was studying clinical biochemistry, and my assignment placed me in the Structural Biology Lab at CIRI, where I worked on proteins involved in building ribosomes.

Ribosomes are tiny structures inside our cells that produce proteins. But what struck me was this strange and beautiful cycle: the proteins I studied helped build the ribosomes, and the ribosomes, in turn, built every other protein in the body. It felt like a perfect loop, a factory assembling the very machines that built it.

That moment stayed with me. It was the first time I felt a genuine sense of awe about science. Not because it was complicated, but because it was elegant. I wasn't just reading facts, I was watching them unfold.

In school, we rarely had time for wonder. Science was broken down into digestible parts. You read a chapter, memorized key points, and answered questions exactly as they were framed. Deviating from the script meant risking marks. Most classrooms weren't built for asking difficult questions or exploring possible answers. They were built for performance.

Our schools proudly advertised board toppers on banners and billboards. Coaching centers promised to produce rank-



holders. That kind of pressure makes you focus on results, not understanding.

In that race, critical thinking becomes a luxury, not a habit.

But science doesn't work like that. It depends on doubt. It moves forward through questions, failures, and new perspectives. If students don't feel free to be curious, to pause and ask "why," they miss the whole point of science.

The disconnect runs deep. I've seen bright students lose interest in science because they couldn't connect it to anything they experienced in real life. They were taught that science lived in books, not in the world around them.

But it's everywhere. In the sky above us, in the way a wound heals, in the rising temperature of our planet. The basic forces we study in physics act on us every time we walk, fall, or throw a ball. The DNA we read about in textbooks carries the code for life in every cell of our bodies. But none of this sticks if we don't feel it.

I wish our classrooms allowed more space for those connections. I wish students were given time to wonder, to imagine, to play with ideas even if they were not on the syllabus.

I wish teachers were free to step away from the textbook and show how science lives

around us—in the kitchen, on a rainy day, or through a microscope.

If you're a student, let science confuse you. Let it pull you in. Don't worry about not understanding everything right away. Ask questions. Build your own links between what you read and what you see.

And if you're a teacher, I hope we can move beyond measuring success only through marks. Let's teach science in ways that make it stick. Through stories, experiments, conversations. Through letting students imagine what atoms look like or why a tree grows toward light. The answers matter, but so do the questions.

That time in the lab taught me more than protein structure. It changed how I thought. It made me slow down, look closer, and trust my curiosity. I want more students to feel that, especially those who have only known science as a subject they're supposed to pass.

Science should be a way of seeing, not just studying. It should teach us how to think, not just what to know. If we can make that shift, we'll not only raise better students. We'll raise better thinkers.

Seerat Maqbool is a student of Clinical Biochemistry at the University of Kashmir.

Helicopter Parenting

Caught between love and fear, many parents in Kashmir are over-controlling their children's lives. Aamir's story shows what happens when they finally let go.

Haziqa Lanker

Aamir was 15 when his parents realized they might be doing more harm than good.

He grew up in a remote village, a place where love often disguises itself as fear. His parents were warm, protective and deeply involved in every aspect of his life. They made his daily schedule, decided who he could meet, often escorted him to school, and kept a close watch on his moods, grades and routines.

In a region marred by strife and uncertainty, their approach felt like the safest way to raise a child.

But Aamir had begun to shrink. He struggled to make small decisions. He relied on his parents for everything, from picking out his clothes to choosing friends. He rarely spoke up in class. When things didn't go his way, he would become overwhelmed, unsure how to cope without immediate help. His world was secure, but narrow.

This kind of parenting is common in Kashmir. What elsewhere might be called "helicopter parenting"—an over-controlling, over-involved style—is often intensified here by a different set of worries. Parents tend to keep their children close, safe and sheltered, due to situational realities of the valley.

But that instinct, however well-meaning, can quietly erode a child's confidence. And Aamir's case is not unique.

Researchers have long warned about the dangers of helicopter parenting. A 2020 study in the Journal of Adolescence found that children of overly controlling parents showed higher rates of anxiety and had lower problem-solving skills. They often grew up fearing failure and doubting their own judgment.

In Kashmir, where the outside world already feels unstable, this kind of emotional dependence can be especially limiting.

Aamir's parents only began to

rethink their approach when they noticed his emotional growth was stalling. He avoided extracurriculars. He hesitated to speak up or try new things. He feared mistakes. They had meant to protect him, but they had also unintentionally stifled him.

The shift began with small acts. They encouraged him to walk to school with friends. They stopped correcting him mid-sentence. When he didn't get selected for a local cricket team, they let him process the disappointment instead of calling the coach.

Over time, they started giving him space to make his own decisions, while staying present and not intrusive.

The change in Aamir was slow but real. He became more confident and expressive. He joined a local art club. He learned to bounce back from small failures. His friendships improved. Most importantly, he began to trust himself.

That trust didn't grow in spite of his parents' distance, it grew because of it.

There's a lesson here, not just for parents in Kashmir, but anywhere where fear threatens to eclipse freedom.

Children need guidance, yes. But they also need room to fall, to fail, and to figure things out on their own.

The desire to protect is natural. But when we step in too often, we rob children of the chance to grow.

In Kashmir, this pattern is compounded by political and emotional fragility. But if we want our children to be resilient in an uncertain world, we have to give them the tools to stand on their own.

And that begins with stepping back. Not abandoning them, but believing in their strength.

Aamir's story is a stark reminder that letting go is not a loss. It's an act of faith.

Haziqa Lanker is an educator based in Kashmir with over nine years of experience in teaching, including early childhood education.

The Byline Is Back



She stepped away for family. She stayed away for grief. Now, she's back with a voice stronger than ever.

Khurram Rasool

Ten years... That's how long it's been since I last sat at a newsroom desk. My fingers racing against deadlines, my words shaping stories, my byline carrying weight in Kashmir's media landscape.

A decade ago, I walked away from the adrenaline rush of chasing stories, from the ink-stained pages that once held my voice.

I left on my own terms. At least, that's what I told myself.

Marriage, motherhood, the expectations of a life that demanded more of me than just my profession. I embraced it, but in doing so, I unknowingly exiled a part of myself.

For years, I told myself it was just a pause, a necessary detour. But time has a way of distorting perception.

The pause became an absence, and the absence became a void. While I poured my energy into nurturing my

children, I felt myself fading, reduced to the echoes of who I used to be.

My voice—once firm, once fearless—became a whisper within my own home, suffocated by routine, lost in the mundanity of everyday existence.

I had never intended to be gone for this long. When I stepped away, I believed it was temporary. My mother would care for my baby, I would soon return to the field, and the rhythm of my career would pick up where it left off.

But life has a way of unravelling even the best-laid plans.

My mother was diagnosed with cancer. The woman who was my anchor, my silent strength, was suddenly in a battle we never saw coming.

For a year, I watched her fight, clinging to hope, bargaining with fate. And then, just like that, she was gone.

Her absence was more than just grief. It was a collapse.

My world crumbled, and I was left to navigate the terrifying unknown of

new motherhood without her guidance. The sleepless nights weren't just for my baby, they were for me too, drowning in a solitude no one could see.

I was lost, emotionally fractured, mentally drained. Depression crept in silently, tightening its grip, making me question if I would ever find myself again.

While I faded into this void, the world outside kept moving. Kashmir changed. Journalism changed. And I? I disappeared.

And then, something shifted. Not overnight, not dramatically, but slowly—like the dawn stretching over the Dal Lake, reclaiming the sky inch by inch.

The urge to write, to be heard again, grew louder. It was no longer just about storytelling, it was about identity.

But the Kashmir I had left behind had changed, and so had its media landscape. Journalism in this valley had always been a battleground, but now, the ground felt more unsteady than ever.

Sands were shifting, spaces were shrinking, and the voices that once dominated the discourse had faded.

Could I still fit into this world? Could I still carve a place for myself?

Doubt lingered, but so did defiance. I am not who I was ten years ago, but I am not less. If anything, I am more. More aware, more resilient, more ready for revival.

Motherhood did not weaken me, it fortified me. The time away did not diminish my worth, it deepened my perspective.

This is not just a return to journalism, this is a reclamation of self. A comeback not for validation, but for liberation.

My byline will no longer be a relic of the past, it will be a force in the present.

Khurram Rasool is a senior journalist based out of Kashmir. She can be reached at khan.khurramrasool@gmail.com

Climate Change Increasing Risk Of Complications During Pregnancy: Study

AFP

Scorching heatwaves fuelled by global warming are increasing the risk of dangerous complications during pregnancies across the world, a report warned on Wednesday.

