

No Certificate, No Closure: Kashmir's River Tragedy Refuses To Rest

Aisha Hasnain

Srinagar: He slowed down at a certain point on the riverbank. "This is where," he said, "the bodies were pulled from."

Then the car stopped, and the driver announced the arrival.

On my right was the spot where the dead were returned by the river and on my immediate left, Sakeena's home.

Her front door faces the very river that took her nine-year-old son and her husband, Showkat.

Already a year has passed since nine people were devoured by the river. It returned eight of them dead, but refuses to give back Showkat.

His old mother keeps a record of missing bodies fished out of water. None of them so far has been her son.



6 UNDER INDIAN LAW, A MISSING PERSON cannot be declared dead until seven years. And this is adding insult to the injury.

In Showkat's mysterious absence, his better-half has become a battered-half.

"I was pregnant with our first child during the September 2014 floods," Sakeena's voice was steady but her eyes told another story. "Showkat rescued some 200 people during that flood. He's not someone who could've drowned."

Sakeena gave birth to their son, Faziq Showkat, eleven days after the flood.

A decade later, Faziq was in

the boat that capsized on April 16, 2024, at around 8am, in Gandbal, Srinagar.

Showkat was initially able to save himself but when he realised Faziq was missing, he jumped back into the river, never to return.

Crossing the river in a boat was a routine for the villagers. The footbridge that could have averted the | [More on P10](#)

Srinagar Hits 32.2°C For 2nd Straight Day

Brief Relief Likely From May 20: MeT

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Severe heatwave conditions continued across parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, with Srinagar recording the season's highest temperature for the second consecutive day at 32.2°C, up from Saturday's 31.5°C.

Qazigund also experienced its hottest day so far at 33.0°C. In South Kashmir, Kokernag touched 31.4°C, while Pahalgam, a popular tourist spot, recorded a milder 27.2°C. Kupwara in North Kashmir saw temperatures reach 29.9°C, and Gulmarg, known for skiing, remained comparatively cool at 23.6°C.

In the Jammu region, heatwave conditions were more intense, with Jammu city sweltering at 40.0°C. Other areas including Banihal, Batote, Bhaderwah, and

Srinagar: 32.2°C
Qazigund: 33.0°C
Kokernag: 31.4°C
Pahalgam: 27.2°C
Kupwara: 29.9°C
Gulmarg: 23.6°C
Jammu: 40.0°C

Katra also crossed the 30°C mark. Director of the Meteorological Department, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, predicted temporary relief starting this evening or Monday with the possibility of light rain and thundershowers, which may persist till May 20. However, he warned that another short spell of heatwave is likely between May 21 and May 24, followed by another round of rain around May 25.

He urged the | [More on P10](#)



Kashmir's Mughal Gardens wear a deserted look as tourist footfall drops drastically. KO Photo by Shoaib Nazir

Terror Mastermind Nizamani Shot Dead In Pak

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist Razaullah Nizamani Khalid alias Abu Saifullah Khalid, who was the brain behind the 2006 attack on the RSS headquarters, was killed by three unidentified gunmen in Sindh province of Pakistan on Sunday, officials here said.

Khalid used to head the terror operations of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) from Nepal in early 2000 and had many aliases including Vinode Kumar, Mohammed Salim and Razaullah. He was involved in multiple terror strikes in India, they said.

He left his residence at Matli this afternoon and was gunned down by assailants near a crossing at Badni in Sindh province, the officials said.

A close associate of Abu Anas of Lashkar, Khalid was the mastermind of the attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) headquarters at Nagpur in which all three terrorists were | [More on P10](#)

Police Conduct Anti-Terror Raids In Poonch

Observer News Service

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday conducted raids at multiple locations with the intention of dismantling terror networks in the border district of Poonch, officials said.

The raids were conducted at nearly one-and-a-half dozen places, mostly targeting houses of overground workers and relatives of terrorists operating from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), they said.

The officials said several electronic devices were seized during the raids that were still underway at some places.

However, no one was arrested during the operation carried out by teams led by senior officers, they added.

Notably, Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Saturday conducted raids at 11 locations in Kashmir and detained several suspects for | [More on P10](#)

'Death Traps' Along LoC

Unexploded Shells Haunt Border Villages Despite Ceasefire

Observer News Service

Jammu: Even as guns have fallen silent along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border in Jammu, fear continues to loom over civilian life. Unexploded mortar shells fired by Pakistani forces during the recent hostilities remain embedded in farmlands and homes, turning villages into ticking time bombs.

Despite the May 10 ceasefire understanding between India and Pakistan, many locals describe the border belt as a "death trap," haunted by



remnants of war.

Balvinder Singh, 62, returned to his home in the

Pargwal sector on May 14. He narrowly escaped death.

"Two shells exploded in

our compound, damaging our house. Three more landed on our farmland," Singh said. "We told our family to stay away from the fields until the Army arrived. We were terrified."

Army engineers later defused the unexploded shells, bringing temporary relief to his family. "Fear is writ large on the faces of people living in these border hamlets," he added.

Scenes across affected areas tell stories of devastation — rooftops torn apart, homes shattered, windowpanes pierced by shrapnel, and cattle carcasses lying | [More on P10](#)

Army Destroys 42 Unexploded Shells In Poonch

Security forces on Sunday destroyed 42 unexploded shells in different forward villages near the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir in a major operation to clear civilian areas following a military confrontation between India and Pakistan, officials said. Indian Army,

in close coordination with local police authorities, successfully conducted a controlled operation for the safe destruction of 42 unexploded ordnances in the border areas of Jhulas, Salotri, Dharati and Salani, a defence spokesperson said. He said these shells, remnants of recent cross-border | [More on P10](#)

'No Expiry Date' To Ceasefire: Army

Observer News Service

Srinagar: There is "no expiry date" to the understanding reached between Indian and Pakistani Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) on cessation of hostilities nearly a week back, the Indian Army said on Sunday.

The clarification came following reports that the arrangement between the two militaries on stopping the hostilities is ending this evening.

The Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan on May 12 decided to continue with the understanding of halting all military actions.

The arrangement was originally reached for two days when the DGMOs held a conversation over the hotline on May 10.

"As far as continuation of break in hostilities, as decided in DGMOs interaction of May 12 are concerned, there is no expiry date to it," the

Indian Army said in a brief clarification.

It also made it clear that there are no "DGMO talks" scheduled for Sunday as reported in a sector of the media.

The arrangement reached on May 10 came after four days of intense hostilities that saw the two sides targeting each other's military installations with drones, missiles and long-range weapons that raised fears of a wider military conflict.

The DGMOs of India and Pakistan on May 12 again 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, the two officers focused on continuing the commitment that both sides must not fire a "single shot" or initiate any "aggressive and inimical" action against each other.

Under | [More on P10](#)

BrahMos Hit Pak Bases: Shah

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday that indigenously developed BrahMos missiles destroyed Pakistani air bases while its air defence system, borrowed from China, remained unused, during Operation Sindoor, which exposed its lies on terrorism to the world.

Addressing a function here, Shah said while surgical strikes and the airstrike in the past were limited to the Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK), India penetrated 100 km inside Pakistan's border under Operation Sindoor and eliminated terrorists and their hubs.

"As our indigenously developed BrahMos (supersonic cruise missile system) worked to destroy Pakistan's air bases, its own air defence system, borrowed from China, remained unused.

"Our Air Force carried out precise attacks and inflicted heavy damage on many places in Pakistan which were considered impregnable. Operation Sindoor will be | [More on P10](#)

Men Account For 72% Of Suicides In India

Experts Call For Urgent Action On Men's Mental Health Issue

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Men accounted for 72 per cent of suicides committed in India in 2022. This data from the National Crime Records Bureau has experts raising concerns about the rising mental health issues in men, which they say are largely overlooked.

Men are often conditioned to suppress vulnerability, leading to silent suffering and in many cases devastating consequences, said Jyoti Kapoor, founder-director and senior psychiatrist at Manasthali.

"Understanding and supporting men's mental health has never been more critical. We must normalise mental health conversations, provide accessible therapy resources and foster environments that encourage emotional expression without judgment," both at home and workplace," Dr Kapoor said.

The incidents of atrocities against men -- ranging from



false accusations and emotional abuse to domestic violence and legal harassment -- not only cause significant psychological trauma but also reflect a deeper, systemic neglect of male emotional well-being.

A study conducted in rural Haryana further revealed that 52.4 per cent of married men

reported experiencing gender-based violence, often without access to legal recourse or psychological support.

Societal narratives continue to overlook the pain of men and the need of the hour is urgent reforms, including gender-inclusive mental health policies, safe spaces for emotional expression, and the dismantling of harmful stereotypes that discourage vulnerability in men.

Dr Shweta Sharma, General Secretary of the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists and Founder of Mansa Global Foundation for Mental Health, said, "Men who experience violence or are wrongfully accused often suffer in silence, fearing ridicule or disbelief. These experiences not only impact their mental health but also distort their sense of identity, purpose and safety. In therapy, we frequently see how unacknowledged trauma in men can manifest as withdrawal," | [More on P10](#)

IMF Imposes 11 New Conditions On Pak:Report

Warns It Against Risks To Bailout Programme

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slapped 11 new conditions on Pakistan for the release of the next tranche of its bailout programme and warned that tensions with India could heighten risks to the scheme's fiscal, external, and reform goals, according to a media report on Sunday.

The new conditions imposed on Pakistan include the parliamentary approval of a new Rs 176 trillion budget, an increase in the debt servicing surcharge on electricity bills and lifting restrictions on import of more than three-year-old used cars.

The Express Tribune newspaper said the Staff Level

report, which the IMF released on Saturday, also said that "rising tensions between India and Pakistan, if sustained or deteriorate further, could heighten risks to the fiscal, external and reform goals of the programme".

The report further stated that tensions between

Pakistan and India have risen significantly

over the past two weeks, but so far, the market reaction has been modest, with the stock market retaining most of its recent gains and spreads widening moderately.

The IMF report has shown the defence budget for the next fiscal year at Rs 2.414 trillion, which is higher by Rs 252 billion or 12%.

Compared to the IMF's projection, | [More on P10](#)

LG Offers Prayers At Zeethyar Temple



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid obeisance at the Zeethyar temple here on the occasion of Zeashta Mata Jayanti on Sunday, an official spokesperson said.

He said the LG sought the blessings of Mata Zeashta and prayed for the well-being of all and peace and prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sinha also interacted with devotees and greeted them on the occasion. Members of the Zeashta Devi | [More on P10](#)



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2

The battle of the brews: Coffee or tea, which is healthier?

There's something undeniably comforting about the aroma of freshly brewed coffee in the morning. For Dubai-based Simran Dey, her day doesn't start without a cup of Joe. Meanwhile, her husband shares a similar sentiment, but with tea—his comfort beverage of choice. This ongoing friendly rivalry between the couple begs the question: which one reigns supreme when it comes to health benefits?

While both tea and coffee have their own set of advantages, the real answer depends on factors like the type of beverage, how it's brewed, and the quantity consumed. Nevertheless, here's a closer look at the health perks each drink offers.

Coffee: A boost for focus and heart-health
Coffee has long been associated with an array of health benefits, owing to its potent caffeine content. Caffeine, a natural stimulant, is well-known for fuelling focus, cognitive function, and mental alertness. For those who need an extra kick to start their day or tackle a challenging task, coffee's higher caffeine content makes it a solid choice.

Beyond mental clarity, coffee consumption has been linked to several health benefits, including reduced inflammation and a lower risk of heart disease and diabetes. For instance, a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that regular coffee intake was associated with a reduced risk of coronary heart disease. Furthermore, a 2022 study published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology found that drinking three to four cups of coffee daily was linked with a longer lifespan and a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. As study author Peter Kistler explained, coffee contains over 100 biologically active compounds—while caffeine is the most well-known, non-caffeinated compounds in coffee are also thought to play a role in the positive effects observed. Hyderabad fire survivor recalls horror: 'She



hugged her children till the end' However, coffee does come with a caveat—its higher caffeine content can be a double-edged sword. While it provides a much-needed energy boost, coffee may also trigger anxiety or disrupt sleep in sensitive individuals. If you're prone to insomnia or heightened stress, it's important to monitor your coffee intake. But what about tea, the quieter contender in this rivalry?

Tea: Steady and calming

On the other hand, tea offers a more calming alternative while still providing cognitive benefits. Like coffee, tea contains caffeine, which can improve mental performance and alertness. As Sasha Rehman, a Dubai-based holistic wellness expert and nutritionist says, tea has an additional advantage: the amino acid theanine. This compound promotes relaxation and helps reduce stress, making tea a perfect option when you need to stay focused, but want to avoid the jitteriness that can come from coffee.

Rehman adds, "Green tea, in particular, is rich in polyphenols—antioxidants that may lower the risk of cardiovascular disease and

some types of cancer. For those who are sensitive to caffeine but still want to reap the health benefits of tea, there are also caffeine-free options like green or herbal teas available. These teas can promote relaxation and even help with sleep, making them a great option for individuals dealing with anxiety or sleep disorders."

Research has a lot to say too: A 2014 study found that green tea consumption led to modest reductions in both systolic and diastolic blood pressures. The analysis of several trials, where green tea was consumed for 3–6 months, showed that blood pressure was reduced by a small but significant amount. Not just this: A 2004 study in the journal Circulation found that both short- and long-term consumption of black tea helped improve blood vessel function in people with coronary artery disease. The research showed that drinking black tea could reverse some of the dysfunction in blood vessel walls, potentially improving heart health.

The antioxidant showdown

As Rehman explains, both tea and coffee are packed with antioxidants, which help combat free radicals in the body. These free radicals, caused by stress, pollution, UV rays, and even exercise, can lead to oxidative stress and cellular damage if left unchecked. Antioxidants neutralise these free radicals, playing a crucial role in disease prevention. Coffee is also rich in chlorogenic acid, a polyphenol known for its powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Studies show that coffee is a key source of polyphenols and phenolic acids in many diets.

Tea, too, is rich in antioxidants. Green tea, in particular, is packed with epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), a catechin with potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. In addition, both green and black teas contain flavonols—like quercetin and kaempferol—that help protect cells from damage. While both beverages offer impressive antioxidant profiles, coffee tends to have

a higher concentration, making it a powerhouse in this regard.

A source of fibre

It might surprise you to learn that your morning cup of coffee can offer a fiber boost. A 2007 study published in The National Library of Medicine revealed that brewed coffee contains between 1.1 and 1.8 grams of fiber per cup, depending on the type. While tea doesn't contribute much to your fiber intake, two or three cups of coffee can make a meaningful addition to your daily fiber goal.

Lower cancer risk

Coffee drinkers have long been linked to a lower risk of several cancers, including colorectal, prostate, liver, and breast cancers. While research connecting tea to cancer prevention is less definitive, coffee's bioactive compounds—known for their anti-inflammatory and DNA-repairing properties—may help reduce cancer risk. Studies suggest that regular coffee consumption could offer protective benefits, but further research is needed to fully understand the relationship. For example, a 2007 study published in Gastroenterology found that coffee consumption might lower the risk of liver cancer, with compounds like chlorogenic acid potentially playing a role. Additionally, a 2010 study in the Journal of Clinical Oncology indicated a possible link between coffee consumption and a reduced risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women.

Conclusion: The best of both worlds

In the end, whether you prefer the boldness of coffee or the soothing qualities of tea, both beverages bring valuable health benefits to the table. Coffee shines with its higher caffeine content, antioxidant power, and potential heart health perks. Meanwhile, tea offers calming, steady energy, enhanced by theanine, and is a powerful choice for those who are sensitive to caffeine or need help managing stress.

Study Flags Chemical Contamination Risk To Endangered Gangetic Dolphins

Press Trust Of India

A scientific study has revealed alarming levels of toxic chemicals in the Ganga river, threatening the health and survival of the endangered Gangetic dolphins.

