

Heart Attacks In Their 30s: A Generation At Risk In Kashmir

What once shocked doctors is now common. An investigation into the valley's shifting health profile reveals a looming epidemic.

Mohammad Adnaan

Srinagar: The discomfort started as a dull pressure under his ribs. Shakeel Ahmad, a 38-year-old schoolteacher from Baramulla, thought it was just indigestion. He kept teaching. The pain got worse.

By the time his family reached the hospital in Srinagar, doctors said they were already two hours late.

"He kept saying it wasn't his heart," said Shakeel's widow. "But in the end, his heart was what failed him, and us."

Heart disease is fast emerging as one of the deadliest public health threats in Kashmir. Despite its growing toll, the silent killer remains largely overlooked in a region already burdened by unpredictable weather and prolonged uncertainty.



Doctors in Srinagar and public health officials across the Valley say they're seeing a troubling rise in cardiovascular

disease, especially among people in their 30s and 40s.

A study published in the Indian Heart Journal found that 7.5 percent of Kashmiris over the age of 40 already suffer from coronary artery disease. The burden is even greater in urban areas.

Recent hospital records show that 1 in 5 heart attack patients in Kashmir is under 45. In 2025 alone, dozens of

deaths among young patients, some in their early 30s, have been linked to undiagnosed diabetes, obesity, and heart conditions. In winter, the risk doubles. Hospitals report nearly 30 cardiac emergencies a day, compared to 15-18 in summer.

Roughly 30 percent of all deaths in the region are now caused by heart-related illness, and a quarter of those occur in people | [More on P6](#)

Forecaster Warns Srinagar May Cross 35°C

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Kashmir Valley is witnessing an early surge in temperatures as a dry spell continues to grip the region. With a 26 percent rainfall deficit recorded so far in June, weather experts have warned of an intense heatwave likely to prevail over the next three days. According to independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif Keng, Srinagar may see the mercury soar above 35 degrees Celsius, much higher than the usual seasonal average. On Wednesday, the summer capital recorded a maximum temperature of 32.5 degrees Celsius.

Other parts of the Valley too recorded unusually high temperatures. Qazigund registered 31.4 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam 27.0, Kokernag 30.8, Kupwara 30.5, and the ski resort of Gulmarg recorded 22.8 degrees Celsius. Interestingly, Jammu city recorded below-normal temperatures, with the day's maximum settling at 37.6 degrees Celsius. Banihal, Batote, Katra, and Bhaderwah also reported temperatures hovering around or slightly below 35 degrees.

Data compiled by the local Meteorological Department shows a significant drop in rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir this month. Samba recorded the highest deficit at 72 percent, followed by Kathua at 62 percent. Most other districts, including Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Kishtwar, Kulgam, Poonch, Reasi, Shopian, and Udhampur, have all recorded below-normal precipitation. Rajouri, however, remained the only station to record large excess rainfall, while Anantnag, Doda, Jammu, Kupwara, and Ramban | [More on P6](#)

Tehran Rebukes Trump: 'No Talks Under Duress'

Trump warns of "A Very Big Week" ahead as tensions mount



Trans Asia News

Tehran: Iran Wednesday condemned US President Donald Trump's remarks about Iranian willingness to negotiate saying only thing more despicable than his lies is his cowardly threat to assassinate Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei. Iran was responding to

remarks by President Trump that Tehran wants to negotiate with the U.S. and even proposed sending a delegation to the White House, but that it was getting "very late" for talks and he might soon authorize strikes on Iran's nuclear program.

In an official statement, the Iran's UN Mission in New York declared, "No | [More on P6](#)

Modi Rejects Trump's Ceasefire Narrative Says Op Sindoor Paused After Pak Appeal

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has told President Donald Trump that India and Pakistan halted their military actions last month following direct talks between their militaries without any mediation by the US, calling out the American leader's narrative that he brokered the ceasefire.

In a nearly 35-minute phone call with Trump on Tuesday, Modi firmly stated that India does not and will "never accept" mediation and that the discussions between Indian and Pakistani militaries on cessation of military actions were initiated at Islamabad's request, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said.

PM Modi also said that India no longer views "terrorism as a proxy war, but as a war itself", and that India's Operation Sindoor is still



ongoing, the foreign secretary said.

Hours after the phone conversation with Modi, Trump on Wednesday repeated his persistent claim that he stopped a war between India and Pakistan.

"Well, I stopped the war. I love Pakistan. I think Modi is a fantastic man. I spoke to him last night. We're going to

make a trade deal with Modi of India. But I stopped the war between Pakistan and India," Trump said.

The cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan was first announced by President Trump on May 10. Since then, the US president has been claiming that he brokered the ceasefire deal by threatening to stop trade with

both countries if they do not agree to stop the conflict.

The prime minister declined a request by the US president to stop over in the US on his way back from Canada, citing "prior commitments".

The May 7-10 military clashes between India and Pakistan figured prominently during the phone conversation that took place as the two leaders could not meet on the sidelines of the G7 summit following the American president's early departure.

"Prime Minister Modi clearly conveyed to President Trump that at no point during this entire sequence of events was there any discussion, at any level, on an India-US trade deal, or any proposal for a mediation by the US between India and Pakistan," Misri said.

"The discussion to cease military action | [More on P6](#)

No Stone Will Be Left Unturned: CM On Muharram Arrangements

Says Govt Must Stay Responsive Beyond Ashura

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting at the Civil Secretariat to review and finalize the arrangements for the upcoming holy month of Muharram, which this year coincides with the annual Amarnath Yatra.

Top officials including Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, senior ministers, legislators, administrative secretaries, and prominent Shia leaders were present. Officers from outside stations joined via video conference.

In his address, the Chief Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring comprehensive and seamless preparations for Muharram. "We will leave



no stone unturned in our efforts, and there should be no shortcoming from our side," he asserted.

He emphasized that the administration must remain responsive throughout the full period of Muharram, which spans two months and eight days—not just the initial ten days. "The very size and composition of this meeting reflects the importance we attach to the sacred month of

Muharram," Omar said.

Acknowledging the added complexity of this year's calendar, where Muharram overlaps with the Amarnath Yatra, the Chief Minister announced the appointment of a Secretary-level Nodal Officer—independent of the Divisional Commissioner—to oversee and coordinate inter-departmental efforts across the Union Territory. The | [More on P6](#)

Reservation Report Sent For Legal Vetting: J&K Cabinet

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet on Wednesday evening convened a meeting at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar to deliberate on the much-debated reservation policy report submitted by the Cabinet Sub-Committee (CSC). After a detailed discussion, the report was referred to the Department of Law for legal examination, delaying any immediate decision on the matter.

A senior Cabinet Minister confirmed that the CSC report, which has recently stirred both political and public uproar, has not been finalized. "The cabinet held detailed deliberations on the CSC report regarding the reservation policy, and after discussion, the report was referred to the Law Department for its opinion," the minister said.

He added that no timeline has been set for the report's return from the Law Department.

"Only after legal vetting, the report will return to the cabinet for a final decision," he stated, suggesting that the process may take some time.

Apart from the reservation policy, sources said the cabinet also reviewed the situation following the recent terror attack in Pahalgam, which has led to a dip in tourist arrivals. Discussions were held on measures to revive tourism in the valley and restore confidence among visitors.

Preparations for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra, scheduled to commence on July 3, also featured prominently during the meeting. The cabinet focused on improving logistics and strengthening health arrangements for the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, lasted for more than an hour and was attended by key ministers and top bureaucrats, sources added. (inputs from KNS)

Operation Sindhu

India Begins Evacuation Of Nationals From Iran

India has launched Operation Sindhu, a special evacuation mission to bring back Indian nationals from Iran amid escalating tensions between Tehran and Tel Aviv.

The operation was initiated as reports emerged that some Indian students were injured in a missile strike that hit a medical dormitory on Keshavarz Street in Tehran. While Iranian embassy officials in New Delhi confirmed the injuries and said the Iranian Foreign | [More on P6](#)

NO IRANIAN OFFICIAL HAS EVER ASKED TO GROVEL at the gates of the White House. The only thing more despicable than his lies is his cowardly threat to 'take out' Iran's Supreme Leader."

'Multi-Million' Land Scam

Srinagar Court Denies Bail To 2 Brothers

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A local court here on Wednesday rejected bail plea of two brothers accused of duping and defrauding a number of people by parting with their hard earned money for purchase of land.

While rejecting the bail plea, Chief Judicial Magistrate Srinagar Aadil Mushtaq Ahmad observed that "it appears to be a multi-million scam, where honest purchasers have been lured by shiny advertisements to purchase land". The accused and their father allegedly after clutching a hefty amount from a considerable number of persons closed their offices.

"In the facts and circumstances of the case I am of the considered opinion that this is a fit case for invoking exception to

the general rule," the court said as it rejected bail application filed by two brothers— Sheikh Ghulam Jeelani and Sheikh Showkat Ahmad of Malla Bagh, Ellahi Bagh, Srinagar.

"The personal liberty guaranteed to the accused is undoubtedly his valuable right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution but same can be refused to him in accordance with the procedure established under law," the court said, adding, "The right of liberty of an individual needs to be balanced against the interests of whole society and the interests of society are to be preferred over the individual interest."

The court further observed that an attempt has been made to deceive | [More on P6](#)

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SKICC Hosts Workshop On CCMP & Cyber Security

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A two-day workshop on “CCMP and cyber security” was held at SKICC here.

An official said that the Department of Information Technology Jammu & Kashmir in collaboration with the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, conducted a state-level workshop in Srinagar.

The official said that the program was aimed at enhancing cyber resilience across departments of the Union Territory by equipping senior officers, including Administrative Secretaries, Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) / Information Security Officers (ISOs), and nodal officers from various government departments, with essential cyber security knowledge and hands-on crisis response planning.