Being exposed to extreme heat while pregnant has previously been linked to a range of problems, including a higher risk of premature birth, stillbirth, birth defects and gestational diabetes.

The new report from the US-based research group Climate Central sought to measure how much more pregnant women have been exposed to excessive heat since 2020 -- and to what extent climate change is to blame.

In 222 out of the 247 countries and territories studied, "climate change at

least doubled the average annual number of pregnancy heat-risk days experienced during the past five years", the report said.

The biggest increases were in developing countries where access to healthcare is limited, such as in the Caribbean, Central and South America, the Pacific islands, Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The researchers only looked at the rise in potentially dangerous hot days and did not examine the extent to which pregnant women were actually affected by heat in the countries.

Ana Bonell, a maternal health and extreme heat researcher at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine not involved in the report, said it "gives clear evidence of the growing exposure risk to extreme heat".

The findings could also apply to the elderly, another group who are more at risk during blisteringly hot periods,



“The new report from the US-based research group Climate Central sought to measure how much more pregnant women have been exposed to excessive heat since 2020 -- and to what extent climate change is to blame.

she told AFP. While researchers are increasingly documenting the many ways that extreme heat can threaten hu-

man health, there remain "many unknowns" about the physiological mechanisms to explain why this happens, Bonell said.

A large 2024 study in Nature Medicine estimated that heatwaves increase the odds of having a complication during pregnancy by 1.25 times.

Beyond wider efforts to fight climate change -- which is largely caused by humans burning fossil fuels -- experts advised local policies to help communities beat the heat.

These include "greening neighbourhoods, limiting pollution, creating cool areas and informing residents about the risks," French epidemiologist Lucie Adelaide said.

In a statement linked to the new report, she also recommended that existing information about the health risks of heatwaves include warnings for pregnant women, who are currently rarely mentioned in such efforts.

Study Shows Why Women Tend To Have Faster Heartbeats, Men More Irregular Rhythms

ANI

For decades, doctors and researchers have puzzled over a fundamental heart rhythm mystery: why do women have faster heartbeats while men are more susceptible to developing irregular rhythms like atrial fibrillation (AFib).

Now, a new study from The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Centre sheds some light.

The research shows that the sinoatrial node (SAN) -- a small but powerful structure in the human heart that serves as its natural pacemaker and initiates every normal heartbeat -- runs on different gene blueprints in men and women.

The study found that women have genes that help their hearts beat faster while men have gene networks that may lead to heart problems like AFib. The research was recently published in the American Heart Association's Circulation: Arrhythmia and Electrophysiology.

"We found for the first time that the genes controlling how the SAN works are influenced by sex," said Vadim Fedorov, PhD, professor of physiology and cell biology,



“That helps explain why women generally have faster heart rates and are more likely to experience inappropriate sinus tachycardia, while men face a greater risk of heart rate disorders like conduction block and atrial fibrillation

Corrine Frick Research Chair in Heart Failure and Arrhythmia at the Ohio State University College of Medicine and senior author of the study. "That helps explain why women generally have faster heart rates and are more likely

to experience inappropriate sinus tachycardia, while men face a greater risk of heart rate disorders like conduction block and atrial fibrillation."

Researchers at Ohio State University's Dorothy M. Davis Heart

and Lung Research Institute and Bob and Corrine Frick Center for Heart Failure and Arrhythmia examined donated human hearts to unmask unique gene sets in the SAN pacemaker cells responsible for the generation and maintenance of heart rates.

They analyzed genes and pathways involved in pacing, metabolism, inflammation and fibrotic remodeling and discovered distinct patterns tied to biological sex. The hearts were donated for research by organ donor families through Life-line of Ohio.

"Women showed higher levels of TBX3 and HCN1, which are two key genes that help drive faster heart rhythms," said Ning Li, MD, PhD, Ohio State research assistant professor and co-author of the study. "In contrast, male hearts had more activity in gene networks related to inflammation and collagen production, which can interfere with electrical signaling and increase the risk of arrhythmias."

The findings could help lay the groundwork for more personalized, patient-specific approaches to treating heart rhythm disorders, Fedorov said.

IPL Biologicals Launches Six New Biological Products To Boost Crop Yield



Press Trust Of India

IPL Biologicals announced on Friday the launch of six new products under the 'NXG Range' to boost farm productivity and drive sustainability.

These six products -- Subtilin, Viridex, Sporidex, BT-dex, BEE Boost, and 360 -- in soluble powder format are developed specifically to be compatible with micro-irrigation systems, the company said in a statement.

IPL Biologicals President Harsh Vardhan Bhagchandka said, "The soluble powder format offers operational advantages, such as improved shelf stability, simplified application, and reduced risk of clogging during mixing or irrigation".

The formulations are composed of high colony-forming unit (CFU) microbial strains, which will contribute to the faster onset of biological activity in the field, he added.

Bhagchandka said the need for regenerative, high-performance inputs is expected to intensify as the global agri-biologicals market progresses toward a projected size of USD 43 billion by 2035.

The NXG platform is a step toward addressing that demand through scientifically validated and irrigation-compatible formats, he added.

Established in 1994 and headquartered in New Delhi, IPL Biologicals is a biotechnology company specialising in microbial-based solutions for sustainable agriculture.

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Tehran Says No Objection To US Companies Operating In Iran

AFP

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Thursday that Tehran has no objection to US companies operating in the country, including in the oil and gas sector.

"We have no ban on the economic presence of American companies in Iran," Araghchi said, attributing the lack of US business activity to primary sanctions imposed by Washington.

"This ban has been imposed by the United States itself," he said.

"If American companies wish to invest in Iran's economy, the US must lift its own primary sanctions."

His remarks come after President Donald Trump said Washington was "getting close" to a new nuclear deal with Tehran to replace the one he abandoned during his first term in 2018.

The longtime foes have held four rounds of Omani-brokered negotiations since April 12 in their highest level of engagement since Trump's walkout effectively scuppered the 2015 deal.

Araghchi said US firms could enter key sectors of Iran's econ-



omy, including its oil and gas industry, but emphasised that if an agreement is reached, the ball be in Washington's court to allow US firms to operate in Iran.

Despite his diplomatic push, Trump has reinstated his "maximum pressure" policy against Iran since returning to office in January.

On Wednesday, the US Treasury Department targeted individuals and entities involved in Iran's ballistic missile programme with sanctions.

Araghchi reiterated Thursday that Tehran aims for the "lifting of sanctions" in its talks with the US, "apart from affirming Iran's nuclear rights."

He has previously said on social media that Iran presents a "trillion-dollar opportunity" that could be open to US enterprises.

Turkiye's Celebi Hava Servisi Explores Legal Remedies To Challenge Termination Of Pacts In India



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Turkiye's Celebi Hava Servisi AS on Friday said all available administrative and legal remedies will be pursued to challenge the unilateral termination of various licence and concession agreements in India after the security clearance for its India company was revoked.

Citing national security interest, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) on Thursday revoked the security clearance for the ground handling and cargo services provider Celebi.

The development came days after Turkiye backed Pakistan and condemned India's strikes on terror camps in the neighbouring country.

Following the BCAS decision, operations of various entities of Celebi Hava Servisi AS have been suspended. They are Celebi Airport Services India Pvt Ltd (CASI), Celebi GH India Pvt Ltd (CGHI), Celebi Nas Airport Services India Pvt Ltd, Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India Pvt Ltd, and Celebi GS Chennai Pvt Ltd (CGSC).

Celebi, operating in the Indian aviation sector for over 15 years and employing over 10,000 people, was offering its services at nine airports, including Delhi, Mumbai, and Ahmedabad.

In a filing to Turkiye's stock

exchange on Friday, Celebi Hava Servisi AS said four concession and licence agreements executed between its company's subsidiaries and the relevant Indian airport authorities have been unilaterally terminated.

The concession agreement, valid until 2034, executed between Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India Pvt Ltd and Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) has been terminated. Celebi has 74 per cent stake in the venture.

Also, the licence agreement for ground handling services between Celebi GH India Pvt Ltd (CGHI), which is 61 per cent owned by Celebi, and Ahmedabad International Airport Ltd (AIAL) has been terminated. The pact was valid till 2032, as per the filing.

"The Bridge Mounted Equipment Service Agreement valid until 2036 and the Concession Agreement Ground Handling Services valid until 2029, executed between Celebi Nas Airport Services India Pvt Ltd (Celebi Nas), 59 per cent owned by our company and Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL)," has been terminated, the filing said.