Published in the journal 'Heliyon', the study by the Wildlife Institute of India found that these freshwater mammals are being exposed to a hazardous cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) through their diet.

The researchers analysed the dietary exposure risks of 39 EDCs in fish species consumed by Gangetic dolphins. The findings indicate significant bioaccumulation of industrial pollutants such as di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) and di-n-butyl phthalate (DnBP) in the prey base of the dolphins.

Residues of banned pesticides like DDT and Lindane (γ-HCH) were also detected, pointing to poor enforcement of environmental regulations in the Ganga basin.

The Gangetic dolphin population has declined by over 50 per cent since 1957, and their range has shrunk by nearly a quarter, despite being designated as India's national aquatic animal. With only five species of river dolphins left globally, all of them threatened, the study warned that India could risk a repeat of the Yangtze River tragedy,

where a similar species went extinct due to unchecked human activities.

The study attributes the contamination to several sources: runoff from agriculture, untreated industrial effluents from the textile sector, vehicular emissions, poor solid waste management, and rising tourism in ecologically sensitive areas.

The effects of EDCs are particularly worrisome as they can disrupt hormonal systems and reproductive functions in mammals, and persist in the ecosystem for long periods.

Although toxicity risk quotients based on standard values were found to be low, when analysed against the reference dose -- "a more realistic measure of exposure risk --" the dolphins were at a high risk from seven key pollutants -- DEHP, DnBP, DDT, arsenic, mercury, cadmium, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The study recommended the urgent inclusion of these chemicals in dolphin conservation-monitoring programmes and calls for a scientifically informed national framework to assess and regulate chemical contamination in river ecosystems.

The Gangetic dolphin is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, but the study stresses that protection on paper must translate into actionable policy and pollution control if the species is to survive.

Dignified Farewell

Transforming Kashmir's Final Rides

In Kashmir, it is a painful irony that the departed, who leave behind a lifetime of earnings, are often transported to their final resting place in load carriers—vehicles they would never have used for commuting while alive. This stark contrast raises a profound question: shouldn't every soul be granted a dignified farewell, just as they lived with dignity? It is time to ensure that the last journey of our loved ones reflects the respect and honor they deserve.

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Smart City's Costly Pedal Push: Srinagar's Bike-Sharing Scheme Raises Eyebrows



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Srinagar's high-profile public bicycle sharing scheme, launched under the Smart City Mission, has come under public and legislative scrutiny after data revealed a striking mismatch between investment and returns. Since its rollout in May 2023, the project has brought in just Rs 4.48 lakh in revenue, against a whopping Rs 13.20 crore already spent on infrastructure and funding support.

The figures were disclosed in responses tabled during the ongoing budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, in reply to queries raised by legislators Shamim Firdous and Mushtaq Guroo. The revelations have sparked renewed questions about the scheme's utility, public reception, and future sustainability.

The Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) has so far spent Rs 9.06 crore on constructing dedicated cycle tracks across key constituencies like Batamalo, Hazratbal, and Lal Chowk. These corridors were developed as part of broader urban initiatives including Lakefront Development along Dal Lake's northern foreshore and the Complete Street Projects in central Srinagar.

To further support the bicycle-sharing scheme, the administration also sanctioned Rs 4.14 crore as viability gap funding under a public-private partnership (PPP)

model. Of this, Rs 1.2 crore has already been disbursed to the private operator managing the project. The firm is responsible for maintaining a fleet of 900 bicycles and 100 docking stations under a five-year agreement.

Despite the ambitious planning and expansive reach, the project—launched formally on May 20, 2023—has so far generated a mere Rs 4,48,333 through user charges. This has led to serious concerns over whether the initiative has succeeded in attracting commuters or fulfilling its goals of promoting eco-friendly and non-motorised urban transport.

Docking stations have been established at strategic points across the city, including Lal Chowk, Dal Gate, Hazratbal, Eidgah, Chanapora, and Bemina. The largest cluster of stations is concentrated in Lal Chowk, Hazratbal, and Chanapora—areas prioritized for last-mile connectivity and congestion reduction.

However, with negligible revenue and growing scepticism, the project's long-term viability remains under question. Lawmakers and citizens alike are asking whether the initiative was grounded in realistic public demand or simply an expensive urban showpiece.

The administration's detailed disclosures have now added a fresh layer of accountability to a scheme once touted as a transformative leap toward sustainable urban mobility in Srinagar.

Stray Dog Crisis Deepens In Srinagar City



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The persistent threat posed by stray dogs across Kashmir shows no sign of abating, with official figures revealing an average of 18 dog bite cases reported every single day.

Health department data indicates that Kashmir witnesses between 6,000 to 6,500 cases of dog bites annually—a number that has sparked growing concern among residents and healthcare professionals alike.

A senior officer at the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the unchecked proliferation of stray dogs is closely linked to poor waste management. "The main culprit is open garbage dumping, especially from meat and poultry shops. These areas become breeding grounds for dogs. The only long-term solution is scientific waste disposal and public cooperation," he stated. He also appealed to residents to be especially cautious during early mornings and evenings, when dog activity is highest.

Local voices from different parts of the city echo the same alarm. Riyaz Ahmad Bhat, a schoolteacher from Habakadal, shared his concern: "My children are scared every morning. They don't want to walk to the bus stop. This fear is affecting their mental well-being and academic performance. We've made several complaints, but nothing substantial has been done."

In the congested neighborhood of Khanyar, another

resident, Manzoor Hussain Lone, described how the menace has altered their daily routine. "After dark, it's like a curfew here—not because of any unrest, but due to these dogs. I've stopped going to the mosque for morning and evening prayers. It's just not worth the risk anymore," he said.

Hospitals and academic institutions, too, have become vulnerable zones. At Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Hospital (JLNM) in Rainawari, stray dogs have been spotted inside wards and near food courts. At Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital (SMHS), the situation is worse. "Every time I bring food for my mother, I'm chased by dogs in the parking area. There are at least a dozen dogs on the premises at any given time," said Shabir Ahmad Mir, an attendant from the old city.

At SKIMS Soura and Kashmir University, students and staff have reported similar encounters. Dogs often roam lecture blocks and hostel areas freely, occasionally barking or chasing pedestrians.

Despite sporadic sterilization drives and awareness campaigns, residents say no long-term, sustainable plan has been implemented by the authorities. "It's not just a civic nuisance anymore—it's a public health and safety crisis," said Bilal Yousuf Shah, a university researcher and civic activist.

As the crisis escalates, city residents continue to plead for urgent action and accountability from the administration.



SEEKING RELIEF FROM the soaring temperatures, a boy enjoys a refreshing dip in a pond in Srinagar on Sunday.
KO PHOTO FAISAL KHAN.

Four Residential Houses Damaged In Lal Bazar Blaze

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A massive fire broke out in the densely populated Lal Bazar area of Srinagar on Saturday evening, damaging four residential houses, officials confirmed.

According to the Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) Department, the fire erupted around 6:15 PM and swiftly spread through a cluster of closely built houses in the congested locality. The first distress call was received at 6:17 PM, following which firefighting units from Soura and Nowhatta were immediately dispatched. Additional reinforcements from Hazratbal, Safakadal, and the F&ES Headquarters were also mobilized to contain the blaze.

The flames were brought under control by 7:13 PM, although firefighting operations continued beyond that point to ensure complete dousing. An F&ES official stated that four three-storey residential houses were extensively damaged. Fortunately, there were no reports of injuries or casualties.



Despite the containment of the fire, local residents voiced frustration over what they described as a delayed response from the fire department. "We made repeated calls, but the fire tenders took time to arrive, allowing the fire to spread rapidly and cause more destruction," one resident alleged.

Witnesses praised the timely inter-

vention by the local police, crediting Station House Officer Ishfaq and his team for promptly mobilizing and helping residents in containing the flames before fire services arrived. "It was the swift action of the police that prevented the fire from engulfing more structures," a local said.

The exact cause of the fire is under investigation.

Admin Organizes Anti-Drugs Awareness Programme At Safakadal

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: To sensitise masses about the harmful effects of drug abuse and encouraging them to eradicate menace of drugs from the society, District Administration Srinagar organized an awareness programme on Drug De-Addiction at Community Hall Gassi Mohalla Safa Kadal.

The event was held on the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, as a part of an ongoing Drug Free

Jammu and Kashmir initiative of the Government to educate students, staff members, and local residents about the growing menace of drug addiction and the collective responsibility to curb it.

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

The program witnessed active participation from students, local community members, and officials

from various Departments.

Departmental Resource persons representing Social Welfare, Police, Health, Education, Excise and SMC, others, together raised awareness among students and the local population. Students contributed through speeches, skits, and discussions, further emphasizing the message.

Participants present on the occasion emphasized the crucial role of education, awareness, and community involvement in eradicating the menace of drugs from society.

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HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI CALENDAR

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PRAYERS

FAJR	3:50
ZUHR	12:27
ASR	5:22
Magrib	7:31
ISHA	9:06

This Day In History

- 1585 - Spain confiscates English ships
- 1635 - France's First Minister, Cardinal Richelieu declares war on Spain (Franco-Spanish War 1635-59)
- 1643 - Battle at Rocroi/Allersheim: French army destroys Spanish army
- 1643 Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Harbor form the United Colonies of New England
- 1649 - England is declared a Commonwealth by an act of the Rump Parliament making England a republic for the next 11 years
- 1652 - Spanish troops occupy Grevelingen
- 1662 U - Uniformity Act of England goes into effect
- 1749 - George II grants charter to Ohio Company to settle Ohio Valley
- 1792 - Russian army enters Poland
- 1793 - Netherlands captures French island of St Maarten (held until 1795)
- 1796 - Game protection law restricts encroachment on Indian hunting grounds
- 1863 - Siege of Vicksburg, investment of city complete
- 1864 - Battle of Port Walthall Junction, Virginia (Bermuda Hundred)
- 1864 - Last engagement in series of battles known as Spotsylvania
- 1864 - Skirmish at Cassville, Georgia
- 1885 - German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck takes possession of Cameroon and Togoland
- 1900 - World's longest railroad tunnel (Simplon) linking Italy and Switzerland opens
- 1910 - Passage of Earth through tail of Halley's Comet causes near-panic
- 1919 - Kelud volcano on Java, erupts killing 5,160
- 1919 - Mustafa Kemal Atatürk lands at Samsun on the Black Sea coast, beginning the Turkish War of Independence
- 1926 -- French air force bombs Damascus Syria
- 1929 - Chinese warlord Feng Yuxiang declares war on Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government
- 1939 - Churchill signs British-Russian anti-Nazi pact
- 1940 - Amsterdam time becomes MET (Middle European Time)
- 1940 - French counter attack at Pronne under Gen De Gaulle
- 1941 - Germany occupiers in Holland forbid bicycle taxis
- 1941 - New Nazi battleship Bismarck leaves Gdynia, Poland
- 1943 - Berlin is declared "Judenrein" (free of Jews)
- 1943 - Churchill pledges Britain's full support to US against Japan
- 1944 - German defense line in Italy collapses
- 194 - 5 Start of the 1st Victory Test Cricket between England & Aust Services
- 1953 - Nuclear explosion in Nevada (fall-out in St George, Utah)
- 1958 - US & Canada form North American Air Defense Command (NORAD)
- 1962 - Indonesian paratroopers land in New Guinea
- 1962- US performs nuclear test at Christmas Island (atmospheric)
- 1964- US diplomats find at least 40 secret microphones in Moscow embassy
- 1967- USSR ratifies treaty with Britain & US banning nuclear weapons in space
- 1971- USSR launches Mars 2, becomes the 1st spacecraft to crash land on Mars
- 1983- NASA launches Intelsat V satellite, no. 506
- 1986- Anti-apartheid activist Hélène Pastoors sentenced to 10 yrs in South Africa
- 1993- Boeing 727 crashes into mountain at Medellín, Colombia, kills 132
- 1995- World's youngest doctor, Balamurali Ambati, 17, graduates Mount Sinai
- 2009- Sri Lanka announces victory in its 25-year war against the terrorist organization, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
- 2011- Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer, project to search for dark matter, led by Samuel C. C. Ting, installed on the International Space Station
- 2016- EgyptAir flight MS804 goes missing over the Mediterranean on route Paris to Cairo
- 2018- Queen Elizabeth II grants the titles of Duke and Duchess of Sussex to Prince Harry and Meghan Markle upon their marriage
- 2020- Greenhouse gas emissions dropped 17% worldwide in April 2020 when world was in lockdown, in study published in "Nature Climate Change"

Professor Arrested Over Social Media Post On Op Sindoor

Press Trust Of India

Sonipat (Haryana): Ashoka University associate professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been arrested for his social media post on Operation Sindoor, police said here on



Ali Khan Mahmudabad

Sunday. The action was taken on a complaint by a BJP Yuva Morcha leader.

"Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been arrested from Delhi," Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Ajeet Singh said over the phone.

He has been arrested in connection with some comments connected with Operation Sindoor, he said.

In a statement, the Ashoka University said, "We have been made aware that Prof Ali Khan Mahmudabad has been taken into police custody earlier today. We are in the process of ascertaining

details of the case".

"The University will continue to cooperate with the police and local authorities in the investigation, fully," it said.

The arrest comes days after the Haryana State Commission for Women sent a notice to the associate professor over his Operation Sindoor remarks.

The May 12 notice mentioned that the panel has taken suo motu cognisance of the "public statements/remarks" made "on or about May 7" by Mahmudabad, the head of the political science department of the Ashoka University in Sonipat.

"We salute the country's daughters - Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh. But the kind of words the professor who teaches political science has used for them... I expected that he would at least present himself before the commission today and express regret," Commission chairperson Renu Bhatia had said.

Mahmudabad's remarks had been annexed to the Commission's notice, and in one of them, he said that right-wing people applauding Col Qureshi should demand protection for victims of mob lynchings and "arbitrary" bulldozing of properties.

Saudi Advises Pilgrims Against Sleeping In Corridors To Ensure Safety During Hajj

Agencies

Dubai: As millions prepare to perform the annual Hajj pilgrimage, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrh has advised pilgrims against lying down or sleeping in corridors and aisles within the



holy sites.

The ministry emphasized that adherence to this rule is essential to safeguard the safety and smooth movement of pilgrims during the rituals.

The ministry highlighted that spreading out in passageways and courtyards creates serious obstacles for worshippers and delays emergency response teams from reaching those in need.

It further warned that such behavior intensifies overcrowding, increasing

the risk to public safety.

Pakistani female officer wins top award in Dubai for solving murder cases

Pilgrims are urged to rest only inside designated areas such as hotels or tents. "Respecting the allocated spaces contributes to a smoother flow of movement

and reduces risks during the busiest moments of Hajj," the ministry said.

Pilgrims have already begun flocking to Mecca in anticipation of Hajj 2025, which is expected to take place between June 4 and June 9, depending on the lunar calendar.

This year's pilgrimage will be the last to occur during the intense summer heat for the next 16 years, as the Islamic lunar calendar shifts the Hajj season into cooler months starting in 2026.



Israeli Strike Kills 130 In Gaza Amid Truce Talks

Agencies

CAIRO/JERUSALEM: Israeli strikes killed at least 130 Palestinians across Gaza overnight, health officials said on Sunday, as Israel said talks with Hamas included a proposal to end the war but sources on both sides said there had been no progress in the talks.

The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the latest indirect talks in Doha included discussions on a truce and hostage deal as well as a proposal to end the war in return for the exile of Hamas militants and the demilitarization of the enclave, terms Hamas has previously rejected.

The substance of the statement was in line with previous declarations from Israel, but the timing, as negotiators meet, offered some prospect of flexibility in Israel's position. A senior Israeli official said there had been no progress in the talks so far.