Speaking on the occasion, IT Minister of J&K Government, Satish Sharma emphasized the critical importance of cyber security in the current digital governance landscape and lauded the initiative as a key milestone towards ensuring secure and reliable citizen services delivery.

Dr Piyush Singla delivered the welcome address and highlighted that in the present digital age, robust cyber security is not just a technical need – it’s a pillar of good governance and public trust.

He encouraged the participants to commit to building resilient systems and a cyber-aware workforce to safeguard citizens and institutions.

A keynote address was delivered by Saurabh Bhagat Commissioner/Secretary, FCS&CA, focusing on the evolving cyber security ecosystem and the need for proactive and preventive strategies.

He highlighted the importance of inter-departmental cooperation for effective e-governance and encouraged officers to become cyber warriors by enhancing their existing knowledge and skills and participating and conducting more training exercises.

According to KNO, the workshop concluded with a Valedictory Ceremony featuring a special address by Dr. Sanjay Bahl, Director General, CERT-In, who congratulated all participants for their active participation and emphasized the need to shift from reactive cyber security to proactive cyber resilience, focusing on rapid recovery while maintaining essential operations during cyber crisis.



Committee On Petitions Holds First Meeting In Sgr

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Committee on Petitions, Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Wednesday held its first meeting at the Assembly complex, Srinagar.

The meeting was presided over by the Committee Chairman, Pirezada Farooq Ahmad Shah which was attended by the members including Mushtaq Guroo, Salman Sagar, Waheed Ur Rehman Para, Mian Mehar Ali, Vijay Kumar and Thakur Randhir Singh also participated in the meeting.

The Chairman outlined the roles and responsibilities of Committee members, expressing confidence in their ability to work collaboratively and contribute effectively to the Committee's success. He emphasized the importance of coordination and teamwork in achieving the Committee's objectives.

The Chairman assured that the Committee will thoroughly examine every petition, pursuing each to its logical conclusion and ensure prompt resolution of

genuine public concerns. He added that the Committee will also report to the House on specific complaints raised during evidence, recommending suitable remedial measures as necessary.

The Chairman emphasized that the Committee will function strictly within its mandated framework and will regularly meet to formulate and implement a course of action for prompt resolution of petitions referred to it. He urged upon all the members to discharge their duties diligently and uphold the decorum and responsibilities entrusted to them. He emphasized on the seamless contribution from all members and concerned officers for the vibrant functioning of the Committee.

The Members actively participated in the discussions, sharing their suggestions and feedback on various pertinent issues.

Earlier, Secretary, Legislative Assembly, Manoj Kumar Pandita, deliberated on various aspects regarding the functioning of the Committee.

Sakeena, Sharma Oversee Muharram Arrangements In City



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo along with Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Information Technology and Transport, Satish Sharma visited ImamBara Zadibal and Imam Bara Hassanabad here to review the preparedness and arrangements being made for the observance of forthcoming Holy Month of Muharram-ul-Haram.

During the visit to Imam Bara at Zadibal, the Ministers interacted with local representatives, community leaders and members of the Shia community.

MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Ali Sadiq; MLA Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Commissioner SMC, Director Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Kashmir, Director Health Services Kashmir, Chief Engineer KPDCI, senior officers of other allied departments like PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, PWD and other departments were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sakeena said that Muharram holds deep spiritual and cultural significance for the Muslim community and it is our collective responsibility to provide an environment of dignity, safety and comfort to the mourners.

She directed the officers to deploy adequate manpower of the health department along the routes of Muharram processions for the facilitation of mourners. She asked the Director Health to deploy a sufficient number of Ambulances as well as blood storage units during the days of procession.

The Minister also directed the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar to establish a Control Room at district

MUHARRAM HOLDS DEEP SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE for the Muslim community and it is our collective responsibility to provide an environment of dignity, safety and comfort to the mourners.

level for better coordination of allied departments.

Minister Sakeena also stressed on the importance of uninterrupted power and water supply, sanitation measures and proper traffic regulation during the mourning period. She emphasized on the need for seamless coordination between various departments to ensure peaceful and respectful conduct of all Muharram processions and gatherings.

The Minister also directed the SMC Commissioner to take immediate measures for cleanliness and desilting of drains in Zadibal, Alamgari Bazar, Madain Sahib Hawal and other routes leading to Imambaras and through which Muharram processions will pass so that people do not face any difficulty.

During the visit, Minister Satish Sharma also interacted with local representatives. He assured them that sufficient stock of essential supplies will be kept available during this holy month.

Minister Sakeena Itoo on the occasion also paid obeisance at the shrine of Mir Shams-ud-din Muhammad Araqi (RA)

Later, the Ministers also visited ImamBara Hassanabad and took stock of Muharram arrangements.

During the visit, the Ministers held detailed interaction with the local Shia leaders and public representatives to have first-hand feedback of the arrangements to be put in place during the Holy Month of Muharram-ul-Haram.

On the occasion Minister Sakeena passed on several onspot directions to the line Departments and stressed on elaborate arrangements and sustained efforts facilitating the observance of important proceedings especially on 9th and 10th of Muharram. She assured the public that all genuine issues will be redressed promptly for smooth observance of the holy month.

Later, the Ministers undertook a comprehensive tour of Mir Behri Dal, the interiors of densely populated Shia areas.

On the occasion, the Ministers held a public interaction and met scores of people of the Shia community and assured them that adequate arrangements shall be made available on the eve of the month of Muharram ul Haram.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sakeena said that this Government is chosen by the public and is for the public, adding that all genuine issues will be redressed in consultation with respective departments. She further said that sufficient staff will be posted in schools in this area within days.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Satish Sharma said that adequate ration supplies will be maintained during the holy month in this area. He also said that sufficient solar lights will also be set up across several areas of Mir Behri Dal.

Over 12,000 Dog, Cat Bite Cases Reported At ARC SMHS



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A whopping 12,833 bite victims, mostly from dog and cat bites, sought treatment at the Anti-Rabies Clinic at Srinagar's Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) Hospital in the past year, officials said.

They said the prevalence of dogs across the valley has contributed to human-dog conflicts, leading to a rise in cases of dog bites in the region. They added that rearing cats at home has also led to bite cases.

Officials informed KNO that in the last one year, from June 2024 to May 2025, ARC SMHS Hospital received 12,833 cases, including 6,258 dog bites, 6,095 cat exposures, and 480 other bite cases. They said the cat exposure is increasing exponentially over the last few years, as many people are keeping them as pets, while almost all dog bites are reported from stray dogs.

“We receive over one thousand animal bite scratch exposures every month in Anti-Rabies, and in the last one year, around 13,000 cases have been reported,” they added. This figure of 12,833 cases marks the highest recorded in the past decade, underscoring the urgent need to address the issue immediately, officials said.

Providing a breakdown, an official said that 530 dog bites were reported in June 2024, 598 in July, 521 in August, 515 in September, 540 in Oc-

tober, 423 in November, 439 in December, 480 in January 2025, 463 in February, 524 in March, 625 in April, and 601 in May.

Details reveal that 440 cat bite cases were reported at the clinic in June 2024, followed by 440 in July, 432 in August, 414 in September, 486 in October, 399 in November, 514 in December, 692 in January 2025, 658 in February, 542 in March, 491 in April, and 537 in May till date, bringing the total number of cat bite cases from June 2024 to date to 6,095.

Speaking to KNO, an official at ARC SMHS said that cats do transmit rabies, similar to dogs, and that cat bite cases are on the rise. People need to take precautions in this regard. “The trend of keeping cats as pets has gone up, especially post-COVID times, but in many instances, owners are not following norms like vaccination, deworming, timely treatment, and hygiene practices,” he said. “We have seen many fold increases in the number of cases visiting the Anti-Rabies Clinic at SMHS over the last three years. Almost half of the cases are victims of cat exposures.”

Reviewing the yearly data on bite cases, the official said that from April 2015 to March 2016, 7,061 bite cases were reported to ARC SMHS, followed by 5,832 from April 2016 to March 2017, 6,802 from April 2017 to March 2018, 6,397 from April 2018 to March 2019, 6,139 from April 2019 to March 2020, 4,808 from April 2020

to March 2021, 5,469 from April 2021 to March 2022, 6,875 from April 2022 to March 2023, and around 8,800 from April 2023 to March 2024, making the total cases since April 2015 around 70,000.

According to officials, Kashmir witnessed a surge in pet ownership over the last decade. In contrast to farm animals, which provide milk, meat, and eggs, pets are kept purely for companionship. They stressed that adherence to personal hygiene while handling pets is crucial for preventing zoonosis.

“A person who intends to keep a pet must be mentally prepared to take proper care of their pet, respecting its behavioural requirements, providing adequate feeding, shelter, and healthcare facilities. There is no fun in bringing home an animal without taking proper care of it,” they said.

They added that regular hygiene practices, such as routine grooming and dental care, help prevent skin infections and dental diseases in pets.

In Kashmir, dog bites pose a serious public health concern, with thousands of people becoming victims of animal bites, particularly from stray dogs, and some developing rabies. Rabies is a universally fatal viral disease, resulting in approximately 59,000 human deaths annually worldwide, with 95 per cent of cases occurring in Africa and Asia.