The concession agreement, valid till 2030, executed between CASI and DIAL has also been terminated. CASI is 99.9 per cent owned by Celebi.

US Tax On Outward Remittances To Pinch Indians Sending Money Home

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The cost for Indians in the US sending money back home will rise, with their total annual outgo is likely to cross USD 1.6 billion as the Trump administration plans to impose a 5 per cent tax on outward remittances.

The estimated outgo is based on data for the 2023-24 period compiled from a recent RBI article.

In President Donald Trump's big priority bill, there is a proposal for a 5 per cent excise tax on remittance transfers that would cover more than 40 million people, including those holding green cards and H1B visas. The proposed levy won't be applicable for US citizens.

India's remittances have more than doubled from USD 55.6 billion in 2010-11 to USD 118.7 billion in 2023-24, according to a recent article published in the Reserve Bank's March Bulletin.

The article highlights findings of the sixth round of India's remittances survey conducted for 2023-24. The fifth round of the survey conducted for 2020-21 was published in July 2022.

The results of the sixth round survey highlight the gradual shift in dominance of India's remittances from the Gulf countries to advanced economies, particularly the US, the UK, Singapore, Canada and Australia.



These advanced economies together accounted for more than half of the 2023-24 inward remittances in India.

In 2023-24, the share of the US in India's total remittances remained largest, rising to 27.7 per cent from 23.4 per cent in 2020-21, as per the article.

A back of the envelope calculation shows that 27.7 per cent share translates to around USD 32.9 billion worth remittances in absolute terms. A 5 per cent tax on USD 32.9 billion would amount to USD 1.64 billion.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) article said the cost of a remittance transaction includes two elements -- the fees charged at any stage of the transaction and the exchange rate conversion from local currency to the currency of the recipient country.

It also said that given the fact that inward remittances are largely for family maintenance, the cost of

sending cross-border remittances has socio-economic impact and therefore, reducing this cost has been a crucial policy agenda globally for over a decade.

The article has been authored by Dhirendra Gajbihiye, Sujata Kundu, Alisha George, Omkar Vinherkar, Yusra Anees and Jithin Baby, all from the Department of Economic and Policy Research of RBI.

According to the World Bank, India has continued to remain the top recipient of remittances since 2008, with its share in world remittances rising from around 11 per cent in 2001 to about 14 per cent in 2024.

The top five recipient countries for remittances in 2024 were India, with an estimated inflow of USD 129 billion, followed by Mexico (USD 68 billion), China (USD 48 billion), the Philippines (USD 40 billion), and Pakistan (USD 33 billion), World Bank said in a blog in De-

A BACK OF THE ENVELOPE CALCULATION SHOWS THAT 27.7 PER CENT share translates to around USD 32.9 billion worth remittances in absolute terms. A 5 per cent tax on USD 32.9 billion would amount to USD 1.64 billion.

BTA Talks: India, US Trade Ministers To Assess Progress From May 17

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: India and the US will commence ministerial-level meetings in Washington from May 17 to assess the progress of negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement, provide political guidance to chief negotiators and push forward efforts to deepen economic ties, an official said.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will hold deliberations on the agreement first with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and later with US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamie Greer during his four-day visit, the official said.

"The minister will be holding political-level discussions to give negotiations a political steer. They will assess the progress made in the negotiations in the past two months," the official said. This will be the Goyal's second visit to the US.

The minister-level meeting will be followed by the deliberations between chief negotiators of the two countries from May 19 to May 22.

The meetings 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 agreement by fall (September-October) this year. The main issues that will figure in the negotiations include market access, rules of origin, and non-tariff barriers.

India's proposal to impose a retaliatory duty under the WTO norms on certain US products over American tariffs on steel and aluminium would also figure in the BTA deliberations. Officials from New Delhi and Washington aim to take advantage of the 90-day tariff pause window to advance the talks.

The US has suspended the additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9. It was announced on April 2 to bridge the widening trade deficit. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed on the countries will continue to remain in place.

To give impetus to the talks, India's Chief Negotiator for BTA Rajesh Agrawal, special secretary in the Department of Commerce, and Assistant US Trade

Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch last month held three-day deliberations in Washington.

In March this year, Goyal held bilateral meetings with Greer and Lutnick.

India and the US have already initiated sectoral-level talks for the pact.

To boost bilateral trade, India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, chemicals, grapes, and bananas in the proposed pact with America.

On the other hand, the US wants duty concessions in sectors like certain industrial goods, automobiles (electric vehicles in particular), wines, petrochemical products, dairy, agriculture items such as apples, and tree nuts.

The terms of reference (ToRs) for the BTA have been finalised by India and the US, which include around 19 chapters covering issues like tariffs, goods, services, rules of origin, non-tariff barriers, and customs facilitation.



Stock Markets End Lower On Profit Taking In IT Shares; Bharti Airtel Declines Nearly 3%

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday due to profit-taking in IT shares and Bharti Airtel after a sharp rally in the previous session.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 200.15 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 82,330.59. During the day, it lost 383.79 points or 0.46 per cent to 82,146.95.

The NSE Nifty dropped 42.30 points or 0.17 per cent to 25,019.80.

Bharti Airtel dropped by 2.81 per cent after Singtel sold about 1.2 per cent of its direct stake in the firm for around USD 1.5 billion in sync with its active capital management approach to optimise its asset portfolio and drive shareholder returns sustainably.

HCL Tech, State Bank of India, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and Titan were also among the losers in the Sensex pack. Eternal, Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints,

ITC, Tata Motors and NTPC were among the gainers.

"Markets languished in negative territory throughout the trading session and ended weak due to selective profit-taking in IT, banking and metal shares.

"However, broader indices like mid and smallcap indices coupled with most sectoral stocks ending in positive territory shows that investors are cautiously optimistic on equities, despite global uncertainties," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.18 per cent and mid-cap index climbed 0.85 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, industrials surged the most by 1.80 per cent, followed by realty (1.72 per cent), capital goods (1.63 per cent), utilities (1.44 per cent), power (1.37 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.87 per cent). IT, tech, BSE Focused IT, metal and bank were the laggards.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark gauge jumped 2,876.12 points or 3.61 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,011.8 points or 4.21 per cent.

Gold Climbs ₹1,400 To ₹96,450/10 G; Silver Jumps ₹1,000



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices jumped Rs 1,400 to Rs 96,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday due to fresh buying from jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 1,400 to Rs 96,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

Gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity had closed at Rs 95,050 and Rs 94,600 per 10 grams, respectively, on Thursday.

In addition, silver prices appreciated by Rs 1,000 to Rs 98,000 per kg on Friday (inclusive of all taxes). The metal had ended at Rs 97,000 per kg in the previous market session.

Meanwhile, spot gold in the international markets declined by USD 50.85 or 1.57 per cent to USD 3,189.25 per ounce.

"Gold prices remained volatile, hovering near USD 3,200 as markets reacted to potential

trade agreements between the US and key partners such as the UK and China," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

The absence of a dovish signal from the US Federal Reserve, with no immediate interest rate cut, further limited buying momentum in bullion, Trivedi added.

Kotak Securities' AVP of Commodity Research Kaynat Chainwala said market participants await the US macroeconomic data, such as housing figures and the preliminary University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment and Inflation Expectations reports for May.

According to commodities experts, investors will be waiting for the US Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee member Mary Daly's commentary later in the day. The data release and the commentary by Daly will provide more insights on the future course for the interest rate decision cycle.

Rupee Ends 3 Paise Weaker At 85.57 Against US Dollar

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Rupee pared its gains and settled 3 paise lower at 85.57 against the greenback on Friday as robust inflow of foreign capital failed to boost the local currency amid negative equity market sentiment and higher crude oil prices.

The government data that showed the country's trade deficit widening in April also dragged the rupee downward, according to forex traders.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened strong at 85.28 and traded in the range of 85.28 to 85.70. It eventually settled at 85.57, lower by 3 paise from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee depreciated 22 paise to close at 85.54 against the greenback.

"Though the Asian currencies were all up, and so were the European currencies, the rupee could not make much headway towards 85.00

level and was getting sold near 85.30 and staying in a range broadly between 85-86 and narrowly between 85.25 and 85.75, which is also the range expected on Monday," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

In the domestic equity market, Sensex declined 200.15 points to settle at 82,330.59, while Nifty fell 42.30 points to 25,019.80.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.12 per cent at 100.75.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.14 per cent to 64.62 per barrel in futures trade.