A Hamas official told Reuters: "Israel's position remains unchanged, they want to release the prisoners (hostages) without a commitment to end the war."

He reiterated that Hamas was proposing releasing all Israeli hostages in return for an end to the war, the pull-out of Israeli troops, an end to a blockade on aid for Gaza, and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

The overnight airstrikes on Gaza hit as Israel prepares for a new ground offensive

“The Israeli government still insists on only partial deals. They are deliberately tormenting us. Bring our children back already! All 58 of them

aimed at achieving “operational control” in parts of Gaza.

Gaza's Health Ministry said at least 464 Palestinians were killed in the week to Sunday as a result of Israel's escalated bombardment. The deaths of at least 130 Palestinians overnight are in addition to that figure.

"Complete families were wiped off the civil registration record by (overnight) Israeli bombardment," Khalil Al-Degran, Gaza health ministry spokesperson, told Reuters by phone.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the casualties. Israel has blocked the entry of medical, food and fuel supplies into Gaza since the start of March to try to pressure Hamas into freeing Israeli hostages and has approved plans that could in-

volve seizing the entire Gaza strip and controlling aid.

"Hospitals overwhelmed"

Reports in Israeli and Arab media that Hamas leader Mohammed Sinwar may have been killed could potentially complicate the Doha talks, which began on Saturday.

Hamas neither confirmed nor denied the reports. Israel's Defense Ministry had no immediate comment.

Gaza medics said contrary to earlier reports Zakaria Al-Sinwar, a history lecturer at a Gaza university and the brother of Hamas' leader, was alive but in critical condition.

He was placed in the morgue earlier with his three children, before medics realized he was still breathing and moved him to an intensive care unit.

"Hospitals are overwhelmed with a growing number of casualties, many are children," health ministry spokesman Degran said.

In Israel, Einav Zangauker, the mother of Hamas hostage Matan Zangauker, said Netanyahu was refusing to end the war in exchange for Hamas releasing the remaining hostages because of his political interests.

"The Israeli government still insists on only partial deals. They are deliberately tormenting us. Bring our children back already! All 58 of them," Zangauker said in a post on the X social media platform.

'World Listens To Language Of Love Only When You Have Power': RSS Chief

Press Trust of India

Jaipur: While India is resolutely committed to global harmony and welfare, the world has now seen the country's formidable strength, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Saturday, stressing that others pay heed to the "language of peace" only from the one who possesses power.

The RSS chief was speaking at a programme at Ravinath Ashram in Harmara, Jaipur.

Talking about the recent action against Pakistan, Mr Bhagwat said that India does not hate anyone, "but the world listens to the language of love and welfare only when you have power", a statement said.

"This is the nature of the world. This nature cannot be changed. So for the welfare of the world, we need to be powerful and the world has seen our strength," he said.

"The world's welfare is our reli-

gion. This is especially a firm duty of Hinduism," Mr Bhagwat said.

He said that India's role is that of an elder brother, and it is working for peace and harmony in the world. Mr Bhagwat said that when Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives were facing a crisis, India was the first to assist them.

The RSS chief said that there has been a tradition of sacrifice in India. "We worship and respect everyone from Lord Shri Ram to Bhamashah," he said.

Iran's Ayatollah Says Trump Lying About Peace In Region

Agencies

Tehran: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused Donald Trump on Saturday of lying when the US president said during his Gulf tour this week that he wanted peace in the region.

On the contrary, said Khamenei, the United States uses its power to give "10-ton bombs to the Zionist (Israeli) regime to drop on the heads of Gaza's children".

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One after departing the United Arab Emirates on Friday that Iran had to move quickly on a US proposal for its nuclear programme or "something bad's going to happen".

His remarks, Khamenei said, "aren't even worth responding to." They are an "embarrassment to the speaker and the American people," Khamenei added.

"Undoubtedly, the source of corruption, war, and conflict in this region is the Zionist regime — a dangerous, deadly cancerous tumour that must be uprooted; it will be uprooted," he said at an event at a religious centre in Tehran, according to state media.

Earlier on Saturday, Iranian President Masoud Pezesh-



“Undoubtedly, the source of corruption, war, and conflict in this region is the Zionist regime — a dangerous, deadly cancerous tumour that must be uprooted; it will be uprooted

kian said Trump speaks about peace while simultaneously making threats.

"Which should we believe?" Pezeshkian said at a naval event in Tehran. "On the one hand, he speaks of peace and on the other, he threatens with the most advanced tools of mass killing."

Tehran would continue Iran-US nuclear talks but is not afraid of threats.

8 Kids Among 17 Killed Near Charminar in Hyderabad



Press Turst Of India

New Delhi: As many as 17 people, including eight children, were killed in a massive fire that broke out at a building in near the iconic Charminar on Sunday.

The fire broke out at a building in Gulzar House here, police said.

"All 17 who were shifted to hospitals were brought dead," a senior police official said.

A narrow staircase was the only escape route for the inmates of the building, but they could not rush out.

The building housed jewellery shops on the ground floor and people were residing in a flat above, police said, adding smoke spread and people suffocated.

Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services Director General Y Nagi Reddy, who inspected the spot, told reporters that the fire accident was reported between 6 am and 6.15 am.

There was a call to the Fire Department at 6.16 am

and the fire engine was turned out at 6.17 am, he said.

There were shops on the ground floor while the first and second floors were residential, he said.

"Prima facie cause of the fire is short-circuit in the mains in the shopping area," Reddy said.

A total of 21 people were in the building when the fire erupted, and 17 of them were shifted to hospitals by the Fire Department in an unconscious state.

There was only one escape route, the staircase, which was very narrow and the inmates could not run to safety, he said.

The Telangana Fire Department in a statement said the fire broke out on the ground floor (G+2 building) and spread to the floors above.

In a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the loss of lives due to the fire tragedy.

He announced Rs 2 lakh for the kin of those who died and Rs 50,000 to the injured.

NEWS MAKERS

The Odisha Police have started an investigation into the alleged links between a Puri-based YouTuber and Jyoti Malhotra, who was arrested on the charge of passing on sensitive information to Pakistani intelligence operatives, an officer said on Sunday.

The police found that Malhotra, who runs a YouTube channel, Travel with JO, and hails from Hisar in Haryana, had visited Puri in September 2024 and came in contact with a woman in the coastal town, who is also a YouTuber, Puri SP Vinit Agrawal said.

Jyoti, whose YouTube channel and Instagram account have 3.77 lakh subscribers and 1.33 lakh followers respectively, allegedly was in contact with a Pakistani staffer working at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi. On May 13, India had

Probe begins into links between Odisha YouTuber, 'Pak spy'

expelled that Pakistani official for allegedly indulging in espionage.

The woman in Puri had also travelled to Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan recently, the SP said.

"We found that Jyoti Malhotra had visited Puri last year, and we are verifying the fact. Anything more can be shared after the verification," Agrawal said.

Asked whether the woman from Puri had shared intelligence inputs with Malhotra, Agrawal said, "The Haryana Police are investigating the matter and we are providing them the required assistance." The police are also "examining the objective" of Malhotra's visit to Puri, and trying to find out



"where she stayed, whom she contacted and any possible suspicious activities", the Puri SP said.

"We are in touch with various central agencies and the Haryana Police. We will share details with the media after field verification," he said while responding to queries from reporters.

The Odisha Police did not disclose the identity of

the Puri YouTuber for its investigation into the matter.

Puri YouTuber's father said the police had quizzed her daughter on Saturday and sought some information.

A team of police personnel visited the woman's residence in Puri for an investigation into the matter.

"My daughter came in contact with Jyoti Malhotra as both are YouTubers. As a friendship developed between them, Malhotra visited Puri. As it is a matter of the nation's security, a proper investigation should be carried out. We will cooperate with the police," he said.

"My daughter visited Kartarpur in Pakistan with another friend, not Malhotra, three or four months ago for a pilgrimage. My daughter has no involvement in anti-national activities and was unaware of Malhotra's alleged espionage," the Puri YouTuber's father said.

Pakistani woman praying for soldiers: MP teacher suspended

A government schoolteacher was placed under suspension in Sehore in Madhya Pradesh after she allegedly shared on social media a video of a Pakistani woman praying for the safety of soldiers of that country during Operation Sindoor, an official said on Sunday.

Sehore District Education Officer Sanjay Singh Tomar said Shahnaz Parveen, a teacher in a government school in Mehatwara, some 55 kilometres from the district headquarters, had been suspended.

The action came following a complaint from the Bajrang Dal and a directive from the Ashta Sub-Divisional Magistrate, he said.

She shared a video with the caption 'Allah, keep Pakistani soldiers safe' on her Facebook account, he said, adding Parveen was suspended under a government letter (directive) prohibiting the posting and sharing of such items on social media.

He, however, did not elaborate on the rules. PTI

Lufthansa flight flew without pilot for 10 minutes

A Lufthansa flight from to Spain last year reportedly flew without an active pilot for 10 minutes after the co-pilot fainted while alone in the cockpit, German news agency dpa reported on Saturday.

During the flight from Frankfurt to Seville on February 17, 2024, the co-pilot of an Airbus A321 fainted while the captain was in the restroom, dpa reported, referring to a report by the Spanish accident investigation authority CIAIAC.

The aircraft, which was carrying 199 passengers and six crew members, flew for around 10 minutes without a pilot in command of the plane, according to the report.

Lufthansa told dpa that it was aware of the investigation report and that its own flight

safety department had also conducted an investigation. The company didn't disclose its results, dpa said.

Although the unconscious co-pilot apparently operated controls unintentionally, the aircraft was able to continue flying in a stable manner thanks to the active autopilot. During this time period, the voice recordings from the cockpit captured strange noises consistent with an acute health emergency, dpa reported.

The captain initially tried entering the regular door opening code, which triggers a buzzer in the cockpit so that the co-pilot can open the door. He did so five times without being able to enter the cockpit. A stewardess tried to contact the co-pilot using the onboard telephone.

Farmers Imparted Training On Commercial Floriculture



Observer News Service

DODA: The Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens organized a one-day training program on Commercial Floriculture for farmers at Kumhari Panchayat Shangroo in Block Bhalla Doda. The program was held under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme ATMA, with the objective of promoting commercial floriculture practices and enhancing farmers' income.

A large number of farmers participated in the event, reflecting their growing interest in floriculture and aromatic crops.

The session included a detailed discussion on commercial floriculture practices and cultivation of aromatic crops like lavender and rosemary. Farmers also shared their concerns related to the cultivation of marigold, lavender, and other commercial flowers. Experts responded to their queries and assured continued support from the department.

Assistant Floriculture Officer Pawan Kumar briefed the participants about the Cen-

trally Sponsored Schemes being implemented in the district. He emphasised that apart from technical support and latest farming technologies, the department also offers financial assistance in the form of incentives to the farmers.

The training program was conducted under the overall guidance of Director General Vivek Sharma and the supervision of Landscape Officer Vikrant Kumar.

The event also saw participation from prominent progressive farmers including Rajinder Kumar, Pritam Singh and Bans Raj, along with several women farmers.

The participants appreciated the efforts and regular support provided by the Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens, Jammu.

The training program served as a valuable platform for farmers to interact with experts, gain knowledge, and explore new opportunities in floriculture, ultimately aiming to improve their livelihoods through sustainable agricultural practice.

DC Rajouri Assesses Damages In Shelling Affected Gonni Village



Observer News Service

RAJOURI: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma visited Gonni village in the Dhangri area to assess the damages caused due to recent incidents of cross-border shelling. He was accompanied by Revenue Officers and other concerned officials.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner took stock of the losses suffered by the residents and issued on-the-spot directions to the Revenue Department to expedite assessment of damages to property, livestock, and crops.

DC Abhishek Sharma also interacted with the affected families and other members of the general public at their doorsteps. He patiently listened to their concerns and assured them of swift redressal of genuine grievances. He emphasized that the district administration stands firmly with the affected families and is committed to ensuring timely relief and rehabilitation.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the officers to maintain close coordination with the locals and ensure that all necessary support is extended to the affected households without any delay.

International Museum Day

Special Exhibition On Basohli Miniature Paintings Held

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J&K joined the global celebration of International Museum Day 2025 at Dogra Art Museum, Jammu.

Every year 18th May is celebrated as International Museum Day across the world. The day is observed to celebrate the diversity of our cultural heritage and the efforts being made for the preservation of our tangible and intangible heritage. The Theme for this year's International Museum Day is "The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities".

To mark the occasion, a special exhibition on Basohli Miniature Paintings was organised, showcasing the intricate artistry and historical significance of this unique painting style. The exhibition provided visitors with a rare opportunity to explore the vibrant colours, detailed compositions, and rich heritage of Basohli art, which has long been recognized as an integral part of India's artistic legacy. The event was organised on the directions of K.K. Sidha, Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J&K and has further directed for free entry of the visitors to the museums of the Department in J&K for this day.

The event started by way of lighting of traditional lamp by Prof. Poonam Choudhary,

Director, Centre for Studies in Museology, University of Jammu, Prof. Vishal Sharma, Dean, School of Social Science, Cluster University of Jammu, Prof. Ranjodh Singh, H.O.D. History, Govt. Degree College, Samba, Prof. Surinder Parihar, H.O.D. History, G.C.W., Gandhi Nagar and Sh. Mukul Magotra, Curator, Dogra Art Museum, Jammu.

Speaking at the event, Prof. Poonam Choudhary from the University of Jammu emphasized the importance of museums in fostering cultural exchange and education. She applauded the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museum's efforts in curating exhibitions that not only preserve history but also inspire future generations to appreciate and engage with traditional art forms.

The celebration of International Museum Day 2025 at the Dogra Art Museum underscored the evolving role of museums as dynamic spaces for learning, innovation, and community engagement. By offering free entry, the museum ensured accessibility for all, encouraging a wider audience to participate in the festivities and deepen their understanding of Jammu's rich artistic heritage.

The event is curated and co-ordinated by Mukul Magotra, Curator, Dogra Art Museum, Jammu under the supervision of Sh. K.K. Sidha, Director, Archives, Archaeology and Museums, J&K.

Satish Sharma Conducts Extensive Tour Of Kaleeth, Battal, Kharah, Thakar & Jogwan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma on Sunday conducted an extensive tour of Kaleeth, Battal, Kharah, Thakar, and Jogwan areas to assess the ongoing return and rehabilitation process of displaced border residents.

During the visit, Minister Sharma personally interacted with several families who have recently started returning to their homes after being displaced due to recent disturbances. He assured the residents of the government's full support in ensuring a smooth and dignified return.

As part of the government's immediate relief measures, around 500 essential ration and relief kits, facilitated in



collaboration with a supporting NGO (Akshaya Patra) were distributed among the affected households. These kits include food supplies and other daily-use necessities aimed at supporting families during the transition period.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the visit, Min-

ister Sharma said, "Omar Abdullah government is fully committed to the rehabilitation and welfare of every affected citizen. We are taking all necessary steps to ensure that no family is left behind and that their return to normal life is facilitated with dignity and compassion."

He further emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts between government departments, local administration and civil society organizations to ensure sustainable rehabilitation and long-term development of the affected regions.

The Minister also directed local officials to maintain regular communication with the returning families and monitor the progress of infrastructure restoration, health care availability and other essential services.

AS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S IMMEDIATE RELIEF MEASURES, around 500 essential ration and relief kits, facilitated in collaboration with a supporting NGO (Akshaya Patra) were distributed among the affected households. These kits include food supplies and other daily-use necessities aimed at supporting families during the transition period.

Sakeena Itoo Conducts Tour Of DH PORA Constituency

Observer News Service

KULGAM: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, conducted an extensive tour of several areas of Damhal Hanjipora (DH Pora) Constituency and had on the spot assessment of public issues and development needs in these areas.