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

AIRPORTS


SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

 <div>HIJRI CALENDAR 22 Zil-Hajj 1446</div>	PRAYERS <table><tr><td>FAJR</td><td>3:34</td></tr><tr><td>ZUHR</td><td>12: 32</td></tr><tr><td>ASR</td><td>5:32</td></tr><tr><td>Magrib</td><td>7:46</td></tr><tr><td>ISHA</td><td>9:29</td></tr></table>	FAJR	3:34	ZUHR	12: 32	ASR	5:32	Magrib	7:46	ISHA	9:29
FAJR	3:34										
ZUHR	12: 32										
ASR	5:32										
Magrib	7:46										
ISHA	9:29										

This Day In History

- 1910 - Father's Day celebrated for 1st time (Spokane, Washington)
- 1917 - The British Royal Family, which has had strong German ties since George I, renounces its German names and titles and adopts the name of Windsor
- 1919 - Opposed to dismemberment of Turkey by the Allies, Mustafa Kemal declares his Turkish Nationalist Congress, headquartered in Ankara, independent of Constantinople
- 1921 - Census held in Great Britain
- 1921 - Turks and Christians of Palestine sign a friendship treaty against Jews
- 1931 - 1st photoelectric cell installed commercially West Haven, Connecticut
- 1940 - German 7th Armoured division under command of Rommel occupies Cherbourg
- 1941 - Romania orders Jews to evacuate Darabani
- 1941 - US President Franklin Roosevelt signs Two Ocean Navy Expansion Act
- 1944 - French troops free Elba
- 1944 - Heavy air raid on US fleet at Guam "Turkey Shoot"
- 1944 - Japanese troops conquer Changsha China
- 1944 - World War II: First day of the 2 day Battle of the Philippine Sea, US naval forces defeat Japanese fleet
- 1948 - Panama and Costa Rica recognize Israel
- 1961 - "Little Egypt (Ying-Yang)" by Coasters peaks at #23
- 1961 - Kuwait declares independence from UK
- 1961 - US Supreme Court struck down a provision in Maryland's constitution requiring state office holders to believe in God
- 1963 - 2 Russian space missions return to Earth
- 1963 - Valentina Tereshkova 1st woman in space returns to Earth
- 1964 - Civil Rights Act of 1964 passes 73-27
- 1965 - Algerian coup under colonel Houari Boumedienne, pres Ben Bella fired
- 1968 - 50,000 participate in Solidarity Day March of Poor People's Campaign
- 1969 - State troopers ordered to Cairo III, to quell racial disturbances
- 1970 - A Nikolayev & V Sevastyanov return after 18 days in Soyuz 9

From KO Archives

‘Shocked’ Tourist Joins Efforts To Clean Dal

SRINAGAR- A German tourist, who was "shocked" by the levels of 'pollution' in the worlds, famous Dal Lake here, on Sunday joined NGOs cleaning up the water body.

"I am shocked to see the pollution in the lake ... Last time when I visited Srinagar and stayed in a house boat, the condition of the lake was not so bad," said Marc Stollreiter,30, who hired 60 labourers to clean the Nehru Park part of the lake.

This part was once a favourite place for youngsters to swim. Once, even former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah had jumped into the lake here during his regime in 1996-2002.

Stollreiter said the plan to clean the lake was chalked out by him and his friend Birgit Lenger in collaboration with House Boat Owners Association, Valley Citizen's Council and Dal Zamin-dar Union.

By noon, volunteers took out tonnes of garbage, including polythene carry bags and plastic bottles, from the lake into boats for proper disposal.

A concerned Stollreiter said, "This lake is dying--- It needs proper maintenance and urgent measures to ensure that coming generations are not deprived of the beautiful water body."

A visitor to the city since his childhood, the tourist said that on every trip he observed an "increase" in the level of pollution in the lake.

His efforts were lauded by the General Secretary of the Valley Citizen's Council, Imdad Saqi.

"We are very concerned over the deteriorating health of the lake and failure of authorities to save it," he said and alleged the Lakes and Waterways Development Authority set up to maintain the lake was doing nothing.

(Kashmir Observer, 19 June, 2007)

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No.- 53-2025-26-ADEN-1-FZR			Date: 17.06.2025	
DEN/HQ/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date-10.07.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/ revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www.ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc, Manual payments through Demand draft Banker Cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information logon to www.ireps.gov.in				
Tender Type		Tendering Section		Packet System
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Date of Uploading Tenders		Bid Starting Date		Tender Closing Date/Time
17.06.2025		26.06.2025		10.07.2025/ 15:00 Hrs
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Advertised Value (Rs.)		Earnest Money	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
1,29,40,836.59/-		2,14,700.00/-	60 Days	09 Months
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AI Plane Crash: 190 Identified by DNA Testing

Press Trust Of India

AHMEDABAD: At least 190 victims of last week's Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad have so far been identified through DNA matching, and 159 bodies have been handed over to their families, an official said on Wednesday. The London-bound Air India flight AI-171 carrying 242 passengers and crew members crashed in Ahmedabad on

DNA tests to establish the identity of the victims as many bodies were charred beyond recognition or damaged. "Till Wednesday morning, 190 DNA samples have been matched, and 159 bodies have already been handed over to the respective families. The process of matching (DNA samples of) other bodies is still on," Ahmedabad Civil Hospital's medical superintendent Dr Rakesh Joshi told reporters.



A relative of a victim of the Air India plane crash is comforted as she breaks down at a hospital in Ahmedabad, India, Friday, June 13, 2025. (Photo | AP)

June 12. All but one on board the plane died along with nearly 29 on the ground when the aircraft smashed into a medical complex. Authorities are carrying out

The state government had earlier stated that samples of 250 victims, including persons on board the ill-fated flight as well as those killed on the ground, were collected for identification.

Rs 3K FASTag Annual Pass For Private Cars From Aug 15: Gadkari



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday said the government will introduce a FASTag-based annual pass for private vehicles, priced at Rs 3,000, effective from August 15, in a step towards hassle-free highway travel.

In a post on X, Gadkari said the pass is valid for one year from the date of activation or up to 200 trips, whichever comes first. The pass is designed exclusively for non-commercial private vehicles such as cars, jeeps, and vans.

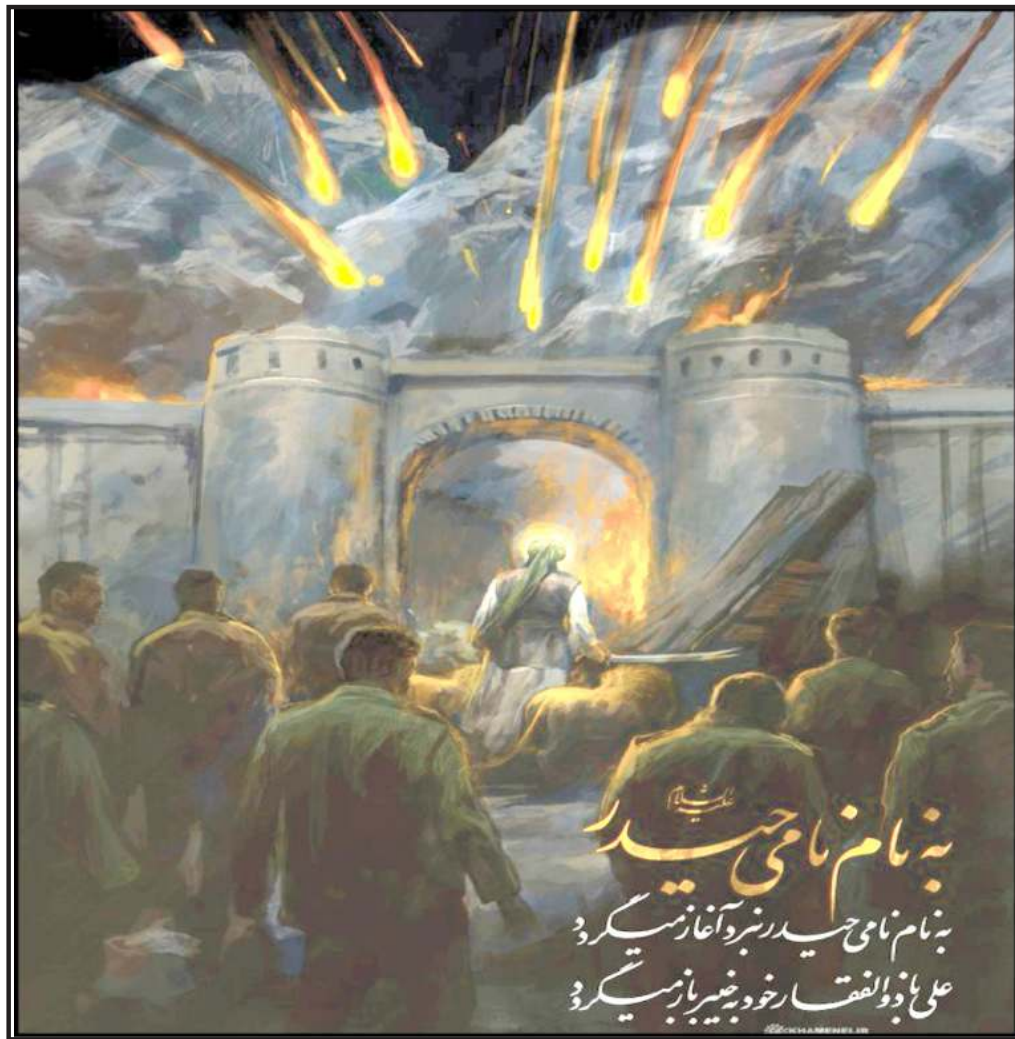
The road transport and highways minister said the annual pass will enable seamless and cost-effective travel across National Highways throughout the country.

A dedicated link for activation and renewal will soon be available on the Rajmarg Yatra App, as well as on the official websites of NHA and MoRTH, he added.

The road transport and highways minister said the annual pass will enable seamless and cost-effective travel across National Highways throughout the country.

Gadkari said the policy addresses long-standing concerns regarding toll plazas located within a 60 km range and simplifies toll payments through a single, affordable transaction.

"By reducing wait times, easing congestion, and minimising disputes at toll plazas, the annual Pass aims to deliver a faster and smoother travel experience for millions of private vehicle owners," the minister said.