The government data released on Thursday showed India's trade deficit widened to a five-month high of USD 26.42 billion as imports rose 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.

Singtel Offloads 1.2% Stake In Bharti Airtel For USD 1.5 Bn

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Singtel on Friday said it has sold about 1.2 per cent of its direct stake in Bharti Airtel for SGD 2 billion (roughly USD 1.5 billion) in sync with its active capital management approach to optimise its asset portfolio and drive shareholder returns.

According to the bulk deal data available on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Singtel's arm Pastel Ltd offloaded 7.10 crore shares or 1.2 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel.

The shares were disposed of at an average price of Rs 1,814.08 apiece, taking the aggregate transaction value to Rs 12,879.96 crore.

Following the sale of 1.2 per cent equity, Singtel will hold a 28.3 per cent stake in India's second-largest telecom operator Airtel.

The transaction was executed on a private placement basis to international and Indian institutional investors,

including existing shareholders of Airtel, according to Singtel.

"Singtel has sold approximately 1.2 per cent of its direct stake in regional associate Airtel today for SGD 2.0 billion as part of its active capital management approach to optimise its asset portfolio and drive shareholder returns sustainably," Singtel - Southeast Asia's largest telecoms provider - said in a statement.

It said the private placement drew strong interest from existing shareholders and new investors and was well oversubscribed, resulting in an increase in transaction size and tighter final pricing than initial guidance. A large majority of the transactions were sold to domestic mutual funds and international long-only funds.

A long-term strategic investor in Airtel for over two decades, Singtel said it has been working with Bharti Enterprises to equalise its effective stake in Airtel in the medium term.

SEBI Extends ODI Framework Deadline To Nov 17

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Markets regulator Sebi on Friday extended the timeline for implementing the framework regarding tightening of rules on issuance of offshore derivative instruments (ODIs) by FPIs to November 17. Sebi, in December, came out with the framework, which was to become effective from May 17.

The framework provides for additional disclosures to be made by ODI subscribers and FPIs (Foreign Portfolio Investors) with segregated portfolios.

"Based on representations received from market participants and in order to ensure smooth implementation of the said circular (issued in December), it has been decided to extend the timeline, ...to November 17, 2025," Sebi said in a circular.

The circular proposed to prohibit FPIs from issuing ODIs with derivatives as the underlying or using derivatives to hedge their ODIs in India. This was aimed at addressing regulatory arbi-

trage for ODIs and FPIs with segregated portfolios. Further, FPIs cannot hedge ODIs with derivatives on Indian stock exchanges. ODIs must only reference securities (non-derivatives) and must be fully hedged one-to-one with the same securities.

On separate registration for ODIs, Sebi had stated that FPIs issuing ODIs must have a separate, dedicated registration. This registration will have the suffix "ODI" under the same PAN.

For existing FPIs, adding the suffix would not be treated as a name change and a separate registration would not be required for ODIs with government securities as the underlying.

Sebi mandated that ODI subscribers disclose detailed ownership information, up to the level of natural persons, if they meet either of the following criteria: their equity ODI positions account for 50 per cent or more of securities linked to a single Indian corporate group, or their total equity positions in Indian markets exceed Rs 25,000 crore.

Kashmir's Big Travel

popular meadow above Pahalgam. Within days, the bookings stopped. Travel agencies began issuing refunds. Cancellations came in waves. A valley that had just opened its arms was again retreating into silence.

"It's like the lights were switched off," said Akib Chaya, who runs a boutique hotel in Gulmarg. "We went from booked out to blacked out overnight."

Akib is also the president of the Hotelier Club Gulmarg. He's been in the business for more than 15 years, long enough to know how quickly things can unravel in Kashmir.

But this time feels different, he said, not just because of the scale of the tragedy, but because the blow comes at a time when the sector seemed to be finding its feet after years of lock-downs and instability.

Many of the region's hotel owners, houseboat operators, and travel agents had taken loans to upgrade facilities post-COVID, betting big on 2025.

Now, they are worried about how to pay salaries, service debts, and keep their doors open.

"This season was supposed to be our turning point," Akib said. "Now we're all looking at survival, not profit."

Tourism in Kashmir has always carried a peculiar tension. Unlike in other parts of India where tourism is supported by broad infrastructure and policy continuity, Kashmir's sector has operated in short cycles of boom and bust.

A single political flare-up, or in this case, an attack, can paralyze an entire season.

The numbers offer both promise and warning. The real Gross State Domestic Product of Jammu and Kashmir was projected to grow 7.06% in 2024-25, with per capita income expected to cross 1.5 lakh. Much of that growth relied on tourism-linked sectors.

An estimated Rs 21,000 crore in annual economic activity is directly or indirectly tied to travel and hospitality.

The sector supports more than three million people, from high-end hotel chains to informal workers: shikara rowers, drivers, cooks, guides, weavers, artisans.

When the visitors vanish, it's not just the tourism industry that feels it. It's the entire economy.

"There's a misconception that only big hotels suffer," said Manzoor Pakhtoon, President of the Houseboat Owners Association. "But when tourism stops, the vegetable seller suffers, the carpenter who makes souvenir boxes suffers, the teenager who carries bags for tips—he suffers most."

For newcomers in the industry, the shock has been especially brutal.

Insha Wani, 32, opened a café in South Kashmir just six months ago. She had used part of her wedding savings and a small government entrepreneurship loan.

By early April, her outdoor tables were full. Tourists stopped for coffee on their way to lesser-known hiking trails. The café had become a local Instagram favourite.

"Now, not even locals are coming," she said. "There's fear in the air again."

Insha said she hasn't defaulted yet, but the EMI is due next week. She's already cut her staff in half.

"I feel like we're always told Kashmir is serene and safe," she said. "But the moment something happens, we are on our own."

Part of the issue, many say, is the absence of structural safety nets.

There is no tourism-specific insurance system, no government-backed contingency fund, and no real long-term disaster recovery plan.

"This is not the first time we've seen tourism collapse," said Bashir Lone, a retired state tourism planner. "But it's the first time we are seeing collapse without a clear roadmap to rebuild."

At a recent press meet, businessman Mushtaq Chaya, the region's most influential tourism voice, called on the government to announce an emergency relief package. He said industry players were not asking for charity but recognition.

"We haven't laid off anyone yet, and we're trying not to," he said. "But we need loan restructuring, marketing support, and most of all: traveler confidence. You can't rebuild that with press releases."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has assured the people that the tourism revival will remain a top priority. Union Civil Aviation Minister echoed that sentiment, saying that the Centre is committed to supporting Kashmir's economic resilience.

But on the ground, few are waiting. Most are working on bare minimums: rotating staff, closing wings of hotels, rationing power usage. Some have paused operations entirely, waiting for better days.

President of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Javid Tenga, remains hopeful. "The tourism spirit of Kashmiris is unmatched," he said. "We've rebuilt many times. We will again."

But the question many are now asking is: should rebuilding mean repeating?

"This cannot just be about bouncing back," said the senior tourism official. "It has to be about building forward—stronger, safer, and smarter."

On Dal Lake, Farooq Ahmad still

waits. He keeps his boat clean, his cushions plumped, his oar polished. He says tourists will return, eventually. They always do.

But between the waiting, he thinks about the future. About how long he can afford to wait. About whether his children should inherit a boat, or something more certain.

"Tourism is our heart," he said. "But hearts are fragile. You have to protect them."

MHA Orders AGMUT

(2012), Mahima Madan (2021), Ananth Dwivedi (2021), Shreya Singhal (2020), and Rishi Kumar (2021).

Sameer Sharma (2011) and Rishi Kumar (2021) are IPS officers who have been posted to Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the MHA cancelled the transfer of two IAS officers.

According to the latest order issued by the MHA, "In partial modification of MHA's order of even number dated 17.10.2024, the transfers of Saugat Biswas, IAS (AGMUT: 2006), from Arunachal Pradesh to Jammu & Kashmir, and Yasha Mudgal, IAS (AGMUT: 2007), from Jammu & Kashmir to Puducherry, are hereby cancelled."

The order further states that all other contents of the original order shall remain unchanged.

India Has Put

the IAF for its swift and precise action during the operation, Singh said: "The Indian Air Force not only dismantled the terror network within minutes but also struck deep into enemy territory without even crossing the border. Our aircraft are capable of neutralising enemy targets from within Indian airspace."

He emphasised that Operation Sindoor, named by PM Modi himself, sent a strong message to the world. "You entered their land and decimated their terror infrastructure. You have sent the message of a 'New India'—strong, decisive, and self-reliant—to the entire world," he told air warriors.