During the tour, Sakeena visited several villages and hamlets and held interaction with the local residents, Mohalla community members and representatives.

The Minister, during the interactions, attentively listened to the concerns of people regarding healthcare, road connectivity, power supply, water supply and other day to day issues requiring urgent attention of the government.

Addressing the locals at various locations, Sakeena highlighted that the present



government is formed by the vote and trust of people and therefore the Ministers are continuously on the ground to listen to the people's issues, reflecting commitment of Omar Abdullah led government to grassroots governance. She added that the public service is core objective of the present

government.

"Presence and responsiveness to public issues and concerns is main motto of this government", Sakeena stated.

While responding to the issues and grievances of local populace, Sakeena assured them that these would be addressed promptly.

Kishtwar Hosts National Science Seminar 2025



Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) Kishtwar successfully hosted the 52nd Rajya Stariya Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshani and Rashtriya Bal Vaigyanik Pradarshani 2025 today alongside a one-day seminar on "Millets for Health and Sustainable Planet."

The event witnessed vibrant participation from over 50 schools of the district, showcasing the theme "Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future" through seven innovative sub-themes.

The event was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan, who extended his best wishes to the young participants. A cultural welcome by students and faculty members marked the opening, setting an enthusiastic tone for the day-long activities.

The exhibition featured student-led scientific exhibits under sub-themes including Food, Health and Hygiene, Transport and Communication, Natural Farming, Disaster Management, Mathematical Modelling and Computational Thinking, Waste Management and Resource Management.

A panel of esteemed judges—Sr. Lecturers Ramesh Kumar, Apram Sharma, Rashid Hamid Kamal, Ali Imran, and

Baber Amin—evaluated the displays based on creativity, scientific approach, and practical relevance.

In the seminar on "Millets for Health and Sustainable Planet" six students from different schools presented well-researched papers, with a Class 12 student from GHSS Kishtwar winning first position, advancing to the divisional level competition at SCERT Jammu.

The seminar was effectively conducted by Lecturer Shameema Banoo and her team, with full coordination by Monika Gupta, Teacher DIET Kishtwar.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal graced the concluding session and felicitated all the winners. He lauded the creative thinking and scientific temper displayed by the students and emphasized the critical role of science in shaping a sustainable future.

Seven top-performing students from across secondary and senior secondary schools—including remote subdivisions like Paddar—secured first positions and were awarded trophies and certificates.

They will now represent District Kishtwar at the divisional level. Participants securing second and third positions were also felicitated.

JK BOPEE Conducts Common Entrance Test For GNM, ANM courses

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (JK-BOPEE) conducted the Common Entrance Test (CET) for GNM/ANM Courses for the academic session 2025-26 at Jammu and Srinagar Centres.

In Kashmir division, the test was conducted at Amar Singh College, KGP Gogji Bagh, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education M A Road and S P College, Srinagar. Likewise, the exam was conducted at Government SPMR Commerce College and GGM Science College in Jammu Division. A total of 2513 candidates appeared in the examination.

To ensure smooth conduct of the entrance test, complete arrangements had been established in collaboration with the respective college administrations and law enforcement agencies under the guidance of Professor Minu Mahajan, Chairperson, J&K BOPEE.

The process was conducted under the supervision of competent JK BOPEE staff members and the staff from the respective colleges.

The Chairperson along with the members, Controller of Examinations, Secretary, officials of J&K BOPEE actively monitored the Common Entrance Test at Srinagar & Jammu. They expressed gratitude to the district administration, IGP Jammu/Kashmir for deploying police personnel, members of monitoring squad, Principal, staff members of the respective Colleges for their support during conduct of this prestigious entrance test.

MLA Pahalgam Distributes Relief to Human-Wildlife Conflict Victims



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: In a compassionate gesture towards the victims of human-wildlife conflict, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Pahalgam, M Altaf Kaloo distributed ex-gratia relief cheques at Townhall Aishmuqam.

Addressing the gathering, MLA Kaloo emphasized the urgent need for a comprehensive and strategic plan to mitigate rising incidents of human-wildlife conflict in the region. "While the ex-gratia relief provides temporary support to the victims, our main focus should be on preventing such incidents from occurring in the first place," he said.

On the occasion, DFO gave a detailed presentation highlighting the department's ongoing efforts, achievements, and future strategies aimed at mini-

mizing human-wildlife conflicts and ensuring safety for both communities and wildlife.

Later, MLA also chaired the consultative meeting on the management of Overa -Aru Wildlife Sanctuary, besides, inferred that he saw first time a detailed and scientific plan for Overa-Aru WLS for 10 years from 2025- 2035, also detailed DPR for Mini Zoo Pahalgam was appreciated.

The initiative was appreciated by the victims, who expressed hope for more proactive measures and increased community engagement in wildlife management.

DFO Wildlife Protection South along with concerned Wildlife Rangers, field staff, human-wildlife victims and civil society members were present on the occasion.

DDMA Conducts Disaster Preparedness Training Programme

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: In a proactive step towards strengthening disaster preparedness and community safety, District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Shopian today conducted a training programme on Disaster preparedness and emergency response at Government Degree College (GDC) Shopian.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz was the chief guest on the occasion.

The training programme witnessed the participation of NCC/ NSS volunteers, student volunteers from GDC and school education, police and other officials, besides civil society members

Experts from SDRF, Fire &

Emergency Services, Health Services and Police conducted live demonstrations on first aid & triage, fire-fighting techniques, search and rescue operations, and handling of disaster situations like accidents and other disasters.

They highlighted the role and responsibilities of NCC/ NSS Cadets and students in supplementing the efforts during emergencies. Their timely response and coordinated efforts save precious lives and help maintain order in the aftermath of calamities, it was emphasised.

Principal, Government Degree College Shopian, Prof. Mohammad Shafiq, Chief Medical Officer and other senior officers from Police and Revenue Departments were present.

DC Jammu Visits Shelling Hit Areas In Sub Division Mendhar

Observer News Service

POONCH: Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar conducted an extensive visit to Sub Division Mendhar to take stock of the situation in areas affected by recent unprovoked cross border shelling. The visit was aimed to assess the damage and ensure timely support to the affected families.

He was accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal and other senior officers of the district administration.

During the visit, the Divisional Commissioner inspected several impacted locations and interacted with residents to personally understand their grievances and the extent of losses incurred.

He also visited the residence of the family where a woman lost her life due to the shelling.

The Divisional Commissioner expressed deep condolences to the bereaved family and assured them of full support from the administration. He conveyed heartfelt sympathies to all those who have suffered due to the cross border shelling.

The Divisional Commissioner issued directions to the district administration for a comprehensive and time bound assessment of the losses to life, property, and livestock. He emphasized the need for immediate relief and compensation measures to alleviate the suffering of the affected people.

He reiterated the administration's commitment to standing with the people in this hour of grief and urged the officials on ground to continue working with compassion and urgency to restore normalcy.

DDMA Pulwama Conducts CBP On Disaster Preparedness



Observer News Service

PULWAMA: District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Pulwama, in collaboration with the Civil Defence and SDRF component Pulwama/Awantipora, successfully conducted Capacity Building Programmes (CBP) on Disaster Preparedness and Response at Town Halls of Pulwama and Awantipora.

The programmes aimed to enhance the knowledge and preparedness of attendees in handling natural and man-

made disasters.

Comprehensive training and awareness sessions were conducted on key aspects viz. Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Mitigation, Disaster Response, First Aid, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Techniques, and the effective utilisation of available resources during emergencies.

Participants received practical and theoretical insights into life-saving techniques and efficient response strategies, equipping them to act promptly and effectively in the event of a disaster.

KASHMIR OBSERVER®

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of
Kashmir Observer LLP
Printed at: K.T Press Pvt. Ltd 120-Electronic Complex,
Industrial Estate, Rangreth-Budgam
Published from: 5-Boulevard Srinagar J&K
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
Managing Editor: Bilal Handoo
News Editor: Farzana Nisar
Online Editor: Syed Hamid
Head Layout & Design: Muntazir Yaseen,
Digital Media Head: Amir Ali Shah
Business & Sales Head: Namisha Raj
Distribution & Advertising: Firdos Ali
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No: L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
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Editorial: (0194) 2502327
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KO VIEW

Tourism Takes Hit

For over three years, tourism in Kashmir has been consistently on the rise. So much so, it became not just a symbol of the prevailing normalcy but also underpinned it. In 2024, 2.95 million tourists visited Kashmir - 43,000 of them foreigners - up from 2.71 million in 2023 and 2.67 million in 2022. This year, the government expected to beat this record but the Pahalgam attack has suddenly brought it down to a trickle.

In the Valley, hotels, houseboats, and tour operators, once fully booked for the summer season, are now scrambling to offer discounts of up to 70% after mass cancellations from anxious tourists. This sudden collapse in tourism, a sector that had flourished in recent years, thanks to a lull in violence, threatens to hit the livelihood of a large number of people deeply dependent on visitors drawn to Kashmir's snow-capped peaks, pristine lakes, and lush Mughal gardens. This even as the booking sites show deep price cuts, but the tourism stakeholders have little hope.

Most of the bookings for the immediate future have been cancelled, and it is going to hurt. The four-day war during which India inflicted punishment on Pakistan for the killings of tourists at Pahalgam has put the clock back. And it would take time before the situation turns around. On a positive note, while the arrivals from the northern states have by and large come to a halt, those from the southern states have continued to trickle in, brushing aside the fresh security concerns. The government has welcomed this trend, offering all help to the visitors and tourism stakeholders. Former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti appreciated the courage of some of these visitors during her visit to Pahalgam in the aftermath of the carnage, assuring them of the region's "resilience and hospitality."

But this, of course, isn't enough. The tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir's GDP and employs two million people. The sector has the potential to shore up the Valley's beleaguered economy. But the sharp drop in tourist numbers is certain to drive up unemployment figures. Already, taxi drivers are speaking of the abrupt collapse in business. The Valley cannot afford another season lost to fear. It's time to restore confidence, protect livelihoods, and let Kashmir welcome the world again.

The Festival That Heals Water

Each year, the people of Panzath in South Kashmir wade into their sacred spring. Not just to fish, but to restore their ecosystem, remember their ancestors and pass on centuries-old wisdom.

Dr. Masoon A. Beig

The sun was already hot by the time the villagers began to gather. It was a Sunday morning in mid-May, and the spring water shimmered under the sky in Panzath, a quiet village tucked into the hills of South Kashmir. But the heat didn't matter. People were here for something that goes far beyond tradition.

Every year, around this time, Panzath comes alive with a rare blend of celebration, community labour and spiritual reflection. It's called the Panzath Fish-cum-Dredging Festival, and for the locals, it's much more than a day of fishing. It's about caring for the earth and for each other.

They begin at the Panzathnag spring, a freshwater source that has fed the region for centuries. Men, teenagers, even small children, roll up their sleeves and step into the cold water. There are no machines. No loudspeakers. No formal uniforms or rules. Just hands, nets, and baskets.

The fishing is only half the job. With each movement, participants also clear silt, weeds and trash from the water. The effort helps keep the spring flowing smoothly and keeps the aquatic ecosystem alive.

Plastic waste and dead leaves are scooped out, while small fish dart between ankles. There's a rhythm to the activity: a music made of splashes, laughter and the rustle of moving hands.

The spring doesn't just serve Panzath. It nourishes surrounding villages too, making this festival a kind of communal insurance policy, renewed every year, powered not by money but by will.

Long before "sustainability" became a buzzword, Panzath was doing it the old-fashioned way: through collective action.

The story echoes a famous Kashmiri tale from the 9th century, when King Awantivarman's engineer, Suya, cleaned the silted Jhelum River by throwing coins into it. The people rushed in after the coins, and ended up clearing the riverbed.

That story is still told today by environmentalists and historians. And now, in a modern-day mirror of it, villagers in Panzath volunteer not for gold, but for something far more lasting—clean water and shared heritage.

For years, the festival remained a silent affair, known only within the region. But then came smartphones, and with them, the world.

A few clips posted on social media showed villagers dancing in the stream, scooping fish from the current, smiling under the sun. The videos caught on. Soon, journalists, tourists, and curious onlookers started arriving.

The real turning point came when India's



“That story is still told today by environmentalists and historians. And now, in a modern-day mirror of it, villagers in Panzath volunteer not for gold, but for something far more lasting—clean water and shared heritage.

Prime Minister mentioned the festival during his national radio program, Mann Ki Baat. He praised the people of Panzath for their environmental consciousness. For a village of just a few hundred homes, it was a surreal moment of recognition.

But what makes the day stand apart isn't just what happens in the water.

As dusk begins to settle, the festival moves from the stream to the graveyard. Locals walk in small groups, carrying fresh flowers and cups of water. They visit the graves of their loved ones, sprinkling water over the earth and offering Fateha, a prayer for the dead.

The ritual is called Roohan Poush, and it gives the day a spiritual depth. After the physical cleansing of the spring, there is a quiet cleansing of the soul.

From the outside, it looks almost like a village fair. Children laugh as they try to catch fish with their hands. Grandfathers tell stories from their youth. Songs fill the air, and dances break out right in the middle of the stream.

But beneath the joy is a deep sense of duty. Older generations teach younger ones not just how to fish, but why they fish, why the water must be clean, why the spring must stay alive, why it all matters.

There are no government schemes funding the event. No NGO banners or corporate sponsors. It's driven entirely by the people. That's what makes it powerful.

In a time when environmental news often brings despair—melting glaciers, choking rivers, vanishing forests—Panzath offers a rare kind of hope. It reminds us that not all solutions come from big conferences or billion-dollar budgets.

Sometimes, they come from a village that sings to its water.

Dr. Masoon A. Beig teaches geography at Altaf Memorial Government Degree College in Kelam Kulgam, Jammu & Kashmir. He specializes in environmental geography.

From Pherans To Pop Culture
Caught between tradition and trend, young Kashmiris are losing more than just a language

Malik Daniyal

It was during a wedding in Srinagar few winters back that I first noticed it, not the lavish trami or the crackling kangri, but the absence of something quieter, more invisible.

The children running around the hall weren't speaking Kashmiri. Their voices, sharp with excitement, carried the rhythm of Urdu and English instead. Even the elders, while serving the Rogan Josh with the care of centuries-old ritual, often replied to their grandchildren in halting urdu, as if trying to meet them halfway across a cultural gap that had quietly widened.

This scene is neither unique nor unexpected. It is the sound of a world in transition, a world where globalization in all its promises and pressures is quietly reshaping the identity of Kashmir.

And while change is inevitable, what we must ask is this: what are we losing in the process, and is it too late to hold on to what defines us?

In Kashmir, language is more than a tool of communication, it is a bearer of memory, metaphor, and belonging. To speak in Kashmiri is to carry generations on the tongue. Yet among younger generations the use of Kashmiri is declining rapidly, not because they cannot, but because they have been led to believe that Kashmiri is outdated and primitive.

English is the language of aspiration, Urdu the language of accessibility. Kashmiri is often the language of grandparents, nostalgia, or embarrassment. The irony is painful — those closest to the language sometimes pass on attitudes that discourage its use.

This misconception, sadly, is perpetuated by modern-day parents themselves. Many parents consciously or unconsciously discourage speaking Kashmiri at home. They associate the language with backwardness and fear it will hold their children back. In doing so, they pass on a subtle but damaging message: to be modern is to reject your roots.

I remember speaking to a mother

who said, "I want my son to speak English and Urdu well. Kashmiri? It's just a language for old people, for rural folk."

Her words echoed a widespread illusion created by a westernized narrative that equates progress with the abandonment of local languages and cultures.

But this illusion is dangerous. It severs the deep connection to identity that Kashmiri language holds. Without that connection, children grow up feeling disconnected not only from their language but from their history and themselves.