Khamenei Unleashes 'Zulfiqar', Declares 'Battle has Begun'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Tensions between Iran and Israel have reached a boiling point, as Iran's Supreme Leader issued a stern warning, signaling the possibility of a full-scale war.

The warning came just hours after direct threats from U.S. President Donald Trump to Sayyed Khamenei, along with his call for Iran's "unconditional surrender."

Ayatollah Khamenei posted a cryptic but strongly worded message on the social media platform X, stating:

"In the name of the renowned Hyder, the battle begins. Ali, with his Zulfiqar, returns to Khaybar."

The statement invoked powerful Islamic symbolism — "Hyder" and "Zulfiqar" refer to the first Shia Imam, Ali, and his legendary sword.

A subsequent post read:

"We must give a strong response to the terrorist Zionist regime. We will show the Zionists no mercy."

The post appeared to frame the battle as part of a broader ideological struggle, accompanied by an image of a man with a sword entering a castle gate — a clear allusion to the historic Battle of Khaybar.

'Irreparable consequences'

Meanwhile in his first remarks outside of social media posts since Friday, when he delivered a speech broadcast on state media after Israel began bombarding Iran, Ayatollah



Earlier, Trump had claimed that the United States and Israel had full control of Iranian airspace and warned that the country's top leader was within reach.

He called for Iran's "unconditional surrender," and said Washington knows the exact whereabouts of Khamenei but was holding off on assassinating him "for now," adding, "Our patience is wearing thin."

Khamenei said peace or war could not be imposed on the Islamic Republic.

"Wise individuals who know Iran, its people, and its history never speak to this nation with the language of threats, because the Iranian nation is not one to surrender," Ayatollah Khamenei said in the video message aired on state TV.

"The Americans should know that any US military intervention will undoubtedly be accompanied by irreparable damage."

How The US Has Shifted Military Jets And Ships In The Middle East

Associated Press

WASHINGTON: The US is shifting military aircraft and warships into and around the Middle East to protect Israel from Iranian attacks as President Donald Trump warns Tehran to step back from the conflict.

Trump's social media posts saying his patience with Iran was "wearing thin" have raised the possibility of deepening US involvement, perhaps by using its bunker-busting bomb to strike a key Iranian nuclear site built deep

underground in the mountains.

Israel doesn't have the massive munition it would take to destroy the Fordo nuclear fuel enrichment plant, or the aircraft needed to deliver it. Only the US does.

As America's national security leaders discuss the next steps, the Pentagon has moved to ensure that its troops and bases in the region are protected.

Here's a look at the US military presence in the Middle East: US aircraft moving to the Middle East In a social media post, Trump warned that "we

now have complete and total control of the skies over Iran."

U.S. officials insisted as of Tuesday that the American military has not taken any offensive actions against Iran, only defensive strikes to take out incoming Iranian missiles to protect Israel.

Additional U.S. fighter jets and refueling tankers have been deployed to the region, but officials have declined to provide specific numbers. Fighter jets have joined in launching strikes to defend Israel, but officials said Tuesday that no American aircraft were over Iran.

EC System to Now Deliver Voter ID Cards in 15 Days

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday said voter identity cards will now be delivered to electors within 15 days, virtually halving the time taken.

Till now, it took a little over a month for the Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) to be delivered to the voters, officials pointed out.

The EC said a new standard operating procedure (SOP) has been introduced to ensure that voter cards are delivered within 15 days of new enrolment of an elector or change in particulars of an existing voter.

The new system will ensure real-time tracking of each stage right from the EPIC generation by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) till the delivery of the card to the elector through the Department of Posts (DoP), the poll authority said.

The electors will also receive notifications via SMS at each stage, keeping them informed about the status of their EPIC, it noted.

For this purpose, the EC has introduced a dedicated IT module on its recently launched ECINet platform.

The new IT platform will replace the existing process by re-engineering the current system and streamlining the workflow.



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The DoP's Application Programme Interface (API) will be integrated with the ECINet for seamless delivery, the EC said.

This initiative aims to enhance service delivery while maintaining data security. In the past four months, the Commission has taken various initiatives for the benefit of electors and other stakeholders.

Regional Conflict Derails Pakistan-Russia Train



Trans Asia News

Dubai: The launch of a much-anticipated direct railway link between Pakistan and Russia has been postponed indefinitely, Gulf News reported on Wednesday. The delay comes as tensions rise in the region, forcing the closure of the Iran-Pakistan border — a crucial transit point for the rail corridor.

The freight train service, originally set to begin on June 22, was to run from Lahore to Astrakhan in southern Russia, passing through Iran, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. The route was part of a broader initiative signed in June 2024 during the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked by Pakistan's Ambassador Muhammad Khalid

Jamali and Russia's Deputy Minister of Transport Dmitry S. Zverev to strengthen bilateral cooperation in rail transport and trade.

The cargo line was expected to begin operations with 16 freight wagons, with plans for future expansion. Officials saw the project as a strategic move to deepen trade ties with Russia and improve regional connectivity with Central Asia.

Despite the setback, Pakistan has made progress on another regional initiative — a new railway route to Uzbekistan via Afghanistan. This first-of-its-kind corridor aims to provide landlocked Uzbekistan and Afghanistan direct access to the Arabian Sea. Uniquely, the route will also support passenger services, opening up greater travel and trade opportunities across the region.

Indian tourist stranded at Azerbaijan border while fleeing Iran; ordeal continues

After a perilous 500-km road journey out of conflict-torn Tehran, stranded Indian tourist Falguni Dey reached Iran's Astara border with Azerbaijan on Tuesday evening, but his ordeal is far from over.

Dey is now caught in a web of complex paperwork needed to cross into Azerbaijan and reach Baku, from where he plans to fly home.

"I may have managed to escape the bombs in Tehran by undertaking this journey, but now I am stuck in Iran's Astara land border because the Azerbaijan authorities would not accept me into their country without a special migration code issued by that government, and my e-visa won't work," Dey told PTI through a voice message.

"Despite my best persuasions,

I have been told that it would require at least another fortnight for that code to arrive, and I have no idea how I will survive that long in Iran," the college professor from Kolkata added.

Translated into reality, this means the additional 300-odd kilometre journey from Astara — near the Caspian Sea in northeastern Iran — to the safety of a hotel room in Baku now remains a distant dream for Dey.

PTI had on Tuesday reported the plight of Dey, also an amateur mountaineer, who reached Tehran on June 5 for a bid to conquer the volcanic summit of Mount Damavand and remained stranded in Tehran because of Israeli missiles till June 17 before making a desperate attempt to escape the city by road and reach the Azerbaijan

border.

"I am physically and emotionally drained. On top of that, I am facing a severe funds crunch, and the uncertainty of reaching home is killing me. All my efforts and the money spent by my family and friends to get me to safety seem to have come to naught," Dey said, nearly breaking down.

The hotel booking in Baku made by his family from Kolkata, where Dey was supposed to reach on Wednesday morning, had to be cancelled because of the complexities at the border check post preventing his cross-over, Dey said.

"Even the Mumbai-bound flight from Baku, where I had booked a ticket, has now been cancelled because of the prevailing uncertainties all around," he added

. PTI

Man Returns 70 Tolas Gold, Cash from Ahmedabad Crash Site

Rajesh Patel, who was among the first responders following the Ahmedabad plane crash on June 12, returned to the scene soon after carrying bodies and many injured to ambulances. He began rummaging through the smouldering wreckage.

Patel, 57, said he collected nearly 70 tolas of gold ornaments, which would be priceless for the victims' kin, Rs 50,000 and a few US dollars from the scene of the deadly aviation tragedy and handed them over to the police.

As he heard a deafening sound and saw a giant ball of fire rising into the sky, Patel, who lives just 300 metres from the scene of the accident, hopped into an ambulance of a private hospital run by his relative in the city's Shahibaug area.

"Upon learning that an aircraft had crashed into a hostel complex of BJ Medical College, I rushed to the area with the hope of saving as many people as I could. However, we could not get close to the spot for the first 15 to 20 minutes. We started the rescue work after the fire was brought under control," said Patel, who is in the construction business.

Since Patel and the other volunteers did not have any stretchers, they used old sarees, bed-sheets, and gunny sacks to carry bodies as well as injured persons to the ambulances, he said.

After finishing the rescue work, Patel turned to salvaging luggage and other belongings of those on board the ill-fated Air India plane.

"From 10 to 15 handbags, which were burnt and lying scattered, we recovered 70 tolas of gold jewellery, 8 to 10 silver articles, a few passports, a copy of Bhagavad Gita, Rs 50,000 cash and 20 dollars. We handed them over to a police official supervising the rescue operation," said Patel.

Patel, who earlier worked as a photographer, had volunteered at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital after the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts. He lost two of his close friends in one of the explosions that took place inside the trauma centre of the hospital.

According to Inspector DB Basiya from the Meghaninagar police station, one of their teams has been tasked with preparing a detailed list of every valuable article as well as luggage recovered from the crash site.

PTI

RTI Group Flags Mining, Land Issues In Budgam

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The smell of dust still hangs over Sukhnag River, long after the machines stopped digging.

On Wednesday, a small delegation walked into the office of Budgam's newly posted Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat. They didn't come with slogans or protest banners. Just facts, names, and a growing list of what they say is being lost—rivers, pastures, livelihoods.

"There are laws. But they're only on paper," said Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat, who led the group from the Jammu and Kashmir RTI Movement. "What we're seeing is destruction in broad daylight."

The activists handed over documents and verbal complaints. They spoke of illegal clay mining in remote blocks, of fruit trees axed without fair compensation in Surasyar, and of Gujjar and Chopan herders being denied access to traditional grazing routes.

"Pastoralists are being pushed off their own land," said Basharat Chopan, who has lived off the highland pastures of Tosamaidan since childhood. "Now they have to beg for permission."