Singh said India's war on terrorism is now a central part of the National Defence Doctrine, and "this is not the old Bharat anymore. Under PM Modi, India has drawn a red line on terrorism. We do not tolerate, we retaliate."

'Pakistan on Probation'

In a scathing indictment of Pakistan, Singh alleged that the neighbouring country is rebuilding terror camps dismantled by Indian forces. "This rebuilding effort must be seen as a deliberate provocation. India has put Pakistan on probation—we are watching its every move," he said.

"If the behaviour improves, it is fine. But if there is any disturbance, the harshest punishment will be given," he warned.

'IMF Must Reconsider Aid to Pakistan'

The Defence Minister accused Pakistan of planning to use part of the upcoming \$2.1 billion IMF aid to fund terror groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. "Pakistan will use the tax money collected from its citizens to fund Masood Azhar and rebuild terror infrastructure in places like Muridke and Bahawalpur," he said.

He alleged that Rs 14 crore has been earmarked for Jaish chieftain Masood Azhar, a UN-designated terrorist. "If IMF's aid is used for this purpose, it becomes complicit," Singh said, urging the global lender to reconsider its assistance to Islamabad.

'World Has Seen Only a Trailer'

Speaking on the success of Operation Sindoor, Singh said: "The world has seen only a trailer. When the time comes, we will show the full movie." He noted that India has transformed into a defence powerhouse—from a major arms importer to a growing exporter.

"Earlier we used to import weapons. Today, we manufacture our own arms and ammunition. This is a matter of national pride and a testament to the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

Bhuj: A Symbol of India's Strength

Calling Bhuj a witness to India's victories in 1965, 1971, and now 2025, Singh praised its strategic importance and saluted the bravery of its air warriors.

"The IAF not only dominated the enemy but decimated them. India's fighter aircraft are capable of striking every corner of Pakistan without crossing the border. IAF proved that India's war policy and technology have changed," he said.

He added: "We are not just dependent on imported weapons—Akash, BrahMos, and other systems made by DRDO are now pillars of our defence."

'Every Child in India Considers You a Hero'

In an emotional conclusion, Singh extended heartfelt gratitude to the armed forces. "Every child in India considers you their hero. On behalf of the nation, I thank you for your bravery and sacrifice. You have made every citizen believe that this New India does not remain silent—it gives a befitting reply."

Reinforcing the government's commitment to national security, Singh said: "For us, the new normal is simple—if anyone dares to target India, they will face the full might of our armed forces."

Op Sindoor Reflects

centre, under the Intelligence Bureau, was created in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks with an aim to share timely inputs among various stakeholders involved in law enforcement.

Under Operation Sindoor, India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

India and Pakistan agreed on May 10 to stop military actions. India has, however, made it clear it has merely paused its operation and its future actions will be guided by Pakistan's conduct.

Modi had said Operation Sindoor was India's new policy against terrorism and the country's unwavering pledge for justice.

"It is the new normal. We have only kept in abeyance our operations against Pakistan and the future will depend on their behaviour," Modi had said in a 22-minute address.

Modi had also sternly warned Pakistan that India will not succumb to nuclear blackmail and sent a clear message to the world: terror and trade, terror and talks cannot go together.

Indian Army

continuing the commitment that both sides must not fire a "single shot" or initiate any "aggressive and inimical" action against each other, according to an Indian readout.

In the May 12 conversation, the two DGMOs expressed commitment that both sides must not fire a single shot or initiate any aggressive action, the Indian Army said that day.

"It was also agreed that both sides consider immediate measures to ensure troop reduction from the borders and forward areas," it said in a statement.

However, there was no word from the Indian side on Pakistan's claim of another round of conversation between the two DGMOs on May 14.

Under Operation Sindoor, India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10.

The Pakistani attempts were strongly responded to by the Indian side by inflicting heavy damages to a number of key Pakistani military installations including air bases, air defence systems, command and control centres and radar sites.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Saturday evening announced that India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect.

In a related development, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday and reviewed the overall security situation.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has redefined India's policy against terrorism which now says that any attack on Indian soil will be considered as an act of war," he said while addressing Army soldiers at Badami Bagh Cantonment in Srinagar.

The defence minister emphasised that India has always prioritised peace and never supported war.

However, when its sovereignty is attacked, it is necessary to respond, he said.

Singh described Operation Sindoor as the biggest action taken by India against terrorism in history, and a testament to the nation's commitment to go to any extent to eliminate the menace.

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

"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," Singh said.

"It was our dharma to eliminate them. Our forces gave the right direction to their anger and took revenge for Pahalgam with great courage and discretion," he said.

6 Terrorists Killed

of Shopian and Nadar area of Tral in Pulwama on Tuesday and Thursday, respectively.

Three terrorists each were killed in the two operations.

Major Joshi said immediately after the Pahalgam terror attack, which claimed 26 lives, the security forces designated several areas as focus areas.

"We had intelligence inputs that terrorists had moved to the higher reaches after the melting of the snow. Keeping that in mind, our domination parties were continuously deployed in the higher reaches, mountainous areas and forests," he said.

The security agencies received an intelligence input about the presence of terrorists in the Keller area on the night of May 12, Major Joshi said.

"So the domination party that was deployed there for some time relocated itself and in a focused way, closed in on the area. They challenged the terrorists who fired at them, leading to

an encounter in which three terrorists were neutralised," he said.

About the Tral encounter, the GoC said the operation took place on a different terrain.

"We had inputs and cordoned off the village. The terrorists took positions in different houses and fired at us. Our challenge was the safe evacuation of the innocent civilians, including children. Then, systematically, searches were conducted one by one in the houses and three terrorists neutralised at separate places," he added.

Major Joshi asserted that the successful conduct of both operations shows that the security forces will find terrorists wherever they are and neutralise them.

Of the six slain terrorists, the most prominent was Shahid Kuttay, who was involved in major attacks, including one on a sarpanch in Shopian's Heerpora on May 18 last year and a firing incident at the Danish Resort on April 8 last year, in which two German tourists and a driver were injured, the officer said.

"Kuttay was also involved in fundraising and other activities," he added.

The neutralisation of both the modules has dealt a blow to terror outfits and will help stop their activities here, Major Joshi said.

Addressing the presser, the inspector general of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said the success of these operations could not have been possible without the support and co-operation of the local population.

"It is not only difficult but impossible to wipe out terrorism without the support of people. The successful operations are a proof that the people here want an end to terror in Jammu and Kashmir," Jain said.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma of the Army's Northern Command complimented the forces for the success of the anti-terror operations.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Commander #NorthernCommand, compliments #ChinarCorps for their swift action and precise execution in the joint operation that neutralised three terrorists in #Awantipora. The #IndianArmy stands by its commitment to keeping #JammuKashmir terror free," the Northern Command said on X.

IWT Suspended

both India and Pakistan.

PM Surya Ghar S

in the Union Territory, notably the rooftop solar scheme that targeted government buildings with a 60% central subsidy. That project, too, was marred by poor execution and eventually fizzled out without achieving its goals.

Worryingly, stakeholders fear history may repeat itself. "Central schemes have a limited shelf life. If the current deadlock persists, the subsidies and support may be phased out before beneficiaries can take advantage of them," a senior energy consultant said.

Adding to the frustration is the apparent absence of direct coordination with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), which is overseeing the national rollout. Applicants say they are unsure where to turn, as neither local authorities nor central agencies are responding effectively.(KNS)

Omar, Mehbooba

peace as much as anyone else in the country. Weaponising something as essential and life-giving as water is not only inhumane but also risks internationalising what should remain a bilateral matter," she said in a post on X.

Omar responded with sharp words, accusing Mehbooba of being blinded by her desire to "score cheap publicity points" and "please some people sitting across the border." He called the IWT a "historic betrayal" of J&K's interests and reiterated his opposition to it.

"Opposing a blatantly unfair treaty is in no way, shape, or form warmongering—it's about correcting a historic injustice," he wrote.

The exchange took a personal turn when Mehbooba dragged in Omar's grandfather, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, accusing him of advocating for J&K's accession to Pakistan for over two decades before switching loyalties. "Your esteemed grandfather Sheikh Sahab once advocated for accession to Pakistan... but post being reinstated as Chief Minister he suddenly reversed his stance by aligning with India," she claimed.