This is a common refrain. Parents' fears, shaped by social pressures, lead to a negative attitude toward their own mother tongue. This internalized skepticism, born of survival instinct, accelerates the erosion of language and with it, the erosion of identity.

Many young students, like a 17-year-old I recently spoke to, express discomfort in speaking Kashmiri despite understanding it well. Their school curriculum is entirely in English, their favorite shows are on Netflix, and most of their conversations happen online where Kashmiri simply has no script, literally or socially. Their homes, where they should feel safe to speak their language, often reinforce the message that Kashmiri is a barrier rather than a bridge.

This cultural loss is not just about words slipping away; it is about a collective forgetting. When we lose Kashmiri, we lose the metaphors for snow, silence, sorrow, and joy

that only this language carries.

We lose the way our ancestors understood the land, the seasons, the sacred rituals that knit our communities together. The history embedded in our tongue is not recorded in books but lives in the sounds and expressions handed down from one generation to the next.

It would be easy and lazy to romanticize the past and vilify the present. Cultures evolve; they are not museums but living organisms. Yet there is a difference between evolution and erosion.

It is painful to watch traditions evolve into mere shadows of themselves. The Wazwan still feeds many at weddings, but the ritual warmth of sharing food with family and friends is replaced by buffet lines and selfies.

The pheran, once a symbol of identity and survival against the harsh winters, is now sometimes worn only for fashion or festival spectacle. Traditional Kashmiri music struggles to find its place in a world overwhelmed by Bollywood beats and Western pop. The very soul of Kashmir risks being reduced to nostalgia rather than a living culture.

This loss is not only external but internal. I have met young Kashmiris who admire global fashion, trends, and languages, which is natural in today's interconnected world. But many confess to feeling caught in between — too modern for their elders, too rooted for global cities. Their accents and expressions are often "corrected" at home, even

by parents, who think shedding Kashmiri will make their children more "updated" or successful.

This internalized negativity toward the mother tongue is one of the most tragic forces eroding Kashmiri identity.

This cultural limbo is real. The pressure to conform to global norms often causes young people to downplay their roots. The pheran becomes too ethnic, the accent too rural, the songs too slow. But there is another side to the story too.

Kashmiri artists, influencers, and writers are increasingly using global platforms to reclaim and represent their identity. When done intentionally, globalization can become a tool for cultural revival rather than cultural erasure.

And yet, the story is not completely bleak. There are quiet resistances happening — local artisans reviving traditional crafts, papier-mâché, and walnut wood carving blending tradition with modern design. Even digital creators are experimenting with bilingual content making room for humour, poetry, and identity in equal measure.

These efforts might seem small but they are the seeds of something larger. These efforts show that identity can survive, but only if nurtured with intention. What, then, can be done?

What is needed is not nostalgia but strategy. First, we must recognize that preserving Kashmiri identity means preserving its language as a living, everyday

presence. This requires a shift in mindset among parents and communities.

Kashmiri should not be seen as a burden but a precious gift to pass on. Schools must integrate Kashmiri language and literature as essential, not elective, subjects. Only then will children grow proud and fluent, instead of hesitant and ashamed.

Second, embracing modern platforms to promote Kashmiri culture is vital. From social media influencers to musicians blending folk and contemporary sounds, Kashmiri identity must have a vibrant voice on global stages.

Finally, community spaces where Kashmiri is spoken, stories are shared, and traditions lived are essential. These could be libraries, cafes, or informal gatherings that encourage cultural exchange. Policy support from government and civil society must prioritize cultural preservation alongside economic development.

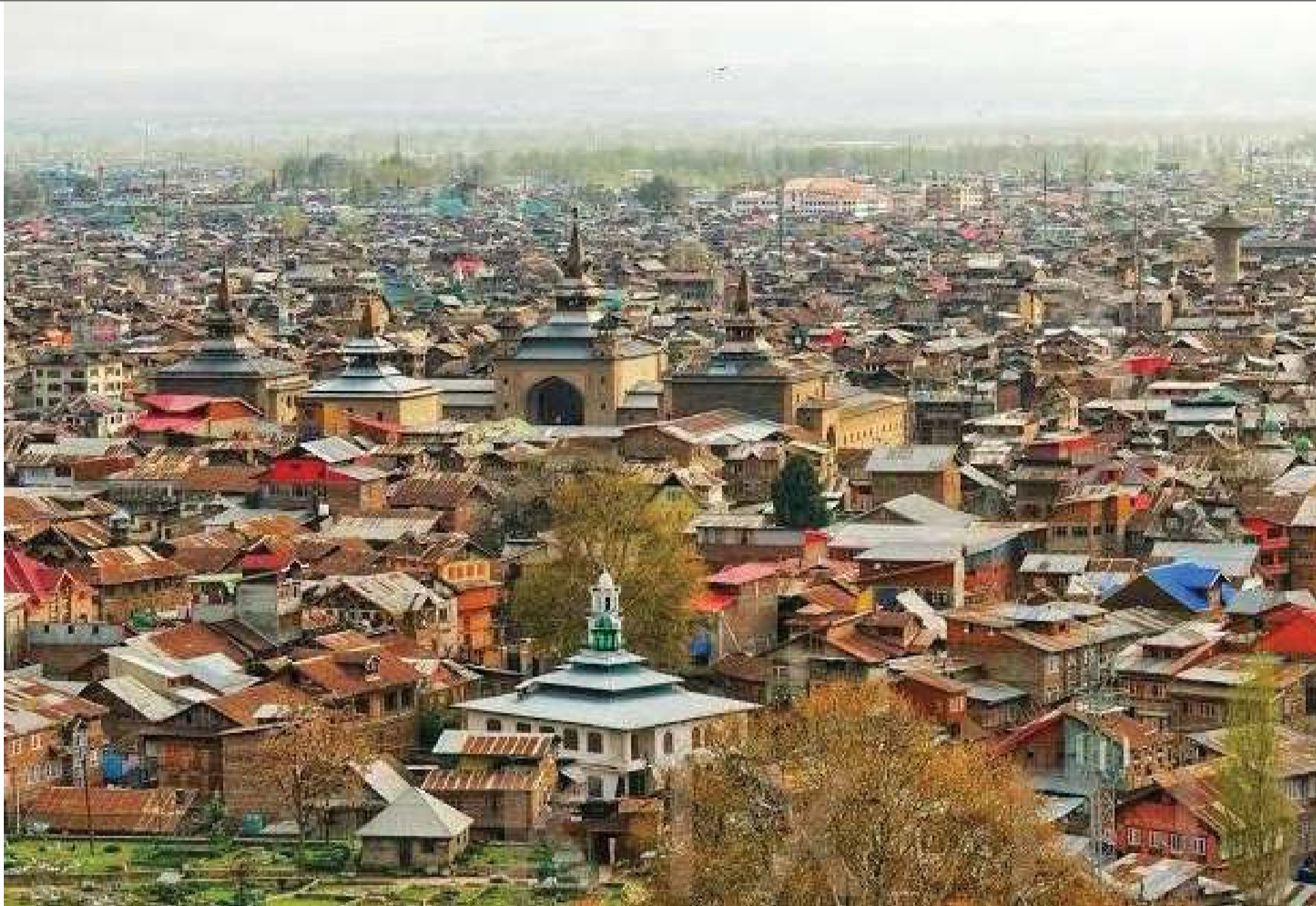
But above all we need to talk to grandparents, to neighbors, to ourselves. Culture survives not just in institutions but in conversations, songs sung at dusk, recipes passed down, and stories retold.

Without these conscious efforts, what future awaits Kashmiri identity? What becomes of a people when their language is forgotten, especially by none other than their own actions? Can we afford to lose the stories, the songs, and the soul that make Kashmir more than just a place on the map?

Kashmir is not just a place on the map, it is a scent, a palette of snow and saffron. To lose that under the weight of trends or algorithms would be to become strangers in our own land.

The erosion of language is not just the loss of words but the loss of ourselves. The question remains: will we remember who we are before it's too late?

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A Timeless City on the Brink of Change

Amid shrinking mud homes and rising concrete, the heart of Srinagar beats with stories of trade, faith, and silent transformations. A walk through the Old City reveals what modernity gives, and what it takes away.

Faizaan Bashir

In the narrow alleys of Downtown Srinagar, the past doesn't just linger, it lives.

Houses lean into each other as if in conversation. The Jhelum River curls nearby, steady and silent, flowing past ancient shrines, vegetable patches, copper shops and carpet looms.

Here, every stone seems to carry a memory, and every shop tells a story.

The Old City, known locally as Shehr-i-Khaas, is the most densely populated pocket of Srinagar. Just five kilometers from Lal Chowk, the city's bustling heart, it stretches across neighborhoods with names as old as the city itself: Zaina Kadal, Khanyar, Rajouri Kadal, Jamalatta, Nowhatta, Gojwara, and more.

Much of the area is built on the banks of the Jhelum, where land has long served two purposes: growing food and growing trade.

A City That Trades and Tills

Walk through Jamia Market in Nowhatta on any regular day and you'll be met with a chaos that feels oddly organized.

Shops selling burqas, spices, steelware, shoes, and saris compete for space and attention. On Fridays and festivals, the lanes are packed wall-to-wall. The market doesn't pause, it pulses.

A short walk from here takes you to Zaina Kadal, home to a mundi famous for dry fruits, copper utensils, and wholesale goods. For generations, villagers from across Kashmir have come here with lists and sacks, returning home with spice-laden satchels and pots that shine like mirrors.

Yet, a silent economy thrives too. In parts of Khanyar, Kawdara, and Dumbpora, families still till small plots of land. They grow haakh, radish, peppers, and turnips.

The soil here has memory. It remembers the hands that worked it for decades. Most of these cultivators belong to the Sufi caste, and while their vegetables are welcomed at the market, old social codes still draw invisible lines.

Matches between merchant Bhats and Sufi growers are rare. No one says it aloud, but it's known.

Where Mud Walls Speak

The homes in Downtown are not just buildings. They are stories made of mud bricks and carved wood. Many are two or three stories tall, their walls thick with

earth and time. Niches flank wooden windows, a nod to Indo-Persian design. Some homes sprawl with five or six rooms, others hold just two.

And yet, they shelter entire families—often three generations under one roof.

In Gojwara, not far from Islamia College, one such house stands tall like a weathered castle, refusing to crumble. But many others haven't been so lucky.

Over the last two decades, concrete has begun to replace mud. With it goes the artistry—the fine Burzil Lakir wood beams, the graceful arches, the quiet dignity of a home that breathes with the seasons.

Shops now line what used to be drawing rooms, and whole facades have been restructured to face the road and trade.

The shift isn't just architectural. It's personal. "We wanted a stronger house, less maintenance," says Basharat, a 38-year-old shopkeeper in Rajouri Kadal. "But sometimes I miss the silence of the old walls."

Different Tongues, Different Ties

Downtown and Uptown Srinagar are just a few kilometers apart. But to locals, they might as well be different worlds.

In the civil lines of Srinagar—areas like Rajbagh or Bemina—families tend to live in nuclear units. Government jobs are common, and houses sit further apart.

In Downtown, joint families still thrive, though many young couples now dream of their own flats.

The way people speak also shifts as you move through the city. "We speak pure Kashmiri here," says Ali Mohammad Lone from Gojwara. "Uptown, it's mixed with Urdu."

Even clothes differ. While Downtown men still wear pherans in winter and khandrass in summer, Uptown folks lean toward formal shirts and jeans. The difference isn't rigid, but it's felt.

Of Shrines and Saints

You can't walk ten minutes in the Old City without passing a shrine.

From the elegant spires of Dastgeer Sahib in Khanyar to the hilltop calm of Makhdoom Sahib in Nowhatta, these structures shape both the skyline and the spirit of the place.

Near Fateh Kadal, the Khanqah-e-Moula glows with woodwork and history. And then there's Jamia Masjid, the architectural crown of Nowhatta, where pigeons fly in slow arcs and prayers rise like mist.

This is a city of saints. Moulvi Abbas Ansari, a respected Shia cleric, hailed from Nawakadal. Dr. Ali Jan, the legendary physician whose diagnostics were said to be near mystical, was from Gojwara. His name now graces a road that leads to SKIMS hospital.

The homes of potters, woodcarvers, shawl weavers, and papier-mâché artists still survive, though many are slowly fading into silence.

Hawal was once famous for shawl-making; Zadibal for its painted papier-mâché.

Today, young men with smartphones are more likely to be found scrolling job sites than dipping brushes in dye.

Women at the Margin

Life for women in the Old City is changing, but slowly. Most are still homemakers, preparing meals, managing children, and rarely stepping beyond the neighborhood alone.

"There's a kind of boundary," says Nasreen, 28, from Bohri Kadal. "Not spoken, but always there."

Headscarves are the norm, and while younger women study and dream, traditional roles remain deeply rooted.

Working outside is not taboo, but it often comes with whispered questions. "We are proud of our girls," says one elder. "But we want them safe."

A Bowl of Haakh-Batti

Economically, the Old City survives on what it grows, sells, or weaves. But wealth here is modest.

Locals sometimes refer to their meals as Haakh-Batti—collard greens and rice—not with shame, but with gratitude. It's a phrase that speaks of sustenance, not luxury.

Some families have relatives, children working abroad. Others run shops passed down from grandparents. A few are professors or clerks. But mostly, this is a place where people live on trade, craft, and a little faith.

As Srinagar changes—its roads widened, its homes rebuilt, its youth pulled by bigger dreams—the Old City stands at a crossroads. It is learning to stretch without snapping, to adapt without forgetting.

And if you listen closely, above the buzz of scooters and the clang of copper, you can still hear the soft murmur of the past: steady, stubborn, and alive.

The writer is PG History and an independent researcher.

'OBESITY SILENT TSUNAMI OF INDIA'S DISEASE BURDEN'

The rising tide of obesity is closely linked to a surge in chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular ailments, fatty liver, hormonal disorders, infertility, and even certain cancers



Press Trust Of India

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The obesity epidemic is quietly reshaping India's disease profile and, unless confronted with urgency, will place an unmanageable burden on the country's healthcare infrastructure and economic productivity

Obesity has emerged as one of the most urgent and under-recognised health crises in India, with experts warning that it now functions as a silent tsunami sweeping through the population.

A study published in The Lancet projects that nearly one-third of Indians or approximately 449 million people could be obese by 2050.

This includes an estimated 218 million men and 231 million women.

The rising tide of obesity is closely linked to a surge in chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular ailments, fatty liver, hormonal disorders, infertility, and even certain cancers, experts said.

India already holds the global record for the highest number of people living with diabetes, estimated at over 101 million. Increasingly, these conditions are being diagnosed at younger ages, they said.

An alarming rise in non-communicable diseases among individuals in their 20s and 30s, the most productive age group, a trend that is largely being driven by excess body weight, said Dr Neeraj Nischal, additional professor in the Department of Medicine at AIIMS.

"The obesity epidemic is quietly reshaping India's disease profile and, unless confronted with urgency, will place an unmanageable burden on the country's healthcare infrastructure and economic productivity," he said.

Dr Rajesh Upadhyay, director and head of the Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Delhi, and past president and dean of Association



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Obesity is not a cosmetic issue. It is a clinical, systemic concern that is driving a surge in diseases like fatty liver, diabetes, gastrointestinal complications, and heart disease. In my practice, I see its consequences every day

tion of Physicians of India, said that obesity is no longer a matter of personal choice or appearance.

It has become one of the most influential medical risk factors in the country today, he said.

"Obesity is not a cosmetic issue. It is a clinical, systemic concern that is driving a surge in diseases like fatty liver, diabetes, gastrointestinal complications, and heart disease. In my practice, I see its consequences every day. To address this, we must move beyond awareness campaigns and commit to deep-rooted preventive reforms across schools, offices, hospitals, and even the medical curriculum," he said.