For years, local herders say, a confusing maze of permits and

official delays has kept them from reaching meadows they've used for generations. Some have given up. Others still try.

The group also called for opening trekking routes across Pir Panjal, including Yusmarg and Doodhpathri, where local youth have invested in guiding and homestay services. "People prepared for tourists. The tourists are ready. But the gates are closed," said Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, RTI Movement's district coordinator.

Mining, though, was the sharpest concern. The National Green Tribunal recently flagged violations in Sukhnag. Residents claim extraction continues under the radar.

"They take the sand, leave craters, and disappear," said Shabir Ahmad Bhat, another member of the group. "The damage stays behind."

Dr. Raja Muzaffar acknowledged recent action by police in Charar Sharief and Chadoora. "But it shouldn't take a court to get results," he said. "The administration should be one step ahead."

The meeting ended without promises but with what the activists described as a "patient hearing."

"We're not asking for favours," Dr. Muzaffar concluded. "We're asking them to follow the law."

Yoga Demonstrations At Manasbal & Wular Lakes Promote Peace



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In the lead-up to International Yoga Day, the J&K Sports Council organized captivating yoga demonstrations on Wednesday at the scenic shores of Manasbal and Wular Lake, blending the tranquility of nature with the timeless practice of yoga. These lakeside sessions drew widespread attention for promoting inner wellness, peace, and the tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir.

Set against the pristine backdrop of Kashmir's natural beauty, the demonstrations showcased how yoga can harmonize body and mind while also strengthening the region's identity as a peaceful and vibrant destination. The initiative not only celebrated the physical and spiritual benefits of yoga but also highlighted the synergy between sports, ecology, and tourism in the Union Territory.

These events form part of a larger series of demonstrations and awareness activities being conducted by the J&K Sports Council across the region in the run-up to International Yoga Day on June 21. The aim is to encourage a culture of fitness, mindfulness, and community participation across diverse age groups and geographies.

The peaceful ambiance of Wular and Manasbal, combined with the disciplined movements of trained Yogasana athletes, sent a powerful message: Kashmir stands as a land of calm, vitality, and opportunity, open to the world for exploration, rejuvenation, and meaningful experiences through both tourism and sports.

Thousands are expected to participate in the Yoga Day celebrations across various centers of the J&K Sports Council, reflecting the growing resonance of yoga as a way of life in the region.

Dharti Aaba Abhiyan Day-4:

IEC Campaign Witnesses Vibrant Community Participation



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The ongoing 15-day Intensive Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign under the Dharti Aaba Janatiya Gramin Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA) entered its fourth day with unwavering momentum in district Anantnag, reinforcing the mission of holistic tribal empowerment.

The camps were held at various locations across the district where an extensive Awareness and Benefit Saturation Camp were organized, drawing active participation from the local tribe. Part of a nation-wide initiative, the campaign is being systematically executed across 33 Panchayats of Anantnag district to ensure saturation of all flagship government schemes and services in tribal areas.

Highlights of the camp included awareness sessions on DAJGUA objectives and impact, distribution of IEC material of different departments, show-

casing of welfare schemes by government departments, awareness drives on PMAY and scheme briefings from departments including Agriculture, Horticulture, Health, ICDS, Social Welfare, Revenue, Sheep Husbandry and others.

The camp also featured interactive sessions between officials and community members, enabling real-time grievance redressal, service gap identification, and fostering deeper engagement.

Beneficiaries expressed satisfaction for the initiative, acknowledging the government's commitment to grassroots empowerment.

The campaign underscores the district administration's resolve for inclusive development and tribal empowerment.

The initiative is being closely monitored by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag with regular reviews and field visits planned to ensure transparency, effectiveness and saturation of services.



LABOURERS CLEAR WEEDS from Dal Lake on a sunny day in Srinagar. KO Photo.

KO PHOTO, SAMEER HUSSAIN

GCC Delegation Calls On CM Omar Abdullah

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A delegation from the Group of Concerned Citizens (GCC), J&K on Wednesday called on the Chief Minister and highlighted several issues of public importance.

Led by Khurshid Ahmad Ganai, retired IAS officer, the delegation raised concerns regarding the need to improve district healthcare, reduce unnecessary referrals to tertiary hospitals, and strengthen cancer care facilities.

The delegation also emphasized the importance of increased investment in the agriculture sector, promotion of vertical farming and innovation, and strict control over the



conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.

In the education sector, the GCC called for enhanced focus on teacher training, introduction of STEM and AI-related courses, and the promotion of Urdu teaching in relevant regions.

Issues related to strengthening startups, expanding voca-

tional training, encouraging MSME-based employment, and addressing traffic bottlenecks on Srinagar city roads were also flagged during the meeting.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured that all genuine concerns would be addressed on priority.

J&K Porters Among Victims As Landslide Hits Kedarnath Yatra Route

Observer News Service

RUDRAPRAYAG: A tragic landslide struck the Kedarnath trek route on Wednesday, claiming the lives of two palanquin-bearers from Jammu and Kashmir and injuring three others, including a pilgrim from Gujarat.

The incident occurred around 11:20 am near Junglechatti Ghat, a key point along the pilgrimage path to the revered Kedarnath shrine. According to police officials, boulders suddenly rolled down the hillside, striking pilgrims, palanquins, and porter operators en route.

The deceased have been identified as Nitin Kumar and Chandrashekar, both residents of Doda district in Jammu and Kashmir. The injured include two more palanquin-bearers from Doda—Sandeep Kumar and Nitin Manhas—as well as a pilgrim from Gujarat, Akash Chitriya of Bhavnagar, police said.

"All five individuals were thrown into a gorge after being hit by falling debris," said Rudraprayag Superintendent of Police Akshay Prahlad Konde. Swift response teams from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), along with local police and volunteers, launched a rescue operation, navigating treacherous terrain and using ropes to retrieve the victims.

While two individuals were declared dead at the scene, the injured were rushed to a local health centre. Two of them, reportedly in serious condition, were referred to a medical facility in Gaurikund for further treatment.

Despite the incident, the yatra has not been halted. "Pilgrim movement continues under strict police supervision," SP Konde confirmed.

This tragedy highlights the persistent risks associated with high-altitude pilgrimage routes, especially during the monsoon season when landslides are common.

Transport Commissioner Reviews Assesses Amarnath Yatra Preparedness

Observer News Service

KULGAM/RAMBAN: Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Mahajan conducted a comprehensive review of functioning of the ARTO offices, focusing on the timely disposal of applications, redressal of public grievances and the status of online services being provided to the citizens.

During his visit to Kulgam, Vishesh Mahajan held an interaction with the Taxi Operators' Union to understand their concerns and operational challenges. He emphasized the importance of maintaining fair practices and ensuring high standards of service to the public, especially in view of the upcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

The Transport Commissioner reviewed the preparedness for the Yatra and directed the officials to ensure availability of adequate service providers for the pilgrims. He also instructed the enforcement staff to keep a strict check on overcharging and ensure that rates remain within the prescribed limits.



CS Scrutinizes Strategy For Effective Implementation Of Mission YUVA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive meeting to assess the implementation of Mission YUVA, a flagship initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and employment in Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting, attended by senior government officials, Vice-Chancellors and representatives from leading financial institutions like IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, NABARD and J&K Bank, focused on accelerating the mission's ambitious goals while Deputy Commissioners participated virtually.

The Chief Secretary expressed satisfaction with the progress on online application submissions for Mission YUVA. He asked the Deputy Commissioners to intensify awareness campaigns at the district level and establish robust institutional frameworks to assist the applicants. He emphasized the importance of consistent monitoring of applications and timely convening of District Level Implementation Committees (DLICs) for swift case approvals.

Dulloo asked the experts of BISAG-N for developing the dashboard which would give a peek into working of the YUVA portal and its utilization by different stakeholders and the applicants.

Addressing the J&K Bank, Dulloo recommended designating a senior administrator to oversee the Mission YUVA operations. He also instructed their branch managers to conduct

weekly visits to Block-level Business Help Desks (BHDs) to guide the applicants in developing effective business proposals for swift loan sanctions.

The Chief Secretary also sought and received assurances from the universities, national institutions, NABARD and NIFT to dedicate their human and material resources towards capacity building for the applicants, transforming them into successful future entrepreneurs.

Secretary, Labour and Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, while highlighting the Mission YUVA's objective, said that it aims to establish J&K as a thriving hub of enterprises and holistic employment. The mission targets creation of 1,37,000+ new enterprises and 4,25,000+ employment opportunities. He explained that the implementation strategy has been built upon four key pillars: Culture, Capital, Capacity Building and Connectivity (4Cs), designed to accelerate employment avenues in J&K. The "Culture" pillar focuses on motivating the individuals and creating an enabling business environment.

Moreover, extensive "Udhyan Jagriti" awareness campaigns have been conducted across J&K, utilizing social media, mass media, outdoor advertising and panchayat-level outreach. So far, 2,086, out of 4,291 panchayats, have been covered, reaching nearly 98,700 individuals. The goal for this phase is to cover 90% of the panchayats and reach 2 lakh individuals.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

TWO COVER SYSTEM

NIT No. 280f R&B/Anantnag/ 2025-26/E-TENDERING/2667-76 DATED: 16.06.2025.

Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K, invites percentage rate bids in electronic tendering system for the following works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with J&K UT Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State Governments.

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

S. No	Name of Work	Tendered Cost (Rs in Lacs.)			Cost of document (Rs in Lacs)	Earnest Money (Bid Security) (Rs in lacs.)	Time of completion For Construction work	Tender Call	Time and Date of opening of tenders online (Technical Bid)	Class of contractor
		Construction Part	Maintenance Part	Total cost of work						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Construction of Road from Anz-walla to Kundpora via Shamshipora.	258.52 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 219.08 + (18% GST Amount 39.44)	25.85 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 21.91 + (18% GST Amount 3.94)	284.37 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 240.99 + (18% GST Amount 43.38)	0.055	5.69	03 Years	1st	08-07-2025 At 11:00 A.M	AAY Class Only

M.H Account = NABARD RIDFXXX.