Omar hit back, calling her remarks a "gutter-level" dig and distancing himself from personal attacks. "I'll rise above the gutter you want to take this conversation to by keeping the late Mufti Sahib and 'North Pole-South Pole' out of this," he said, alluding to PDP's past alliance with the BJP.

"You keep advocating the interests of anyone you want to and I'll keep advocating for the interests of the people of J&K to use our own rivers for our own benefit. I'm not going to stop the water, just use more of it for ourselves. Now I think I'll do some real work and you can keep posting," the NC leader added.

Over 3.5L Pilgrims

facility will be handed over to the Tourism Department by June 20.

"The first batch of pilgrims from Jammu Yatri Niwas will leave for Amarnath from twin routes—Pahalgam and Baltal—route on July 2," they added.

They further said that so far more than three and a half lakh devotees from across the country have registered online from April 14 for the Yatra.

"There is a great enthusiasm among the devotees and despite all challenges they are ready to visit the cave shrine during the yatra," they stated.

The administration at the Divisional and the District levels has directed the concerned officers to expedite the preparations for the Yatra.

"Devotees will get all facilities from the entry gate at Lakhanpur (J&K-Punjab Border) upto the holy cave of Shri Amarnath to facilitate their journey," said officials.

"The facelift work of Yatri Niwas has been allotted to the J&K Public Works Department and the repairs will begin very soon as the accommodation was being used for the stay of additional security personnel on duty in the aftermath of Indo-Pak tension," they added.

Director Tourism, Jammu, Vikas Gupta on Friday conducted a comprehensive inspection of Yatri Niwas and assessed the preparedness and infrastructural arrangements for the smooth facilitation of pilgrims.

He was accompanied by Aijaz Qaiser, Joint Director Tourism, Jammu. The Director reviewed key facilities

including accommodation, sanitation, uninterrupted power supply, potable water availability, hygiene standards, and overall management of the premises. The objective of the visit was to ensure seamless coordination among departments and timely completion of all essential works ahead of the Yatra.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards of quality, sanitation, and coordination to ensure a safe, comfortable, and well-managed environment for the yatriis.

The Director reiterated the commitment of the Tourism Department to ensuring that all necessary infrastructure, services, and logistics are put in place well in advance, in close coordination with all concerned departments, for the smooth and successful conduct of the Shri Amarnath Yatra.

Meanwhile officials said that besides infrastructural arrangements and facilities, health of the pilgrims visiting the Yatri Niwas will also be taken care of for which a team of Jammu and Kashmir Health Department will be deputed round the clock on roster basis.

Meanwhile, he said that the pilgrims from outside the Jammu and Kashmir, can also avail the facility of postpaid numbers of various telecom service providers.

Notably, the pre-paid SIM cards from rest of the parts of the country are not functional in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Likewise every year, this time also travel prepaid SIM card service will be available from telecom operators," they said, "devotees will get all facilities under one-roof like registration, travel to scenic places of Jammu etc."

Two counters will also be set up in the Yatri Niwas by Jammu-Kashmir Road Transport Corporation, said official.

They stated that around 120 mobile toilets will also be installed at Yatri Niwas.

"The two-storied Yatri Niwas has a capacity to accommodate 2000 pilgrims and apart from this, a prefabricated shed has also been built in the courtyard to accommodate nearly 200 pilgrims in case of heavy rush," they said.

"Along with other arrangements, 24x7 water and electricity supply will be made available at the Yatri Niwas for the pilgrims," they said.

However, tight security arrangements will be made in and around the base camp for the safety of the devotees, they added.

Flight Disruptions

remain patient and assured them of timely updates as soon as the final schedule is received.

According to official data, out of 3,622 pilgrims from J&K and 242 from Ladakh, 480 have departed from Delhi, 10 from Mumbai, 2 from Hyderabad, and 1,461 from Srinagar. The remaining pilgrims are awaiting rebooking, with a few fresh cancellations also reported.

The disruptions have caused concern among the pilgrims and their families, increasing the urgency for extra flights to ensure the pilgrimage can proceed smoothly.

Nilofer Khan Gets

period of two (02) years w.e.f. 19.05.2025, the date of completion of her existing term as the Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir," reads the order.

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IPL Resumes With RCB v KKR Face-Off; Kohli's Outing In Focus

Press Trust of India

BENGALURU: Brought to a halt by the recent India-Pakistan border tensions, the IPL will resume on Saturday with Royal Challengers Bengaluru taking on Kolkata Knight Riders in a high-stakes contest where the spotlight will firmly be on Virat Kohli following his recent Test retirement.

The unexpected 10-day break has left both the RCB and the KKR with different goals to achieve and common challenges to hurdle over.

The RCB are second on the table with 16 points from 11 matches, and a win here can propel them to the playoffs.

KKR are sixth on the table with 11 points from 12 games, and a slip-up will evaporate the defending champions' hopes of making the knockouts.

They are also faced with the challenging task of hitting the pre-break intensity straightaway



at the Chinnaswamy stadium.

The hosts are coming off a four-match winning streak while the tourists have managed to stitch two victories in three matches before the league came to a grinding halt. Questions remain on whether they can regain that competitive edge after a passage of un-

certainty.

But RCB are better-placed to surmount these difficulties, and the sight of skipper Rajat Patidar batting rather fluently at nets might have soothed a lot of nerves. Patidar had injured his finger during the home match against Chennai Super Kings, forcing him to wear a splint.

The hosts also have most of their foreign recruits back in the hut after returning home in the wake of the Indo-Pak military face-off.

The likes of Phil Salt, Lungi Ngidi, Tim David, Liam Livingstone and Romario Shepherd are available for this match and beyond.

The jarring notes will be the injury-enforced absence of Devdutt Padikkal and pacer Josh Hazlewood.

RCB will also hope that Mayank Agarwal, who has replaced Padikkal in the line-up, will rise to the occasion.

Hazlewood has a shoulder injury and the franchise has not yet given clarity on his availability.

However, the loudest cheers will be reserved for Kohli, who announced his retirement from Test cricket earlier this week.

If social media calls are anything to go by, the faithfuls are planning to don the white jersey to honour a batter who lorded over the traditional format.

However, Kohli does not require such external motivation to stoke his inner fire and, rest assured, the 36-year-old will be eager to churn out some impactful knocks, perhaps a silent riposte after a rather abruptly ending his Test career.

Match starts at 7.30pm.

Sports For All - YSS Anantnag Hosts Specially Abled & Others



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Anantnag held several sports events across various zones of the district on Friday.

At the district level, U-17 Inter-Zonal competitions in Badminton, Chess, and Table Tennis concluded at SRJ HSS Khanabal. Boys competed in Badminton, while Chess and TT events were held for Girls.

In Badminton U-17 Boys, Shan Ifham AND Sehran Khalil from Zone Anantnag, Zehran Feroz

from Zone Qazigund displayed incredible performance. In Chess U-17 Girls Aliza Shakeel and Duha Ishtiyag from Zone Anantnag, Fatima Bint Shabir from Zone Mattan performed exceptionally. In Table Tennis U-17 Girls Rutba Shabir and Aisha Sidiqa from Zone Verinag, Zuhra Nisar from Zone Anantnag delivered remarkable performances.

Meanwhile, in a heart warming initiative, Zone Achabal organised a special event at Fisheries Park Achabal exclusively for specially-abled students and youth. The ZPEO interacted with

the participants, encouraging them and appreciating their enthusiasm and love for sports.

Zone Bijbehara hosted Yoga competitions for U-14 and U-17 boys at BMHSS Bijbehara. Zone Bidder also conducted an AAG Boys Yoga competition at HSS Kokernag. Zone Srigufwara organised Inter-School Yoga competitions for U-14 and U-17 boys and girls at MS Budroo, with a total of 155 participants.

Zone Doru held U-14 and U-17 Girls' Football tournaments at Shankerpora Stadium with a massive turnout of 420 participants.

Zone Achabal hosted Baseball tournaments for U-14 and U-17 girls at HSS Dialgam, witnessing participation from 220 girls.

Zone Qazigund held U-17 Boys' Football competition at HS Damjan. In a thrilling final, HSS Vessu defeated HS Damjan 1-0, thanks to a match-winning goal by Faidu Fayaz.

Inter-School Sports Competitions Continue Across Budgam



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam, led by DYSSO Gh. Hassan Lone, is continuing to hold its vibrant zonal-level inter-school competitions across the district.

Zone Budgam hosted AAG girls' Kho-Kho and Kabaddi at Syed Yahiya Bukhari Ground, inaugurated by ZPEO Tariq Ahmad.