Echoing this concern, Dr Mohsin Wali, senior consultant of Internal Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, noted that the crisis is growing quietly but with devastating consequences.

"This is India's silent tsunami. The burden of obesity is not always visible on the surface, but its impact is evident in hospital admissions, in the rise of chronic illnesses, and in the younger age of onset for lifestyle diseases. We must treat this as a National emergency. Prevention must begin at the institutional level -" what we serve in school and hospital canteens, what we teach young doctors, and how we screen for risk -" all must change," he said.

Health experts are urging immediate and coordinated action to treat obesity as a systemic public health challenge.

They called for greater accountability in public institutions, widespread access to preventive screenings, nutritional reform in institutional food environments, and a fundamental shift in how India approaches medical education and policy.

The rising prevalence of obesity is not confined to urban populations or high-income groups. It is increasingly visible in rural areas, among adolescents, and across various regions of the country. If no action is taken, experts cautioned that India could soon become the epicentre of a global obesity and non-communicable disease crisis.

The long-term consequences could include a shorter lifespan for future generations, significant loss of workforce productivity, and unsustainable pressure on the nation's health system.



India Largest Market For Electric Three-Wheelers: IEA



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India continues to be the world's largest market for electric three-wheelers for a second year in a row as sales rose nearly 20 per cent to reach about 7 lakh vehicles in 2024, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a report.

In its Global EV Outlook 2025, the Paris-based energy watchdog said India continues to drive most growth in the global electric three-wheeler market.

Despite the global three-wheeler (3W) market shrinking 5 per cent from the previous year, electric 3W sales grew more than 10 per cent to surpass 1 million vehicles in 2024. Electric 3W sales represented almost one-quarter of all 3W sales, up from one-fifth in 2023, it said.

The market is highly concentrated, with China and India together accounting for more than 90 per cent of electric and conventional 3W sales.

"Electrification of 3Ws in China has stagnated at less than

15 per cent over the past three years. In 2023, India overtook China to become the world's largest market for electric 3Ws, and it maintained this position in 2024, with sales growing close to 20 per cent year-on-year to reach nearly 7,00,000 vehicles," it said.

This translated into a record 57 per cent electric sales share in 2024, 3 per cent up on the previous year.

This growing trend, it said, looks set to continue thanks to policy support under the new PM E-DRIVE scheme, which allocated budget in 2024 to support the roll-out of more than 3,00,000 electric 3Ws for commercial use - for which the total fleet (electric and ICE) was estimated at more than 10 million vehicles in 2023.

IEA said China, India and Southeast Asia remain the world's largest 2/3W markets, accounting for around 80 per cent of 2024 global sales, with 2/3Ws serving as the primary mode of private passenger transport in these regions.

India's Port Restrictions On B'desh Imports To Help MSMEs: Experts

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Restrictions imposed by India on certain Bangladeshi goods will help the domestic ready-made garment industry, particularly MSMEs, to enhance their competitiveness, according to experts.

On May 17, India restricted imports worth \$770 million from Bangladesh, covering nearly 42% of bilateral imports. Key goods like garments, processed foods, and plastic items are now limited to select sea ports or barred from land routes entirely.

Ready-made garments, valued at \$618 million, now face strict routing through only two Indian seaports. This severely limits Bangladesh's most valuable export channel to India.

"Indian textile firms have long protested the competitive edge enjoyed by Bangladeshi exporters, who benefit from duty-free Chinese fabric imports and export subsidies, giving them a 10-15% price advantage in the Indian market," think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

The port restrictions will help Indian MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises) from the textiles sector, GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said. Sharing similar views, Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) Vice Chairman A Sakthivel said it was a demand of domestic exporters to impose these restrictions.

"It is a good decision now taken by the Indian government. The domestic industry will benefit from this," Sakthivel said.



efit from this," Sakthivel said.

The move comes in response to Bangladesh's recent restrictions on Indian yarn, rice, and other goods, as well as the imposition of a transit fee on Indian cargo's departure from past cooperation. Even as Dhaka moves closer to Beijing, India should not shut the door to dialogue, Srivastava said.

"As the bigger neighbour and regional power, India has a greater responsibility to lead with patience, keep communication open, and avoid using trade as a weapon. Rebuilding trust through diplomacy and economic cooperation is still possible," he said.

The import of apparels from Bangladesh is primarily in select categories such as cotton trousers of men and jackets, blazers of synthetic fibres for local consumption by many retailers chains.

The total apparel imports from Bangladesh in 2024-25 was 677.5 million, up 13.8% from its 2023-24 level of \$595.5 million.

Apparel import from Bangladesh through Petrapole land port alone was \$515.3 million in 2024-25, accounting for around 76% of apparel import into India from Bangladesh.

US Remittance Tax Plan May Hit Indian Households Rupee: GTRI

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- A proposed 5 per cent US tax on remittances sent abroad by non-citizens is raising alarm in India as it may hit Indian households and the rupee, economic think tank GTRI said on Sunday.

The provision is part of a broader legislative package titled 'The One Big Beautiful Bill' introduced in the US House of Representatives on May 12.

It targets international money transfers made by non-US citizens, including green card holders and temporary visa workers like those on H-1B or H-2A visas. The proposed levy will not be applicable to US citizens.

"The proposed US tax on remittances sent abroad by non-citizens is raising alarm in India, which stands to lose billions in annual foreign currency inflows if the plan becomes law," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

For India, the stakes are high as the country received USD 120 billion in remittances in 2023-24, with nearly 28 per cent originating from the US, it added.

"A 5 per cent tax could significantly raise the cost



of sending money home. A 10-15 per cent drop in remittance flows could result in a USD 12-18 billion shortfall for India annually," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He said that the loss would tighten the supply of US dollars in India's foreign exchange market, putting modest depreciation pressure on the rupee.

"The Reserve Bank of India may be forced to intervene more frequently to stabilise the currency. The rupee could weaken by Rs 1-1.5 per US dollar if the remittance shock plays out fully," he added.

In states like Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, millions of families rely on remittances to cover essential expenses

like education, healthcare, and housing.

Srivastava said that a sudden decline in these flows could hit household consumption hard, at a time when the Indian economy is already navigating global uncertainty and inflation pressures.

By taxing the global capital flow, he said, the US could disrupt a key channel of global development financing, reduce household income in poorer nations, and weaken demand in economies already grappling with inequality and instability.

The development assumes significance, as India has proposed at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to lower the cost of cross-border flow of capital or remittances.

A 5 PER CENT TAX COULD SIGNIFICANTLY RAISE THE COST OF SENDING MONEY HOME. A 10-15 per cent drop in remittance flows could result in a USD 12-18 billion shortfall for India annually," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

India's Smartphone Exports Soar, Surpassing Petroleum, Diamonds In FY25

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- New Delhi- India's smartphone exports surged nearly fivefold to the US and about fourfold to Japan in the past three years, propelling the segment to surpass petroleum products and diamonds as the country's top exported goods, according to government data.

The smartphone exports rose by 55 per cent to USD 24.14 billion in 2024-25 from USD 15.57 billion in 2023-24 and USD 10.96 billion in 2022-23.

In the last fiscal, the top five nations where India registered the highest growth in smartphone exports were the US, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, and Czech Republic.

Exports to the US alone rose from USD 2.16 billion in 2022-23 to USD 5.57 billion in 2023-24 and USD 10.6 billion in 2024-25.

A significant export growth has also been registered with Japan where shipments surged from USD 120 million in 2022-23 to USD 520 million in FY25.

This rapid ascent has propelled smartphones to become one of India's top exported goods, overtaking traditional leaders like petroleum products and diamonds for the first



Exports to the US alone rose from USD 2.16 billion in 2022-23 to USD 5.57 billion in 2023-24 and USD 10.6 billion in 2024-25.

time," a commerce ministry official said.

Over the past three years, exports from the sector has experienced a healthy surge,

transforming the country into a major global manufacturing and export hub, the official said.

This growth is underpinned by government initiatives such as the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which has spurred investments, scaled up local production, and integrated India more deeply into global value chains.

Exports to the Netherlands increased to USD 2.2 billion in the last fiscal from USD 1.07 billion in 2022-23. Similarly, shipments to Italy rose to USD 1.26 billion from USD 720 million. To the Czech Republic, shipments rose to USD 1.17 billion from USD 650 million, the data showed.

Centre Has Taken Measures To Ensure PACS Do Not Become Financially Sick: Amit Shah

Press Trust Of India

AHMEDABAD- Union Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the Centre has taken measures to prevent registered PACS from becoming financially sick and will soon bring a policy for their quick settlement in case they have gone into liquidation and for registration of new PACS in their place.

The Union Minister of Cooperation said the Narendra Modi government aims to set up two lakh new Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) by 2029, and they are being connected to 22 different types of businesses, with arrangements being made to ensure registered PACS do not become financially sick.

"The work of connecting 22 different types of businesses with PACS has been done by the Union government, and I am sure arrangements have been made to ensure not a single registered PACS becomes financially sick in coming times," Shah said at 'Sahkari Mahasammelan' organised here to mark the International Year of Cooperatives.

In a short time, the Centre is going to bring a new policy for quick settlement of PACS that have gone into liquidation and for registration of new PACS in their place, he added.

The Union Minister said initiative is also being taken to involve "a cooperative-owned company" for manufacturing equipment such as those for making ice cream, cheese,



paneer, keeping milk chilled as well as measuring fat etc as part of promoting a circular economy in the dairy sector.

In a short time, the government also plans experimentation with a circular economy in the dairy sector by forming a cooperative society for the use of skin, bones, and horns of animals when they die, he said.

"If the cooperative sector has to move forward, then we will have to make efforts to bring awareness, training and transparency in every group. The Cooperative Department of the Union government has set this as the goal of the Cooperative Year. Therefore, the Centre has given importance to both Science of Cooperation and Science in Cooperation - reviving and modernising the science of cooperation and the use of technology in cooperatives," he added.

He said the cooperative movement, which started during the Independence movement, had ended in many parts of the country, except for Gujarat.

But it is the responsibility of the cooperative leaders of Gujarat to make the movement symmetric, Shah added.



Adani Partners With Sparton To Develop Anti-Submarine Warfare Solutions

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has signed a deal with a US undersea warfare company Sparton to develop electronic sensors and navigation systems that could be used for anti-submarine warfare, the conglomerate said on Sunday.

Adani Defence & Aerospace has signed a binding collaboration agreement with Sparton (DeLeon Springs LLC) to assemble anti-submarine warfare (ASW) solutions for the Indian Navy, it said in a statement.

The partnership aims to localise the assemblage of sonobuoys and other ASW systems in India under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

It will be the first private company in India to offer indigenous Sonobuoys solutions to the Indian Navy.

Headquartered in De Leon Springs, Florida, Sparton develops, produces and supplies electronic systems to support undersea warfare for the US Navy and allied military forces.

The firm was, in December 2020, acquired by Israeli defence electronics company Elbit Systems Ltd.

Prior to the current deal, the Adani Group had in 2018 set up a joint venture partnership with Israeli weapons giant Elbit Systems to manufacture lethal Hermes 900 drones. In 2020, Adani-Elbit announced 'mini' drone missile weapons production.

Adani Group has also partnered with Israel Weapon Industries to manufacture assault weapons, sniper rifles and machine guns.

In a statement on Sunday, Adani Defence & Aerospace said it "has signed a binding collaboration agreement with Sparton (DeLeon Springs LLC), a group company of Elbit Systems and a leading provider of advanced anti-submarine warfare systems. This partnership marks a significant step toward localising the assembly of complex electronic systems and advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) solutions for the Indian and global markets".

Market Valuation Of 9 Of Top 10 Firms Jumps ₹3.35 Lakh Crore

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Nine of the top 10 valued firms added Rs 3.35 lakh crore in their market valuation last week in tandem with a positive trend in equities, led by Reliance Industries.

HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and ITC were the gainers among the top 10 companies. Bharti Airtel was the only laggard.

Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge jumped 2,876.12 points or 3.61 per cent.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 1,06,703.54 crore to Rs 19,71,139.96 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation surged Rs 46,306.99 crore to Rs 10,36,322.32 crore.

TCS added Rs 43,688.4 crore to take its valuation to Rs 12,89,106.49

crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys zoomed Rs 34,281.79 crore to Rs 6,60,365.49 crore and that of HDFC Bank rallied Rs 34,029.11 crore to Rs 14,80,323.54 crore.

Bajaj Finance's market valuation edged up by Rs 32,730.72 crore to Rs 5,69,658.67 crore.

The mcap of ITC climbed Rs 15,142.09 crore to Rs 5,45,115.06 crore and that of State Bank of India went up by Rs 11,111.15 crore to Rs 7,06,696.04 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 11,054.83 crore to Rs 5,59,437.68 crore.

However, the mcap of Bharti Airtel declined by Rs 19,330.14 crore to Rs 10,34,561.48 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Sebi Simplifies Operational Process Of Cash Flow Disclosure In Corp Bond Database

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Markets regulator Sebi has simplified the operational process and provided clarity on cash flow disclosure in the corporate bond database after a review of the Request for Quote (RFQ) Platform framework.

In its latest circular, the regulator has made yield-to-price calculation on the RFQ platform easier. Now, only the due dates -- and not the actual payment dates -- mentioned in the cash flow schedule will be used for these calculations.

This move is aimed at streamlining and simplifying the process of trade execution on the RFQ platform.

As part of this simplification, yield-to-price will now be based on scheduled due dates, without applying any adjustments based on day count conventions. At present, yields on debt securities are calculated using more complex methods that

consider actual payment dates and required day count adjustments.

In addition to simplifying yield calculations, Sebi has introduced a requirement for mandatory cash flow disclosures in the centralised corporate bond database. Under this, issuers will need to provide a detailed cash flow schedule -- covering interest, dividend, or redemption payments -- at the time of ISIN activation and after the securities are listed.

To maintain transparency and accuracy, this information is to be regularly updated in the database. Sebi has also mandated that any changes to the cash flow schedule must be updated within one working day.

These new regulations will be applicable to all new debt security issues starting August 18, 2025, and also to existing ISINs for their remaining maturity, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its circular on Friday.

'Port Curbs On Imports From B'desh To Have Impact In Bengal'

Press Trust Of India

KOLKATA- Though the Centre's move to restrict imports of certain goods from Bangladesh via land ports will have an impact on employment and transport revenue in West Bengal, the national interest is more important than the potential economic fallout, officials said on Sunday.

The central government on Saturday imposed port restrictions on the import of a few Bangladeshi goods, such as readymade garments and processed food items, in response to similar curbs placed by Dhaka on certain Indian products last month.

"Around 20-30 trucks, carrying finished premium garments, used to come daily even after India banned third-country transhipment. The latest order will completely stop such movement via land ports. When transhipment was allowed, 60-80 truckloads of garments were entering India," Petrapole Clearing Agents Staff Welfare Association (PCAS-WA) member Kartik Chakraborty said.

Truckers and workers at border logistics hubs will be affected by the port restriction order, he said.

A trade expert, declining to be named, said the finished garments from Bangladesh often make their way into modern Indian retail chains at low prices, and these products are effectively being "dumped into the market by Bangladeshi exporters".

"The move by the Centre may be strategic, possibly linked to national interest and recent geopolitical developments, including Dhaka's ties with Islamabad. The national interest is more important than the potential economic fallout," the expert said.

The notification imposes "port restrictions on the import of certain goods such as readymade garments, processed food items etc., from Bangladesh to India," the Centre said.