Position of AAA = Accorded Vide Order No CE(R&B) SK/AA/DB/01 of 2024-25 Dated 27.01.2025.

Position of TS = Accorded Vide Order No CE (RnB)/SK/TS/22 of 2025-26, Dated 31.05.2025.

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	16/06/2025
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	17/06/2025 from 10.00 AM.
3	Date, Time and Place of Pre Bid meeting	19/06/2025 at 11.00 AM in the Office of the Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Ang H.Q Khanabal
4	Bid submission Start Date	19/06/2025 from 11.00 AM.
5	Bid Submission End Date	07/07/2025 upto 04.00 PM.
6	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	08/07/2025 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Ang, H.Q Khanabal
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (tender inviting authority)/NIT No. Name of Work/Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt/The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Superintending Engineer(R&B) Circle Anantnag HQ Khanabal (Tender Receiving Authority)/Tender receiving Authority. (The Date of EMD (CDR/FDR/BG) should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and validity of EMD at the time of opening of Bids shall be a period of 45 days beyond Bid Validity of 120 days).
- All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/ Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/ Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.
- The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Superintending Engineer(R&B) Circle Anantnag HQ Khanabal (Tender Receiving Authority) within 07 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period(DLP) of the work. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year shall be forwarded to Higher Authorities.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period(DLP) of the work. Bidders can resubmit/withdraw the bids as specified.
- The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of Responsive Bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Anantnag HQ Khanabal. The date for same shall be intimated separately.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited if:-
 - Any bidder/tender withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required Performance Security within specified time period before signing contract agreement.
 - In case contractor fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
- Instruction to Bidders regarding E-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "BiddersManual Kit" on www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SBD with technical bid.
- Note:-
 - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
 - The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
- Scanned copy of Cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag(The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD pledged to Superintending Engineer(R&B) Circle Anantnag HQ Khanabal (Tender Receiving Authority) must be uploaded with the Technical bid documents for the work. After opening of financial bids, the lowest bidder shall submit the Performance Security in the form of CDR/BG/FDR within 07 Days in the Office of the Superintending Engineer R&B Circle Anantnag HQ Khanabal. Failure to do so shall render the first lowest successful bidder non-responsive. The Original Treasury Challan (Cost of Tender Document), EMD (earnest money) and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of the Contract.
- Bidders may contact Office of the Superintending Engineer R&B Circle Anantnag HQ Khanabal or Concerned Executive Engineer for any guidance for getting DSC or any other relevant details in respect of e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.
- Price escalation and Taxes: The %age quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees, shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.
- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
- Defect Liability Period: 05 Years after date of completion.
- All key construction material (i.e. cement, steel, bitumen, pipes etc) shall have to be arranged by the contractor strictly as per specifications with the approval of Engineer-in-charge.
- Qualification criteria for the work and other terms and conditions are contained in the bidding document available on website

DIPK-2639-25

DT: 18/06/2025

Executive Engineer
PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag

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KO VIEW

Modi-Trump call

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s firm rejection of US President Donald Trump’s repeated offers to mediate between India and Pakistan is not just a reiteration of India’s longstanding policy, it is a clear signal to the world that New Delhi will brook no ambiguity about its sovereignty and its red lines.

Ever since the signing of the 1972 Simla Agreement, India has maintained that the question of Jammu and Kashmir is a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan, to be resolved only through direct dialogue, if and when conditions permit. This principle is rooted not just in diplomatic consistency but also in bitter experience. Each time India has attempted talks with Islamabad, the overture has been followed, sooner or later, by a terror attack. This has made New Delhi wary of talking to Pakistan. In the past, when the two countries were closer to a breakthrough in their negotiations - for example during the 2003-07 dialogue between the then prime minister Manmohan Singh and the then Pakistani counterpart Parvez Musharraf - it is immediately followed by a major incident that disrupts the engagement and turns the discourse hostile.

The current situation is no different. Despite the latest flare-up, the pattern remains: Mediation by an external power, no matter how well-intentioned, may not change this fundamental reality.

President Trump’s dramatic statements, claiming that he leveraged trade threats to stop the recent India-Pakistan conflict, or that he can broker a “solution” to Kashmir after a thousand years, do little for peace in South Asia. They undermine the carefully cultivated understanding between India and its Western partners that equating India and Pakistan is a reality that India doesn’t see as reflecting the new geopolitical reality in the region.

That said, India has demonstrated the ability, capacity and maturity to handle its challenges on its own. And should there be a time for talks with Pakistan, it will come not through third-party pressure but through India’s considered determination. Until then, any offer of mediation, however lofty in rhetoric, is both redundant and unhelpful.

As things stand, there is an irreconcilable divergence in the stances of the two countries. While Pakistan seeks focus on the Kashmir issue, India wants the stoppage of cross-border terrorism for any talks to start. As for the Kashmir issue, New Delhi has removed it from any future talks with Pakistan, except the discussions on the status of the part of the region under Islamabad’s control. India, thus, has a bilateral approach to engagement with Pakistan. The message is clear: peace talks will be possible only when Pakistan addresses India’s concerns on terror, not when outsiders knock on the door with unsolicited solutions.

FINANCIAL FIX

The Land Trap

Buying property in Kashmir can cost more than money, thanks to fraud, confusion, and a broken system.

Irshad Mushtaq

Behind the valley’s ‘shining’ property market lies a darker reality, where buyers are misled, brokers exploit gaps, and the law lags behind.

Most property deals here happen through brokers. Few are licensed. Many operate on trust, not paperwork. And that’s the problem.

Buyers, unfamiliar with legal terms like khasra numbers, mutation records, or registered sale deeds, often sign without fully understanding what they’re getting into.

Some brokers deliberately show incomplete or forged documents. Others sell the same plot to more than one person. Many use family inheritance disputes or forged gift deeds to sell land under litigation. By the time buyers realise, they’re either stuck in court or forced to settle for a fraction of what they paid.

Take the case of a Srinagar businessman who bought land for 50 lakh, only to find it had already been sold twice before. His case is now dragging through court. He’s paying legal fees, fighting for land he thought he owned.

Why does this happen? Kashmir lacks a digital land registry. Records are mostly on paper, often outdated. Property laws are complex and rarely explained. Legal help is expensive. And revenue officials are too overwhelmed to verify every deal.

There’s little deterrent. Scammers walk away while victims stay trapped.

Fixing this won’t be easy, but it must start with digitising land records, licensing brokers, and requiring document verification before any sale.

Until then, Kashmir’s land will stay fertile ground. Not just for homes, but for fraud. And every new buyer walks in blind, hoping they won’t be next.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The Coaching Culture Is a Crisis

Behind every NEET rank is a child under siege. It’s time we chose schools over stress.

Dr. Mushtaq Rather

Not long ago, in Anantnag, a young girl preparing for NEET died by suicide. She was just 18. She had left the familiarity of home for the promise of Kota, India’s coaching capital, where thousands of students chase dreams shaped by the alphabet soup of JEE, NEET, and UPSC.

Her life ended in silence, just another number in a long, grim list of suicides that has turned Kota into something darker: a city of sorrow.

This wasn’t the first tragedy, and, heart-breakingly, it won’t be the last.

So far this year, at least 15 students have taken their lives in Kota. The Supreme Court recently asked the Rajasthan government what, if anything, had been done. But the real question runs deeper: how did we let things get this far?

We now live in an academic culture where “going to school” has become an afterthought, even an inconvenience.

Children as young as 14 are pulled from classrooms and placed into coaching centers with military precision. They wake before dawn, study until night, and see the world not in experiences, but in multiple-choice questions.

In Jammu and Kashmir, as in many parts of India, senior secondary students skip school altogether, enrolling instead in private coaching centers while maintaining what are, in essence, ghost admissions in their schools.

This arrangement is mutually beneficial. Private schools pocket monthly tuition fees and celebrate the students’ exam results as their own. Students, meanwhile, get attendance certificates without ever stepping into a classroom.

But what is lost in this transaction — what disappears in the blur of test series and cram sheets — is something far more essential: the

soul of education.

A school is not just a building. It’s a space where students learn to speak up, to fall down and rise again, to think critically and feel deeply. In its best form, a school is a laboratory of life. It teaches collaboration in morning assemblies, leadership in classroom debates, expression through arts and writing, and resilience through routine. Coaching centers, by contrast, offer content. Pure, relentless, mechanical content.

We need to ask ourselves, what are we preparing our children for? A high-stakes exam? Or a full life?

The rise of the coaching industry, now a multi-billion-dollar behemoth, reflects our collective fear. We worry that schools can’t keep up, that they don’t prepare our kids for the cut-throat competition of elite colleges. That fear is not entirely unfounded.

But in trying to compensate, we’ve allowed coaching centers to become not a support system but a replacement. And with that shift, something fundamental has been lost.

It’s not just about stress. It’s about identity. Children in this system are not seen as individuals, with talents and flaws, dreams and doubts, but as output machines. A child’s worth is measured in percentile ranks and ranks alone. The pressure to perform is constant, the emotional scaffolding non-existent. When students break down, as they increasingly do, we treat it as a private failure rather than a public warning.

Consider this: in Anantnag, a girl named Deeba Bilal recently scored 97% in Class 11 without any coaching. Her success came from consistent school attendance and an encouraging learning atmosphere at HSS Salia. She credited her school, not a private tutor, for her achievement. There’s also Syed Sania Misbah, a student and activist nominated for the Rashtriya Bal Puraskar for her advocacy for tribal

girls’ education.