Zone Soibug held martial arts trials (Taekwondo, Boxing, Karate, Judo) for girls at Masters Martial Arts Academy, with strong participation from government and private schools.

Zone Hardpanzoo conduct trials in the discipline of martial art at HS Arizal, inaugurated by Headmaster Mukhtar Ahmad. Zone Magam conducted U-14 boys' Kho-Kho at PS Hazarpura under ZPEO Gh. Nabi Lone.

Inter-School Zonal Level Events Showcase Talent In Ganderbal



Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Ganderbal conducted a series of Inter-School Zonal Level sports events throughout the district on Friday. The competitions were organised in alignment with the guidelines from higher authorities of DYSS J&K.

The day began in Zone Ganderbal with the Inter-School Zonal Level Carrom and Chess competitions for Boys U-17, held at Sultania English Medium Public School. A total of 56 student players participated in the Chess competition, while 51 students competed in Carrom.

In Carrom Competition Winner (Singles): New Dreamland. Runner-up (Singles): BHS Shal-

labugh. In Chess Competition Winner: New Tiny Hearts School. Runner-up: New Dreamland Educational Institute. All winner and runner-up teams were honoured with trophies presented by senior officials.

Additionally, Zone Tullamulla hosted the Inter-School Zonal Level Kabaddi Selection Trials for Girls U-14 at BHSS Kurhama. A total of 52 aspiring girl students showcased their skills and talent, with the best team selected for the upcoming Inter-Zone District Level Championship.

These events highlight the growing sports talent in the district and demonstrate the commitment of YSS Ganderbal to fostering youth development through sports.

YSS Baramulla Engages Students Across Sopore, Wagoora & Pattan



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Youth Services and Sports Baramulla conducted Inter-School Zonal Level competitions across various education zones of the district including Sopore, Wagoora, Rohama and Pattan.

In Zone Sopore, an Inter-

School Zonal Level Table Tennis competition for Under-14 and Under-17 boys was organized at Subhana Stadium Sopore.

Meanwhile, Zone Wagoora held an Inter-School Zonal Level Yoga competition for Under-14 and Under-17 boys at Higher Secondary School Managam,

witnessing participation from 32 students.

Simultaneously, Zone Rohama organised an Inter-School Zonal Level Badminton competition for Under-17 boys at High School Tragpora, with 35 students taking part.

In the Singles category, HS Sari-pora emerged as the winner while HS Reban secured the runner-up position. In the Doubles category, HSS Hadipora clinched the title and HSS Balhama finished as the runner-up. All winners and runners-up were awarded appreciation certificates by the Head of Institution, HS Tragpora.

Furthermore, YSS Zone Pattan, on the second day of its inter-school zonal level Badminton competition for Under-14 and Under-17 girls, witnessed overwhelming participation of 100 students from both government and private schools.

Lamine Yamal's Rise Helps Barcelona Move Beyond The Post-Messi Era

Agencies

BARCELONA: When Lionel Messi left Barcelona it looked like a generation would have to go by before another player of his incredible talent would don the burgundy and blue.

It turned out a couple of years was enough.

Lamine Yamal cemented his status as the Next Big Thing in global soccer by excelling in a season that saw Barcelona finish with treble of domestic titles.

Fittingly enough, the 17-year-old scored the decisive goal to clinch the Spanish league crown on Thursday.

Defenders know what is coming when Yamal dips his head and starts his dribble from the right side across the edge of the area. They know he is seeking the sliver of space to get his fantastic left-foot curler off. But Espanyol's players – like so many others this season – could do

nothing to stop him from whipping the ball into the top corner of the net to spark the 2-0 victory.

"We have a kid who can pull gold out of his boots," Raphinha said about Yamal.

Inevitable Comparisons To Messi

While he has dismissed comparisons to Messi, or any other player for that matter, it is impossible not to see flashes of the Argentine's majestic moves in his young feet, especially after the soccer planets aligned to put them together in a photo when Yamal was just a baby.

They both terrorize defenses from the right flank of Barcelona's attack, cutting inside to put the ball on their prized left boot.

But Yamal has his own talents. His gliding moves are his own, as is his lithe, elastic body. And while Messi was perhaps a better finisher at this age, Yamal is



just as good a dribbler and perhaps even a better passer.

His ability to jink past double

teams and score beautiful goals make the highlights, as do those exquisite crosses he makes with

the outside edge of his boot to drop balls into the box.

A Stellar Start To A Promising Career

To say that Yamal has a way to go to match Messi is the understatement of the season.

Messi won his first Spanish league and Champions League titles when he was 18 years old. He hit his first hat trick, against Real Madrid nonetheless, at age 19. He went on to score a club record 672 goals in 778 appearances, winning four European Cups, 10 league titles and eight Copa del Rey crowns en route to being awarded the Ballon d'Or six times while with Barcelona. He then took Argentina to the World Cup title.

But at this stage, Yamal sure looks destined to become a great, great player in his own right.

Yamal has set pretty much every record for youngest what-

ever for Barcelona and Spain, from youngest scorer in La Liga history to youngest scorer in a European Championship, among many more. His debut at age 15, becoming the youngest Barcelona player in La Liga, in April 2023 promises to be remembered as a milestone for the Catalan club.

He already has two league titles, a Copa del Rey and a Spanish Super Cup, and the European title for Spain, before he turns 18 in July.

Statistics back up his game-by-game impact. Yamal leads the league in assists with 13 this season, while he also has by far the most dribbles to get past opponents with 149, over 60 more than any other player. He also shows a swagger and ability to be a vocal leader for his team that the quiet teenage Messi took years to develop.

More To Come

Yamal's continued his rapid

rise during the first season under Hansi Flick. The forward said the German coach gave Barcelona "new life" after winning nothing in the previous campaign, and that more was to come.

"This is very important for the club to win these titles, we feel like we are winners," Yamal said. "Now I think the mentality of the club is going to change."

Barcelona's future looks even brighter when considering that Yamal is surrounded by young standouts.

Pedri is an elite midfielder player who at 22 years old has already put in 200 appearances for his club. Centerback mainstay Pau Cubarsi is just 18. Gavi Páez is 20, Alejandro Balde 21, and Fermin López 22.

So Real Madrid and the rest of European soccer beware. Barcelona has the potential to establish a dynasty known as the Yamal Era.

Short TAKES

Starc, Ferreira Skip IPL Return; Jacks Back For MI, Stoinis Will Fly Back

Delhi Capitals' Mitchell Starc and Donovan Ferreira have opted not to return for the remainder of the IPL, while England all-rounder Will Jacks will rejoin Mumbai Indians for their final two league fixtures.

Australian pacer Starc and South African batter Ferreira have communicated their decision to the Delhi Capitals management.

In a major boost to DC, vice-captain Faf du Plessis has decided to return for the remainder of the IPL. While Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who was signed as temporary replacement to Jake Fraser McGurk, has obtained the No Objection Certificate.

For Punjab Kings, Marcus Stoinis and Josh Inglis have agreed to join the team but will be missing its first game post IPL resumption on May 18.

MI batter Jacks confirmed his return by posting a photo of his flight ticket to Mumbai on Instagram on Friday.

But like compatriot Jos Buttler, Jacks will leave for national duty after completing Mumbai Indians' last two league engagements as the IPL play-offs are clashing with England's white ball series against the West Indies starting May 29.

Rohit Has 'Special Feeling' To Play At Wankhede With Stand In His Name

Senior India batter Rohit Sharma said it will be a "special feeling" for him to play in India jersey in the ODIs at the Wankhede Stadium where a stand was on Friday named after him.

Mumbai Cricket Association named a stand each at the Wankhede Stadium after Rohit, former India skipper Ajit Wadekar, and ex-BCCI president Sharad Pawar.

"I had never dreamt of what was going to happen today. You try to achieve a lot of milestones, but something like this is really special, because Wankhede is an iconic stadium and so many memories have been made here," said Rohit, who announced his retirement from Test cricket on May 7.

"To have my name here with the greats of the game and the world's best political leader, I cannot express the feeling. I am super grateful.

"I am still playing and retired from two formats. It will be surreal to play when I play on 21st (for Mumbai Indians in IPL) and have a stand here, it will be special when I represent the country here," added Rohit who has also retired from T20 Internationals after leading India to the World Cup trophy last year.

Havertz Fitness Boost For Arsenal Ahead Of Crunch Newcastle Game

Arsenal forward Kai Havertz could feature in their Premier League home game against Newcastle United after recovering from hamstring surgery, manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday as the north London club look to consolidate second place.