The order said that readymade garments imports from Bangladesh will not be allowed from any land port. However, it is allowed only through the Nhava Sheva and Kolkata seaports.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 1

No Certificate, No Closure:

tragedy was still work in progress. The boat was ferrying eighteen people: schoolchildren, their mothers, and a few labourers. Jhelum was looking swollen and scary due to relentless rainfall. The wooden vessel couldn't brave the strong water current and overturned. Nine survived, six were declared dead the same day, and three went missing. Two other dead bodies were retrieved in the second week. The only one still unaccounted for is Showkat. "Two dead bodies were recovered today from the river," Showkat's mother narrates, "One is from Shopian, another from Kupwara." The one from Kupwara was identified by the ID card he had on him. His face had decomposed, Sakeena adds. "My husband also carries all the cards with himself – the ATM card, the Aadhaar card, his licence, his phone." She shows me a picture of Showkat, treasuring it as a souvenir: "This is the jacket he wore that morning." His mother looks at the picture with a longing in her eyes, "He used to carry himself so well." Following the boat tragedy, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited the area. When asked what he would do for the locals, his answer was, "I'll show it by doing the job." The bridge was ultimately built after 7 years. The locals heaved a sigh of relief. But the human development cost still hangs heavy over Gandalb. Showkat was the only son born after his five sisters. His mother still sits by the bank and waits for him, "I just want to bury him!" There is no bitterness in her tone or tearful eyes, only pain. Sakeena tries to compose her, "Mummy, we've two blessed daughters. We're a proper family with a house that still hustles with life." It's a small house that Showkat built with his sweat and savings after they lost their ancestral abode to the flood. Showkat worked as a mason. His father died when he was in grade 9. Since then, he had carried his family. "He used to work late into the night," his mother tells me. "You would see the injuries on his knuckles. Back then, I used to receive only a couple of thousand rupees as pension but we managed to make it [home] out of that poverty." Inside Showkat's sorrow-filled shelter was a man figure, listening to the two traumatized talking heads. He finally joined the conversation. "My son-in-law never once asked for help," says Sakeena's father. "He did not let my daughter sell her gold when she had offered to..." "Neither Showkat Sa'ab, nor Mummy," Sakeena completes her father's comment. "She [Mummy] said you have kids and you will need it." But when Faziq wouldn't stop asking for a car, Sakeena sold her gold so that Showkat could buy a small car for the family. The car was never bought and the money was perhaps used to pay off the bank loan that Showkat had taken, pledging the house as collateral. Two weeks back, when Sakeena came to know that the interest had risen to Rs 52,000, she was devastated. "We were promised a lot of things at the time of this accident but none of them were true," said the woman who can't even call herself a widow. "The insurance company seeks evidence of Showkat's death." Under Indian law, a missing person cannot be declared dead until seven years. And this is adding insult to the injury. Official hands are tied to help Sakeena on a professional level. She had approached the higher authorities but to no avail. She did not receive relief for her husband's case and no help was provided by the bank or the insurance company in clearing the loan. There's no death certificate Sakeena can provide. And the insurance company simply asked her to wait for all these years. However, some revenue officials advised her against that. "We couldn't wait for seven years," one of

the officials said. "By then the interest would be too high. She could lose the house." These Samaritans helped her with some money on a personal level and assisted her in clearing the loan. Sakeena is relieved, but she wants to live a life of integrity that Showkat lived. She's an intelligent lady with no formal education. She wants to work to support her girls' education. Her little ones are twins who study in first grade. The grief-stricken family now depends largely on Showkat's mother, who survives on a modest pension left by her late husband. That pension will end with her, leaving Sakeena and her daughters with no support. As of now, the monthly electricity bill of over Rs 1500 remains Sakeena's household worry. She tries to use power judiciously, but she still gets a big bill. This burden gets heavier with her everyday sight and struggles. Right in front of her kitchen window, lies Faziq's grave. He's buried in the backyard and Sakeena sees it all the time. No one could've represented them at the time of the burial. Numbed with pain and agony, she herself had asked for him to be buried in the yard once echoing with his laughter and plays. It reminds me of something my zoology professor once said: If hormones didn't blunt our pain during grief, we would have to bury the mother with her child. One such mother is seeking closure now. But the river that consumed her husband and her son's grave made it difficult. And then there are heartless rules prolonging her pain. Sakeena is supposed to wait for years till she gets the death certificate and eventually some relief. Till then, the river is likely to keep its secret. **Srinagar Hits** public—especially vulnerable groups like pregnant women, children, and the elderly—to take precautions and stay well-hydrated during the ongoing heatwave. **Terror Mastermind** shot dead. Besides the RSS attack, the Lashkar operative was involved in the Indian Institute of Science terror attack of 2005 in Bengaluru, in which IIT professor Munish Chandra Puri was killed and four others injured. The terrorists had escaped from the scene. Later, police investigated the case and chargesheeted Abu Anas, who is still at large. Khalid was also the mastermind of the 2008 attack on a CRPF camp at Rampur in Uttar Pradesh in which seven personnel and a civilian were killed. The two terrorists escaped under the cover of darkness. From mid-2000, Khalid was the in-charge of the Nepal module of LeT, responsible for the recruitment of cadres, providing financial and logistic support and facilitating the movement of LeT operatives across the Indo-Nepal border. Khalid was working closely with LeT's so-called "launching commanders" -- Azam Cheema alias Babaji and Yaqoob (LeT's chief accountant). Khalid left Nepal and returned to Pakistan after Indian security agencies exposed the module. He later worked closely with several leaders of LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawah, including Yusuf Muzammil, LeT commander for Jammu and Kashmir, Muzammil Iqbal Hashmi and Muhammad Yusuf Taibi. Khalid was tasked by the LeT and JuD leadership in Pakistan to undertake the recruitment of fresh cadres from the areas of Badin and Hyderabad districts of Sindh and collect funds for the organisation. According to media reports from Sindh, Khalid was declared brought dead at hospital after being shot. These reports also termed it a case of personal enmity. **Police Conduct** questioning as part of its investigation into sleeper cell modules in the valley, officials said.

"In continuation to the raids conducted across South Kashmir by the SIA, Kashmir, earlier this week, in the investigation related to sleeper cell modules, extensive raids were carried out today at around 11 locations across Central and North Kashmir," an official said. The officials said these raids were conducted in connection with the investigation of case FIR No. 01/2025 registered under various sections of UA(P) Act. The competent court has authorised these searches which are being conducted in the presence of executive magistrates, they said. **Unexploded Shells** in blood. The acrid smell of gunpowder still hangs in the air. In a village near the International Border, Sardar Gurmeet Singh's family was forced to stay away from their home after a live mortar shell sank into their compound. "It took four days for the army's bomb squad to remove it. Only then could we return," he said. Over the last five days, Army engineers have launched an extensive clearance operation, defusing more than 80 unexploded shells across Jammu's border districts -- including 6 in Pargwal, 19 in Rajouri, 42 in Poonch, and 12 along the IB. "These shells, mostly 120 mm mortars, have a range of 15 to 30 km and pose a serious threat to both civilians and military assets," an Army officer said. "Most were fired by Pakistan during the recent escalation." That escalation began on May 7, when the Indian Army launched Operation Sindoor, striking nine terror hubs in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) in retaliation for the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgalam that killed 26 people, most of them tourists. Pakistan responded with shelling from May 7 to 10, targeting civilian areas across Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Rajouri, and Poonch. In those four days, 27 civilians were killed and over 70 injured. Farid Din Gujjar, a local farmer, said his paddy fields in a border village were heavily shelled. "Crater after crater -- that's what's left of our farmland. We can't resume work until the area is cleared. It's a death trap," he said. The Army, in coordination with Jammu and Kashmir Police, has issued repeated warnings asking residents not to touch any suspicious object. High-risk zones have been evacuated. In one major operation, 42 unexploded shells were safely destroyed in Poonch's Jhullas, Salotri, Dharati and Salani villages. "All safety protocols were followed," an Army spokesperson said, adding the effort reflects the forces' "continued commitment to protect civilians and restore normalcy." Poonch district saw the highest number of casualties during the shelling spree. Officials confirmed that along with mortars, Pakistan also used drones and missiles to strike civilian targets. As cleanup operations continue, residents are slowly returning to their homes. But fear remains. The uncertainty of another round of shelling lingers -- and with it, the trauma of a war that's paused but far from forgotten. (inputs from PTI) **Army Destroys 42** shelling, posed a serious threat to the lives and safety of local residents. The operation was carried out with utmost precision, adhering to all standard safety protocols to prevent any risk to civilian life or property, the spokesperson said. He said the bomb disposal teams from the Indian Army, in coordination with police, ensured the complete neutralisation of all explosive remnants. This proactive effort reflects the organisation's continued commitment to safeguarding civilian populations in conflict-affected zones and restoring a sense of normalcy in vulnerable border communities, he said. On May 7, India destroyed nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under its Operation Sindoor.

Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10. The two sides reached an understanding on cessation of hostilities on May 10 after four days of confrontations. **'No Expiry Date** Operation Sindoor, India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgalam 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, inflicting heavy damage 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 May 10 evening announced that India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect. On May 15, Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar told the country's Senate that the DGMOs of Pakistan and India talked over the hotline on May 14 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. Following Dar's comments, the Indian Army said it will pursue confidence-building measures to reduce the "alertness level" in line with the May 10 understanding. **BrahMos Hit Pak** written in golden letters when the history is written on the border safety," he said. Operation Sindoor was launched by the Indian armed forces in the wake of the Pahalgalam terrorist attack in which 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen were killed. The operations destroyed terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, from where terrorist attacks against India were planned and directed. "Pakistan used to tell the whole world that no terrorist activity happens there and accuse India of making false complaints. But, terrorists were finished with missiles under 'Operation Sindoor' and Pakistan was exposed to the world," Shah said. He said the next day, senior officers of the Pakistani army attended the funeral of terrorists and offered prayers, "which exposed the nexus of the Pakistani Army, Pakistan, and terrorism, and the whole world came to know that Pakistan runs bases for terrorists". Recalling PM Narendra Modi's speech in Bihar after the Pahalgalam terror strike, Shah said, "Within few days, Narendrabhai's strong political will, the valour of the army, the accurate information of the intelligence agencies and the firepower of the Army destroyed the terrorist camps in nine places in Pakistan and razed them to the ground". He said the Modi government has given a befitting reply to terrorists who wiped off the vermilion from the forehead of women and created a new kind of history in the security of India and the protection of the borders. "PM Modi made it clear in his address to the nation after Operation Sindoor that the Indus River and blood will not flow together. If terrorism is not eradicated, then not even a drop of water from the Indus river will be available," Shah recalled. He said Modi conveyed to Pakistan that trade and terrorism will not go together, and if Pakistan shelters terrorism, the entire trade will end. "Modi said he is ready to hold talks with

Pakistan, but the talks will be centred on taking back PoK and eliminating terrorism. Today, 140 crore people of India salute the valour of our armed forces, the accuracy of the intelligence agencies, and the strong political will of Narendra Modi," he said. He further said that Modi has undertaken a task to place India at the forefront by 2047 and has laid a strong foundation for the country's development in the last 11 years. Shah laid the foundation stone and inaugurated various developmental projects of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation after leading a Tiranga Yatra and inaugurating a nursing college building in Mehsana. Earlier in the day, Shah inaugurated the state-of-the-art, fully automated frozen potato products manufacturing facility of Falcon Agrifriz Foods in Mehsana. The group has invested approximately Rs 1,050 crore in Gujarat, intending to transform the state into a global hub for frozen potato-based products, a release stated. **Men Account** aggression, substance use or suicidal ideation." The issue is further compounded by a lack of legal safeguards, said Dr Preeti Singh, Senior Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Seamless Minds Clinic and Paras Health. A 2013-14 study found that 53.2 per cent of rape charges filed during that period were false, sparking concern among psychologists and legal experts alike about the psychological toll on the falsely accused, she said. The fallout often includes clinical depression, anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and long-term emotional trauma. "These are the silent stories that rarely make it out -- men suffering alone, carrying a burden that is becoming unbearable. The system must become gender-neutral, fair and emotionally intelligent. Let's stop numbing men's pain with silence or stereotypes -- check in, talk to them and remind them that strength can look like vulnerability," said Dr Preeti Singh. **IMF Imposes** the government has indicated allocating over Rs 2.5 trillion or an 18% higher budget, after confrontation with India early this month. India carried out precision strikes under 'Operation Sindoor' on terror infrastructure early on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgalam terror attack that killed 26 people. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10. India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10 to end the conflict after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. The Express Tribune report said that the IMF slapped 11 more conditions on Pakistan, taking the total conditions to 50. It has imposed the new condition of securing "parliamentary approval of the fiscal year 2026 budget in line with the IMF staff agreement to meet programme targets by end-June 2025". The IMF report has shown the total size of the federal budget at Rs 17.6 trillion, including Rs 1.07 trillion for development spending. A new condition has also been imposed on the provinces where the four federating units will implement the new Agriculture Income Tax laws through a comprehensive plan, including the establishment of an operational platform for processing returns, taxpayer identification and registration, a communication campaign, and a compliance improvement plan. The deadline for the provinces is June this year. According to the third new condition, the government will publish a governance action plan based on the recommendations of the Governance Diagnostic Assessment by the IMF. The purpose of the report is to publicly identify reform measures to address critical governance vulnerabilities. Another new condition states that the government will prepare and publish a plan outlining the government's post-2027 financial sector strategy, outlining the institutional and regulatory environment from 2028 onwards. In the energy sector, four new conditions have been introduced. The government will issue notifications of the annual electricity tariff rebasing by July 1st of this year to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels. It will also issue a notification of the semi-annual gas tariff adjustment to maintain energy tariffs at cost recovery levels by February 15, 2026, according to the report. Parliament will also adopt legislation to make the captive power levy ordinance permanent by the end of this month, according to the IMF. The government has increased the cost for the industries to force them to shift to the national electricity grid. Parliament will also adopt legislation to remove the maximum Rs3.21 per unit cap on the debt service surcharge, which is tantamount to punishing honest electricity consumers to pay for the inefficiency of the power sector. The IMF and the World Bank dictated that wrong energy policies are causing the accumulation of the circular debt in addition to the government's bad governance. The deadline to remove the cap is the end of June, according to the report. The IMF has also imposed a condition that Pakistan will prepare a plan based on the assessment conducted to fully phase out all incentives in relation to Special Technology Zones and other industrial parks and zones by 2035. The report has to be prepared by the end of this year. Finally, in a consumer-friendly condition, the IMF has asked Pakistan to submit to the Parliament all required legislation for lifting all quantitative restrictions on the commercial importation of used motor vehicles (initially only for vehicles less than five years old by the end of July. Currently, only cars up to three years old can be imported. **LG Offers Prayers** Prabandhak Committee, prominent citizens and people from all walks of life were present on the occasion, the spokesperson said.



The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets.

Kashmir Observer, with 28 years of experience in news gathering is now available 24x7 on all digital platforms like laptops, cell phones or via Bluetooth on your smart TV's across the world.

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IPL 2025: Time For Pant To Fire As LSG Hopes Hang In Balance



Press Trust of India

LUCKNOW: Rishabh Pant will aim to hit the refresh button after a wretched run as Lucknow Super Giants make one last ditch attempt to stay alive in IPL play-offs race by winning their remaining three league matches, starting with clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad here Monday.

Last year's finalists SRH are already out of contention and will be playing for pride while LSG have an outside chance of sneaking into the last-four if they can get to 16 points with three emphatic wins.

LSG's net run-rate -0.469 however makes it virtually impossible unless their last three opponents are completely annihilated.

For SRH, it will be a chance for some of their players to shrug off rustiness that has plagued their campaign through and

through.

The likes of Nitish Kumar Reddy and Ishan Kishan wouldn't mind some runs under their belt before they leave the sub-continental shores for India A's tour of England.

However the bigger context is skipper Pant's personal form which has nosedived since his record Rs 27 crore bidding at the IPL auctions last year.