These students are reminders that schools still matter. That schools, when empowered, can nurture excellence. Not just in marks, but in meaning.

We often speak of 21st-century skills: critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration. But coaching centers are still stuck in the 20th century, or perhaps even earlier, where rote learning is king and human emotion is irrelevant.

Schools, at their best, are still trying to teach empathy, purpose, and belonging. They are still trying to raise not just toppers, but citizens.

But to do that, schools must reclaim their space. We need policy reform, yes, but more than that, we need cultural reform. Parents must stop viewing school as a checkbox and coaching as a cure-all. Teachers must be trained not only to deliver lessons but to support emotional well-being. Education departments must ensure that dummy admissions are not just discouraged but made impossible. And we must create avenues for academic success that do not require children to sacrifice their childhoods.

The Ministry of Education’s recent move to bar coaching enrollment for students under 16 and to clamp down on misleading promises is a start.

But regulation won’t fix what culture has normalized. We need to ask ourselves: what kind of learning do we value? What kind of child do we want to raise?

At the end of the day, a child who cracks an exam but loses his sense of self in the process is not a success story. It’s a cautionary tale.

And we already have too many of those.

Dr. Mushtaq Rather is an educator and columnist from Mattan, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Great Queue Trap

Every year, thousands of young Kashmiris wait endlessly for government jobs that may never come. It’s not just a crisis of employment, it’s a collapse of dreams, dignity and direction.

Peerzada Mohsin Shafi

Jobs? Or just wait?

The truth is, many of them wait. And wait. Coaching becomes routine. Family pressure builds. Mental health starts to suffer. And years slip by.

There’s a saying: “Intizaar sab kuch khatam karta hai”—waiting kills everything. For too many of our young people, this waiting has become their life.

The saddest part is how this queue—this obsession with one kind of job—shrinks ambition. We now have engineers applying for Class IV posts. Not because they lack skill, but because they’ve been taught that it’s better to mop a government floor than build something of their own.

It’s not just desperation. It’s a lack of imagination in our system.

We’ve built a culture that puts government labels above personal growth. That sees stability as more

important than creativity. That rewards waiting more than working. And the cost? Thousands of capable minds never explore other possibilities. They don’t start businesses. They don’t learn trades. They don’t try digital work, freelance gigs, or creative paths. They just wait.

Yes, job security matters. And yes, government jobs do offer that. But they are not the only source of rizq. Islam reminds us that sustenance comes from Allah, not from a government file. The Qur’an says: “Indeed, it is Allah who is the Provider, the firm possessor of strength.” That verse isn’t just religious comfort. It’s a call to shift our mindset.

So why are we still knocking on the same closed door?

Look around. The world has changed. People earn from coding, designing, teaching online,

farming, baking, and building apps. Young people are creating podcasts, running media pages, and exporting crafts. These aren’t backup plans. These are futures. But only if we allow them to be seen as such.

The cost of not doing this is already too visible. Burnout. Frustration. Thirty-year-olds still asking parents for pocket money. Depression that goes undiagnosed. And at the end, even those who do get the jobs often feel underused, unhappy, or stuck. They didn’t chase a passion—they chased a guarantee.

We need to ask: what is success, really?

Is it a salary slip, or the joy of building something that matters? Is it an office chair, or a life you control? Kashmir’s youth are among the brightest in the country. They deserve more than a waiting room.

Families need to widen the definition of dignity. Schools must teach skills beyond textbooks. Governments should back ideas, not just announce vacancies.

And we as a society must stop seeing anything outside “government service” as failure.

The author is a research scholar and writer from Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir. He holds an M.Tech in Infrastructure Development.

Letter to Editor

Kashmir’s Aspirants Deserve Better Than a Glitchy Website

I’m writing to express deep concern — not just mine, but that of many job aspirants across Jammu and Kashmir — about how the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) is functioning. Most people already know about the delays in exams, slow results, and irregular recruitment calendars. But there’s another problem that doesn’t get talked about enough: the complete failure of its online system.

Recently, three of my friends — all law graduates — tried to apply for a JKPSC exam. The process should’ve been simple. Fill out the form online, upload documents, pay the fee. But when they got to the payment stage, the website froze. No error message, no confirmation. Just nothing. They waited. Tried again. Switched browsers. Still no luck.

All three live in different districts — Ganderbal, Anantnag, and Kupwara. That same day, they all faced the exact same issue.

They emailed JKPSC for help. No one responded. With the deadline getting close, they had no choice but to travel to Srinagar and sort it out in person. One spent nearly a thousand rupees just on travel. Another skipped work. And when they reached the office, no one seemed surprised. Their complaint was treated like routine.

It shouldn’t be like this.

JKPSC is not a college website. It’s a state-level commission that handles the future of thousands of young people. Yet, it continues to operate with an outdated portal that often doesn’t work, doesn’t reply to emails, and doesn’t seem to care.

One of those friends, after fixing the payment in person, came home to upload the rest of his documents. The portal failed again. He couldn’t upload anything. Another round of anxiety. Another day wasted. Another trip possibly needed.

This isn’t a rare story. Many candidates go through this, especially those from remote areas.

They don’t just deal with broken links. They deal with broken hopes. Because behind every form is a young person who’s studied for years and is just asking for a fair shot.

What makes this worse is that JKPSC charges a hefty application fee. For that money, we don’t get a smooth experience. We get errors, delays, and silence.

This isn’t just about tech. It’s about trust. It’s about the message being sent to thousands of young minds: that we must fight the system even before we fight for the job.

I urge those in power to take this seriously. Fix the portal. Respond to queries. And treat candidates with the respect they deserve. It’s the least we ask.

Sincerely,
Ummar Jamal
National President, J&K Students Association

A Builder of Roads, and Lives, in South Kashmir

With mud on his boots and no PR team, a young Kashmiri engineer is doing what decades of policy couldn't

Mohammad Amin Mir

In Kralmad, a village tucked under the Pir Panjal in South Kashmir, people speak of a man who doesn't sit in offices. He builds them.

Gowhar Ahmad Mir is 36. A computer engineer by training. A contractor by profession. A local hero by default. He walks to work in dusty shoes, rolls up his sleeves, and calls his workers by name.

In a place long defined by absence—of jobs, of leaders, of plans that last—his presence is starting to change things.

"He didn't leave," said Abdul Rahim, an elderly farmer leaning against a stone wall. "That's all it took to matter here."

After earning his engineering degree, Gowhar could have gone the usual route—Srinagar, Delhi, Dubai. He stayed.

In 2010, he registered a small construction group under a government-backed self-help scheme. No capital. No machines. Just borrowed tools and a handful of local youth who

believed him when he said, "We can build this ourselves."

Today, his firm handles public infrastructure projects across the Doru tehsil—roads, classrooms, irrigation canals, community centers. He employs over 50 men, most from nearby villages. Many had no income before.

"He gave me my first job," said Waseem Ahmad, 28, who now manages field operations. "And he told me, learn everything. One day you'll lead."

Gowhar shows up to work sites with his own helmet, sometimes before the labourers. He doesn't outsource supervision. He doesn't sit in air-conditioned cabins. "If I'm not in the field, I'm not leading," he says.

But it's not just the concrete that matters. In Doru, his influence runs deeper.

When a widow's roof collapses in the winter, his men fix it. When a student needs tuition, the bill gets paid, quietly. There are no press releases, no social media posts. Just small interventions that, over time, stitch together trust.

"He never asks for anything," said Mehnaz Jan, a school teacher. "But if you need help, somehow, he already knows."

Locals call him muhafiz, protector.

During floods, he organizes relief. During curbs, he sends medicine. During snow, he clears the roads himself. He's never contested an election, but village heads ask him to mediate disputes. Young men ask him how to register a business. Women ask if their sons can apprentice under him.

In a region where many grow up watching their dreams float outward—to cities, to other states, to other countries—Gowhar built a life by staying.

"I tell boys, you don't need to escape to succeed," he says. "You need to start from where you are."

His vision now includes a skill training center. He's drafted a plan for a local construction academy to teach plumbing, masonry, digital design. He wants to create a co-operative for small-time contractors so they don't drown in debt during lean seasons. The

plan is modest. The ambition is not.

He doesn't speak the language of development conferences. He speaks Kashmiri and Urdu and a little Hindi, in a tone more fatherly than fiery. That makes him more trusted than most district officials, more accessible than the local MLA.

"Gowhar is not just building houses," said Bashir Lone, a retired school headmaster. "He's rebuilding belief."

The younger generation, often disengaged and disillusioned, sees in him something rare. A figure who doesn't preach success, but models it, without ego.

Sameer Bhat, 24, used to consider leaving for Punjab or Delhi. He now runs a small plumbing business, inspired by Gowhar's example. "He told me: make mistakes here, not in a strange city. That stuck."

In the larger politics of Kashmir, names like Gowhar don't usually surface. But on the ground, in the spaces between government schemes and lived reality, he has become indispensable.

"He's the only person we know who builds and stays," said Irfan, a young electrician. "Everyone else comes to cut the ribbon."

The locals call him the people's engineer. Not for his degree, but for the dignity he brings to work.

If you walk down the road from Doru to Kralmad in the evening, you'll likely spot him. Not in a motorcade. Not in a boardroom. But standing in the mud, phone in one hand, pointing with the other, making sure the pavement holds.

"It's not about contracts," he says. "It's about making this place livable."

He pauses. The call comes again. He turns, walks back toward the worksite.

Behind him, a group of boys watch closely. Some of them will build roads next year. Some will start their own crews. All of them have seen what it means to lead without leaving.

The author is a development analyst based in Jammu & Kashmir. He writes on grassroots leadership, youth issues, and governance.

Theij-Kad: When Rice Fields Sang in Kashmir

Once, summer in Kashmir arrived with song, sweat, and soil. Now, amid cranes and concrete, the old music is fading fast.