Havertz was set to miss the rest of the season when he underwent surgery in February but the Germany forward has fast-tracked his recovery to potentially return for Arsenal in the last two games of the season.

Despite missing more than three months of action, Havertz remains Arsenal's top scorer with nine league goals this season and 15 in all competitions.

"We're going to decide that tomorrow. He's done certain parts of the sessions in the last two days," Arteta told reporters ahead of Sunday's game.

"He looks in great shape but the medical staff need to give clearance and how Kai feels. (It's) unbelievable, it's a credit to him and the medical staff and they've been pushing each other.

"We know how important Kai is for us. He looks in great shape... and you see the transformation on him which is really impressive."

FA Cup Not First Choice But We Want The Trophy: Man City's Guardiola

The FA Cup was not Manchester City's top priority this season but now they are in a third straight final the club will go all out to win the trophy at Wembley this weekend, manager Pep Guardiola said on Friday.

City are fourth in the Premier League and yet to secure Champions League qualification for next season and winning the FA Cup when they face Crystal Palace on Saturday may not be enough to salvage their campaign.

"That is the problem right, the FA Cup now is not the first choice. Of course, we want it. Once we are here of course we want the trophy. It is massively important," Guardiola told reporters.

"It was a disappointment last season (losing in the final to Manchester United). But I'm pretty sure we'll perform well and we are going to compete against them.

Reel to Real: Indian Films Caught in Turkey-Azerbaijan Boycott Storm

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Following Turkey and Azerbaijan's public support for Pakistan after India launched Operation Sindoor, there has been a rising wave of opposition in India against these countries being used as film-shooting destinations. Leading film industry bodies such as AICWA (All India Cine Workers Association) and FWICE (Federation of Western India Cine Employees) have urged Indian filmmakers to refrain from filming in both nations.

Over the years, Turkey and Azerbaijan have attracted Indian filmmakers with their stunning landscapes, architectural el-

egance, and a blend of European and Middle Eastern aesthetics. However, as the political climate shifts, these once-popular locations are now under scrutiny.

Here's a look at 10 Indian films that were shot in Turkey and Azerbaijan:

Films Shot in Turkey Ek Tha Tiger (2012)

Starring Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif, this espionage thriller features several high-octane sequences shot in Istanbul and Madrid, capturing the historic and cultural charm of Turkey.

Race 2 (2013)

A stylish action-thriller led by Saif Ali Khan and Deepika Padukone, the film showcases the sleek urban side of Turkey with scenes filmed in Istanbul's iconic locales.

Dil Dhadakne Do (2015)

This ensemble family drama by Zoya Akhtar includes picturesque shots of Turkey as the backdrop for the Mehra family's Mediterranean cruise, particularly scenes in Antalya and Istanbul.

Guru (2007)

Mani Ratnam's semi-biographical drama on a business tycoon



(played by Abhishek Bachchan) includes song sequences filmed in Turkey, lending a visually rich setting to the film's narrative.

Baby (2015)

Neeraj Pandey's gripping spy thriller featuring Akshay Kumar includes action sequences shot in Istanbul, enhancing the film's international espionage appeal.

Films Shot in Azerbaijan
Vidaamuyarchi (Upcoming)
Starring Tamil superstar Ajith Kumar, this much-anticipated action thriller has been extensively filmed in Azerbaijan, making use of the country's dramatic landscapes.

Jawan (2023)

Some sequences of Shah Rukh Khan's blockbuster hit were shot in Baku, Azerbaijan, giving the film a gritty and global look.

Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy (2019)

The war sequences in this Telugu historical epic featuring

Chiranjeevi were partly filmed in Azerbaijan, taking advantage of its open terrains and grand visuals.

Agent (2023)

The Telugu action film starring Akhil Akkineni includes scenes shot in Azerbaijan, aligning with its high-octane, globe-trotting storyline.

Zanjeer (2013)

The action-packed remake starring Ram Charan and Priyanka Chopra includes certain portions filmed in and around Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, adding an international flair to the film.

India's Real-life Royals Slam Netflix Show The Royals

Manjusha Radhakrishnan
Gulf News

Netflix's The Royals, starring Ishaan Khatter and Bhumi Pednekar, may be packed with drama, but it's the real-life royals of India who are now serving the tea—and they're not amused. While the show attempts to portray the glamorous-but-broke lives of a fictional aristocratic family, a heritage collective called Royal Fables has accused it of everything from misrepresentation to historical blasphemy.

In an impassioned Instagram post "on behalf of the 565 princely states of India," Royal Fables let Netflix know exactly how they felt. Spoiler alert: it was not subtle.

"We just finished watching The Royals and immediately felt the strong urge to reach out..."

Translation? Are the real-life royals clutching their pearls? Absolutely. And not the Netflix kind—these are authentic heirloom pearls passed down through generations, thank you very much.

"We don't sell Palaces for bat poop"

One of the more colourful criticisms from Royal Fables is the show's portrayal of Indian royals as broke and desperate.

"Royal families are not poor. They are not selling their palaces or making money from bat poop! They are landowners and inheritors of a rich legacy they are monetising," the note declared.

Apparently, a palace-to-Airbnb pipeline isn't just unrealistic—it's offensive.

Ravi Varma who?

Royal Fables also took issue with a now-infamous scene in which Bhumi Pednekar's character gifts a Raja Ravi Varma painting to a Rajmata. The issue?

"Surely no Ravi Varma that costs hundreds of crores is ever sold. How could your smart CEO gift one in the hope of starting a homestay?!"

Basically, if you're gifting a painting that could buy the entire homestay four times over, you may want to rethink your business plan.

'Everyone wants name in newspapers': Supreme Court says no to fresh pleas against Waqf law

Agencies

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to examine a couple of fresh pleas challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, saying everybody wants name in newspapers.

A bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gavi and Justice Augustine George Masih said it would decide the pending matter scheduled to come up on May 20.

The apex court would then hear the point of interim relief in the case.

As soon as one of the pleas came up for hearing on Friday, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, objected and said there can't be an "endless" filing of pleas challenging the Act. The counsel appearing for the petitioner said he had filed the petition on April 8 and removed the defects pointed out by the apex court registry on April 15 but his plea was not listed for hearing.



"Everybody wants his name to be in the newspapers," the CJI observed.

When the lawyer urged the bench his plea should be tagged with the pending petitions, the bench said, "We will decide that matter." The bench then dismissed it.

When another similar plea came up for hearing, the bench said, "Dismissed".

When the counsel for the petitioner urged that he be allowed to intervene in the pending pleas, the CJI said, "We already have too

many intervenors." On April 17, the apex court decided to hear only five of the total number of pleas before it.

The pleas challenging the Act came up for hearing before a bench comprising the CJI and Justice Masih on May 15.

The bench said it would hear arguments on May 20 for passing interim directions on three issues including the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts, waqf-by-user or waqf by deed.

Fight Over Lemons Sparks Communal Tension In Udaipur, 6 Detained: Police

Agencies

A minor dispute spiralled into a communal clash in Rajasthan's Udaipur, leaving a vegetable vendor seriously injured, police said on Friday.

The incident took place in the Dhanmandi area of Udaipur late on Thursday evening, they said, adding that six people have so far been detained. Police said a verbal spat between two men over buying lemons at a vegetable stall near Teej Ka Chowk soon led to an argument and within minutes, it turned into a communal clash.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Yogesh Goyal said a group of five to seven people allegedly attacked the vegetable vendor, Satveer (50), with a sharp weapon, leaving him with severe injuries on his face. Satveer was taken to the MB Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment.

The tensions escalated further when two roadside huts and vegetable carts were set on fire. Firefighters reached the scene and doused the flames.

Police teams from four nearby

stations, led by the SP himself, arrived at the spot and brought the situation under control. Extra forces have been deployed in sensitive areas to maintain peace.

Markets in the area remained shut on Friday.

"Six people have been detained after scanning CCTV footage that captured the assailants carrying weapons. We are investigating all aspects of the incident and strict action will be taken," the SP said.

Local traders observed a complete market bandh on Friday, shutting down shops at Dhanmandi and Teej Ka Chowk. They demanded immediate arrests and action against allegedly negligent police officials.

Later in the day, a meeting between the traders and the administration helped pacify the situation.

Municipal Commissioner Ramprakash and Additional District Magistrate (ADM), City, Vaar Singh assured the protesters of action on three of their key demands -- arresting the accused, removing illegal vendors from the area and taking disciplinary action against errant officers.

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