With 128 runs from 11 games at a strike-rate of less than 100 and average of 12.80, it couldn't have gotten worse for Pant. Things can only go up from here on.

Pant's name is doing the rounds for the Test vice-captaincy and even though IPL is a different format, getting a few impactful innings and guiding the team to victory is always good optics just before any major announcement.

The forced break couldn't have come at a more opportune

time as it must have given the stockily built Rourkee man a chance to go back to the drawing board and analyse his own game.

LSG will also want their main batter Nicholas Pooran (410 runs) to start firing once again as he had tapered off after a bright start in the first five or six games.

New Zealand seamer William O'Rourke is a welcome addition in place of an injured Mayank Yadav, who is once again out for an indefinite period.

It will once again depend on top three which includes South African Aiden Markram (348) and Mitchell Marsh (378).

The problem with LSG has been the middle order that hasn't performed as per expectations, except save Ayush Badoni (326). David Miller (160 runs) has also not set the stage on fire during the final overs. Match Starts at 7:30 pm.

Sports Minister Announces Multiple New Games Under Khelo India Scheme



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Sunday announced the broadening of the scope of the Khelo India initiative with the introduction of multiple Games to cover school sports, martial arts, beach and water sports from this year onwards.

While launching the Khelo India Annual Calendar, Mandaviya said that the government will soon introduce a series of Khelo India Games and other competitions, including Khelo India North-East Games, among others.

He said the aim was to strengthen India's sporting ecosystem, provide strategic year-round schedule to boost grass-roots competitions and talent identification.

"The Khelo India Annual Calendar is not just a schedule but it is a strategic blueprint strengthening India's domestic competition structure for transforming India into a global sporting powerhouse," Mandaviya said.

"Over the past decade, Indian sports have undergone a remark-

able transformation... We have created a dynamic and inclusive sporting ecosystem with regular national-level competitions under the Khelo India initiative.

"Taking this vision forward, we will soon introduce Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG), Khelo India School Games (KISG), Khelo India Water Sports and Khelo India North-East Games, among others."

Mandaviya said these events will be pivotal in identifying, nurturing, and preparing India's young talent.

"Through structured competitions, year-round engagement, and pan-India participation, we are building the foundation for sustained sporting excellence as we gear up for the Commonwealth Games 2030 and the Olympic Games 2036. India is on the move, and the youth are at the heart of this sporting revolution," the sports minister added.

The Khelo India platform already includes four structured national-level Games, namely the Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India University Games, Khelo India Para Games, and Khelo India Winter Games.

A special focus is being given to the Khelo India School Games (KISG), which will follow a tiered structure, starting from the district level, moving to the state level, and culminating in national-level competitions.

Furthermore, the inclusion of events like the Khelo India Martial Art Games, Khelo India Tribal Games, and Khelo India Swadeshi Games will aim to bring indigenous and traditional martial arts into the mainstream, the sports ministry said.

The first edition of the Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG) is set to take place in Diu from May 19-25, which will draw national attention to coastal and beach sports, while also highlighting the region's tourism potential.

The calendar for the remainder of the year includes events such as the Khelo India School Games (August to December), Khelo India University Games (March-April), Water Sports and North-East Games (May-June), Tribal Games (September in Chhattisgarh), and the Indigenous and Martial Art Games (July-August in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh).

Hesson Wants Babar Azam & Rizwan Back In T20 Set Up

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan's new white ball head coach Mike Hesson is keen to revive the careers of senior batters Babar Azam and Muhammad Rizwan in the T20 format after selectors dropped them from the team.

A reliable source confided that Hesson had held talks with the selectors this week and said he wanted Babar and Rizwan in the T20 squad.

Both the former captains and seniors were dropped for the away T20 against New Zealand in April and earlier also were in and out of the side in the shortest format.

Rizwan was removed as the national T20 captain before the New Zealand tour with Salman Ali Agha replacing him as captain.

Pakistan were swamped 1-4 in the series in New Zealand and even before that they lost series in Australia and South Africa.

"Hesson told the selectors that he felt that Babar and Rizwan with their experience still had plenty to give to the team," the source said.

"Hesson told the selectors he wanted to work with Babar and Rizwan on changing their approach and game in the shortest format and giving them another chance before taking a call on their T20 future," he added.

The source said senior selector, Aaqib Javed had expressed his doubts on the wisdom of including Babar and Rizwan in future T20 plans but Hesson insisted he wanted to have a go at them and see how they responded as their experience was invaluable.

"In all likelihood you will see both back for the home series against Bangladesh later this month with some other changes in the side," the source added.

Pakistan is due to play a five-match T20 series at home from late May in Lahore and Faisalabad.



Cricketers Maximize Their Potential When They Know Who They Are: Dravid

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Understand your own self and unlock the maximum potential you have as a cricketer, is former India captain and head coach Rahul Dravid's mantra for all those aspiring to take up the sport professionally. Dravid, who is working with Rajasthan Royals in IPL during the ongoing season after guiding India to T20 World Cup triumph, spoke to 'JioHotstar' during an episode of 'Halla Bol'.

"Just being good at cricket and just practising cricket will off course get you certain distance but the really good players, great players that I have had the privilege of working with or sharing dressing room with, one of the common things I see in all of them is that they truly know who they are as people," Dravid, India's second highest scorer in Test cricket said.

"I think if you know who are as a person and grow as a per-



son, you give yourself the best chance to maximise your potential," he added.

The gift of sporting talent can only take a person that far, feels Dravid.

"...you have been given a talent to become the best cricketer you can be, you also need to grow as a person and you need to under-

stand yourself as a person both on and off the field to maximise your potential," Dravid said in the video.

He made it clear that he doesn't believe in comparisons.

"It's individual, you can't judge yourself with other people, compare yourself with other people. Your job is to get the best

out of yourself and the gifts you have been given and that will only come with growing both as a cricketer on the field but growing as a person off it as well," said Dravid.

'Hope RR's Young India Batters Play Tough International Cricket'

Head coach Rahul Dravid hopes that the young Indian players in the Rajasthan Royals' ranks will soon get the opportunity to play "tough international cricket," which in turn will help them return stronger for the next IPL season.

The Royals crashed to their fifth successive defeat when they went down against Punjab Kings by 10 runs here on Sunday.

"We've seen some abilities. Even today, the batting that Jaiswal did, Vaibhav did, Dhruv Jurel did. There's a lot of Sanju, Riyan today. We have a lot of young, good Indian batsmen. They'll be even better in a year," Dravid said in the post match press conference.

Dravid then expanded his thoughts on how the young names in the Royals' ranks can perform better a year down the road.

"Vaibhav (Suryavanshi) will play a lot of cricket like India U19. Riyan Parag will also play a

lot of cricket. So, I think all these players will play a lot of cricket for India throughout the year — tough cricket, international cricket.

"So, hopefully when they come back here next year, they will be more experienced. They are already very talented players," he added.

Dravid felt that the Rajasthan bowlers and batters have not been able to apply finishing touches to the job, leading to the team's dismal show this season.

In the latest instance, RR reached 76/1 in just 4.5 overs in the chase of 220 but lost the match by 10 runs against Punjab Kings.

"We've got close but we haven't been able to finish the job. It's been one of those seasons where you always feel with the ball that probably give 15-20 runs extra, and after getting to good positions (with the bat)... with that lower middle-order we just haven't been able to

click and get the big shots that we need," said Dravid.

The Punjab side were reeling at 159 for five in the 16th over but they collected 60 runs in the last four overs to reach 219/5 at the Saiwal Man Singh Stadium.

"It's been five games now where the margins have been 10 runs, tie game, 1 run, 2 runs, 10 runs again. So that's really one or two hits which you need in that phase which we just haven't been able to do."

Dravid said bowlers also bear equal share of blame for the team's underwhelming show.

"There's no point in just blaming the batsmen. I think with the ball also, to be honest, this wicket I didn't think it was 220. It was about 195-200 wicket and we gave 20 runs extra."

"If we look at the statistics, we haven't been taking wickets or in controlling the runs despite making some good starts. So for the next season, we have to work on that," he added.

Short TAKES

Patriotic Fervour Marks IPL's Return To Delhi After Brief Suspension

Patriotic fervour gripped the Arun Jaitley Stadium as Delhi Capitals and Gujarat Titans players lined up for the national anthem ahead of their IPL clash here on Sunday, marking the tournament's return to the national capital after suspension.

The IPL had come to a halt due to military tension between India and Pakistan. The Delhi Capitals squad was shaken after their match against Punjab Kings in Dharamsala was called off midway due to air raid alerts in neighbouring Jammu and Pathankot.

On Sunday, the atmosphere in the stadium was electric, with chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram" echoing through the stands as the players made their way onto the field.

Digital panels and the giant screen flashed "Thank You Armed Forces" messages during the warm-up, honouring the Indian armed forces for their bravery during the recent conflict, which had threatened to spiral into a full-blown war before the two nations agreed to a ceasefire. Similar emotional scenes were witnessed earlier in the day in Jaipur, where players of Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings lined up for the national anthem ahead of their match at the Saiwal Mansingh Stadium.

Punjab Kings Beat Rajasthan Royals By 10 Runs In IPL

Nehal Wadhwa and Shashank Singh struck half-centuries, while left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar took three wickets as Punjab Kings defeated Rajasthan Royals by 10 runs to enhance their chances of making the IPL playoffs, here Sunday.

Thanks to Wadhwa's 37-ball 70, Shashank's unbeaten 59 and a valuable 30 by skipper Shreyas Iyer, PBKS scored a competitive 219 for 5.

RR openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (50) and Vaibhav Suryavanshi (40) gave the home side a fiery start, scoring 76 runs in 4.5 overs.

But once Suryavanshi was dismissed by Brar (3/22) in the fifth over, wickets started tumbling at regular intervals and RR could managed 209 for 7 in the end. Dhruv Jurel (53 off 31 balls) was the highest run-getter for RR. PBKS pacer Azmatullah Omarzai (2/44) too played his part in the win, taking the wickets of the dangerous Shimron Hetmyer (11) and captain Sanju Samson (20). With this win PBKS are now on 17 points, the same as leaders Royal Challengers Bengaluru, but are second on the table because of an inferior net run rate.

F1: Red Bull's Max Verstappen Makes It Four Wins In A Row At Imola

Max Verstappen took a dominant victory at Imola on Sunday to celebrate Red Bull's 400th grand prix and end Formula One leader Oscar Piastri's run of three wins in a row for McLaren.

Australian Piastri started on pole and finished third, overtaken by teammate Lando Norris on fresher tyres seven laps from the end, with his championship lead cut from 16 points to 13 after seven rounds.

The victory was the 65th of Verstappen's career, second of the season and the four-times world champion's fourth in a row at the Italian circuit near Bologna after wins in 2021, 2022 and 2024. There was no race in 2023 due to flooding.

Seven-times World champion Lewis Hamilton finished a surprising fourth in his first race in Italy for Ferrari after starting 12th following a qualifying nightmare. Alex Albon was fifth for Williams with Charles Leclerc sixth for Ferrari.

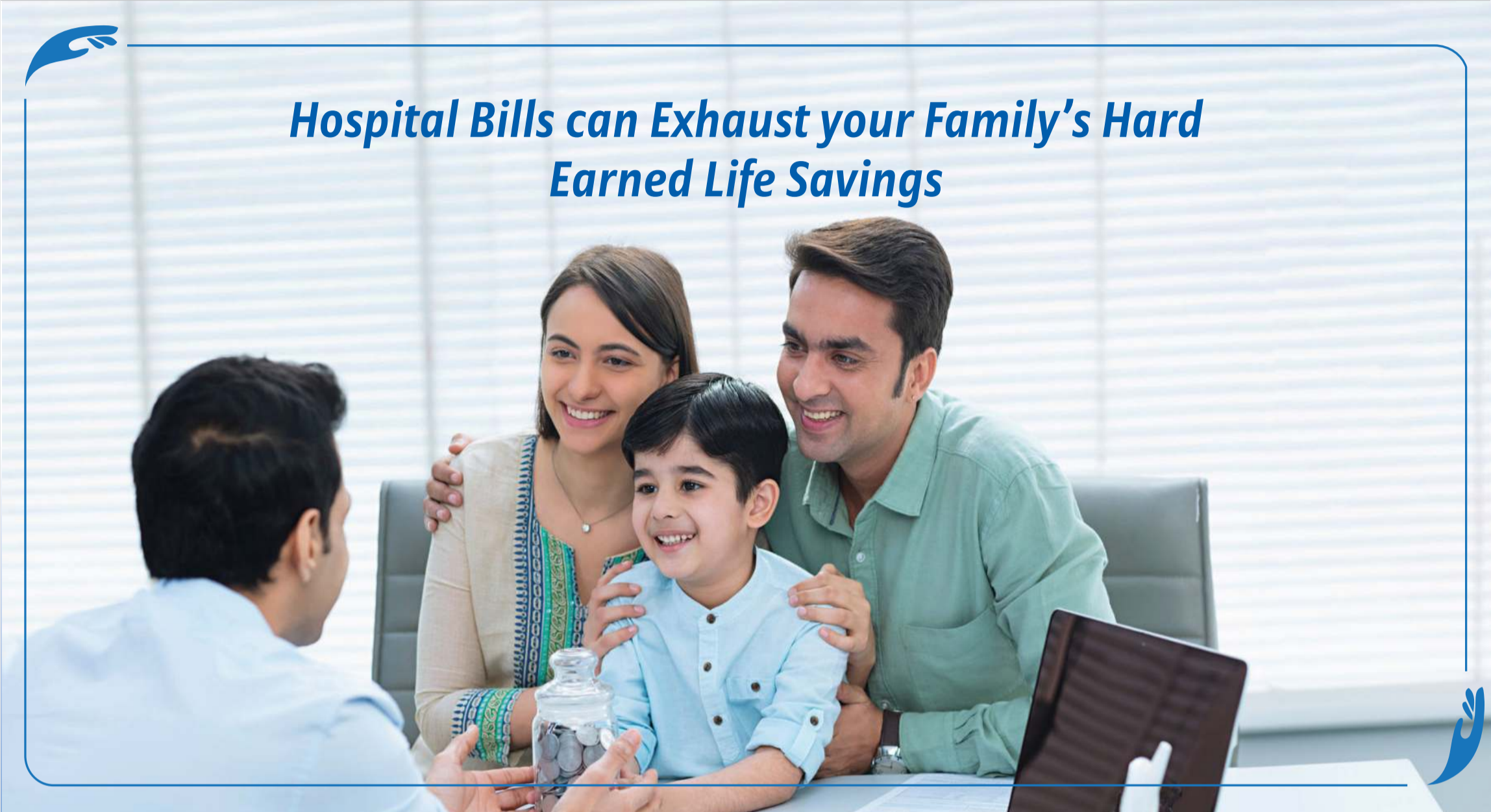
Record-Breaking Harry Kane Crowned Bundesliga's Top Scorer

Champions Bayern Munich crushed hosts Hoffenheim 4-0 in the Bundesliga finale on Saturday as record-breaking Harry Kane was crowned the league's top striker for a second straight season. He started on the bench but came on in the second half to score his 26th goal of the season.

Bayern had already secured the title two weeks ago but were ready to finish their title-winning season in style ahead of Sunday's planned title celebrations in central Munich. It was the first club title for 31-year-old Kane and the first as Bayern coach for Vincent Kompany in his first season in charge.

He became the first player in Bundesliga history to be crowned top scorer in both his first two seasons. "I always try to improve," Kane said after being handed the top scorer trophy. "But without teammates this would not be possible. I am enjoying this."







"The perfect end to a brilliant season. Thank you for your brilliant support, tomorrow we celebrate this title together," Kane later wrote on social media ahead of Sunday's title celebrations.








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