Rayees Ahmad Kumar

Seasons in Kashmir once moved like chapters from an old book. You could tell when one ended, when another began. Not by calendars, but by colour, scent, and sound.

Summer didn't simply arrive. It entered with a rustle, a murmur, a rhythm. And at its heart was Theij-Kad — the paddy season that turned the Valley into something lyrical.

Ask the old women in Qazigund or Shopian, and they'll remember. They'll speak of the May sun melting into the fields, of ankles sunk in cool mud, of voices rising like incense in the morning air.

Theij-Kad wasn't a task. It was a celebration. A calling. A festival disguised as farming.

The land, back then, was a theatre. Women from neighbouring homes arrived at first light, their fists full of rice saplings. They didn't speak much. They sang. Mehjoor's verses. Rasool Mir's laments. Lalla Ded's prayers.

The songs weren't performed. They were lived. Bent over the flooded fields, these women stitched melodies into mud.

Children were sent as little couriers, carrying pink noon-chai in copper samavars, careful not to spill. The fields smelled of milk-tea, damp earth, and cow dung. There were no machines, only muscle.

The men, meanwhile, moved in silence, clearing water channels, pulling seedlings from nurseries,

dragging heavy baskets. When weeds came, they returned, hands calloused, knees stiff, to bend again.

It was hard work, yes. But it had a rhythm. A meaning. It connected people to land, families to each other. It marked time not with alarms but with the soft ripples of water shifting around ankles.

But that world is fading. The fields have grown silent. The women no longer gather. The songs are no longer sung.

Walk through Pulwama or Baramulla now, and you'll see what took their place. Factories, malls, housing blocks. The fields weren't abandoned, they were bought, sold, repurposed.

Agriculture gave way to horticulture. Apples yield more profit than rice. A box of walnuts earns more than a bag of grain. Land, once sacred, is now real estate.

Despite laws meant to protect farmland, the shrinkage is visible. Between 2011 and 2021, paddy cultivation dropped drastically across the Valley. Satellite images confirm it. What the eye misses, the numbers catch.

And with this vanishing land, something else has disappeared. The spirit of Theij-Kad.

Where once women sang, now hired men from outside Kashmir work in silence. They transplant saplings swiftly, mechanically, with no knowledge of the old songs, no connection to the soil beneath their feet. Their work is efficient. Their presence is quiet. But it lacks the beauty of belonging.

In the past, Theij-Kad was also a

time of gathering. Evenings were for feasts. Beef cooked in three ways. Potatoes from the backyard. Chutneys ground by hand. The entire village, it seemed, sat at one long table. Married daughters returned home with children in tow, adding to the laughter. Some engagements were even delayed until after Theij-Kad, as if the land needed time to breathe first, before celebrations could begin.

Now, such evenings are rare. Kitchens are smaller. Songs are fewer. Fields are fewer still.

Yet, the memory holds.

Sometimes, in early June, if you find yourself near an old village, you might hear it. A low hum. A lone woman's voice. A whisper of a song from a time when farming was not a chore but a chorus. A time when Kashmir's rice fields didn't just grow grain, they grew joy.

We are told this change is progress. That development must come. That the economy must grow. But what happens when growth silences memory? When profit tears apart the page before the chapter ends?

Theij-Kad still arrives each year. The sun still warms the soil. Water still glistens in the fields. But fewer people listen. Fewer hands reach into the mud.

What remains is a shadow of the old season, a flicker of its music. And if we're not careful, even that may vanish.

The author is a columnist based in Qazigund, Kashmir

Why Jammu and Kashmir Needs Sociology More Than Ever

In a region shaped by conflict and complexity, sociology offers more than theory.

It offers a way to see clearly, ask harder questions, and shape a better future.

Faizan Ashraf

We live in a world where everything moves fast. Opinions arrive before facts, and headlines often crowd out history.

In Jammu and Kashmir, where life is layered with struggle, hope, and constant change, that speed can blur what really matters. That's where sociology comes in.

Sociology isn't just an academic subject tucked away in university departments. It's a way of seeing. A way of asking questions that many avoid.

Why do some communities remain poor while others progress? Why do youth turn to drugs? Why do schools fail some and uplift others?

These aren't just personal tragedies—they're social patterns. And to understand them, we need to look deeper.

Jammu and Kashmir has always demanded that kind of deeper thinking. The region has been shaped by long years of political conflict, social tension, economic uncertainty, and cultural shifts. Every few years, the landscape seems to change: new laws, new leadership, new headlines.

But the underlying questions remain. Who benefits? Who gets left behind? Who decides what progress means?

Sociology helps us trace the invisible lines that connect people's private lives to public issues. It looks at how institutions like education, religion, media, family, and government shape our choices and limit them. It helps us move from asking, "What's

wrong with that person?" to "What happened to their world?"

Take, for example, the growing issue of drug addiction in Kashmir. It's easy to blame individuals. But sociology shows how addiction links to unemployment, lack of purpose, mental trauma, peer pressure, and social breakdown.

Gender-based violence isn't just about one man and one woman. It ties to patriarchy, silence, lack of support, and deeply rooted norms.

School dropout rates are not just about bad students or teachers. They often reflect income inequality, caste bias, inaccessible education, and shifting family expectations.

Anthony Giddens, a well-known sociologist, said society is more than the sum of its parts. What he meant was: to truly understand people's lives, you have to understand the systems around them. You can't separate a girl's dreams from the village she lives in, the expectations her family places on her, or the stories her society tells about success and shame.

In Jammu and Kashmir, sociology gives us the tools to name these connections. It helps explain why the same problems—violence, inequality, unemployment—keep returning despite programs, policies, and promises.

It helps us see how caste, class, gender, religion, and power intersect in real life, not just in textbooks. And it urges us to listen, to those who are often ignored.

Sociology doesn't stop at pointing out what's wrong. It helps us imag-

ine what could be better. It supports dialogue across difference, builds empathy, and encourages change that begins with understanding. In a place like Kashmir, where trust is fragile and stories often go unheard, that matters.

When young people study sociology, they don't just memorize facts. They learn how to think. They learn to ask: Why is this happening? Who gains? Who suffers? What might be done differently? That mindset—critical, curious, compassionate—is what the region needs more of.

Sociology also teaches us to recognize what's working. The strength of extended families. The resilience of displaced communities. The cultural values that hold people together. The everyday kindness that still exists, even in difficult times.

Jammu and Kashmir stands at a crossroads. The choices made today will shape its future for decades. To make the right choices, we need more than numbers and plans. We need insight. We need voices that understand the history behind the headlines and the people behind the problems.

Sociology is not a luxury. It's not only for professors or policymakers. It's for anyone who wants to understand their place in a changing world.

And it's especially for those who want to turn understanding into action.

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A Hormonal Epidemic in Kashmir's Classrooms and Colleges

Polycystic Ovarian Disease is silently growing in Kashmir's teenage girls and women.

Doctors say the solution isn't in pills but in everyday choices.

Amaar Mir

You hear it in whispers during bus rides, in clinic waiting rooms, in college corridors. Girls skipping periods for months. Women in their 20s growing facial hair. Teenagers breaking down over sudden weight gain and cystic acne.

A silent crisis is gripping women in Kashmir, and it has a name: PCOD.

"I hadn't seen my period in five months," says 19-year-old Iqra from Anantnag. "I was scared, but the doctor just wrote it off as stress."

When she finally got an ultrasound, the image showed what doctors call a "string of pearls": rows of tiny, undeveloped follicles lining her ovaries. It confirmed what she had feared: Polycystic Ovarian Disease, or PCOD.

And she's not alone.

A recent estimate suggests that more than 37% of women and girls in Kashmir may be affected by PCOD. That's more than one in three. Many doctors say it's not an issue that medicine alone can fix.

"We're seeing it in girls as young as 13," says Dr. Iffat Wani, a gynecologist based in Srinagar. "And we can't just hand them pills and send them off. The root problem is deeper—

lifestyle, food, stress, and too much sitting."

PCOD isn't just about irregular periods. It can mean hair growing where it shouldn't, acne that refuses to heal, sudden weight gain, and infertility.

Most of this is linked to hormonal confusion inside the body, especially when insulin and male hormones (called androgens) take over.

"People think PCOD is about cysts. But it's really a hormonal imbalance," says Dr. Wani. "The ovaries don't release eggs regularly. That throws everything off."

Inside the body, things get complicated fast. Hormones that are supposed to work in harmony begin to clash. The brain tells the ovaries to prepare for ovulation, but the signal gets scrambled. Instead of one egg maturing, multiple follicles start to grow and then stall halfway. These immature follicles appear on an ultrasound as cysts, though they're not the dangerous kind, they still mess with the cycle.

What triggers this chaos? Doctors say one word: insulin.

Insulin is the hormone that manages sugar in the blood. But when the body stops responding to it properly—a condition called insulin resistance—the pancreas pumps out more.

This extra insulin pushes the ovaries to produce more androgens. That, in turn, causes acne, unwanted facial hair, and irregular cycles.

Even more worryingly, this isn't just happening in women who are overweight.

"We've seen PCOD in thin girls too," says Dr. Nusrat, a clinical nutritionist in Pulwama. "Weight isn't always the cause. It's about how the body handles sugar."

Still, excess belly fat adds fuel to the fire. Fat releases chemicals that mess with insulin and increase inflammation, making things worse.

Combine that with hours of sitting, a diet filled with processed foods and sugary drinks, and little to no exercise, and you have a perfect recipe for hormonal meltdown.

Iqra blames her habits too. "During the pandemic, I stopped going out. I gained 12 kilos, and my sleep was all over the place. I used to eat instant noodles every day. That's when my periods stopped."

Doctors across Kashmir echo the same concern: too much junk food, sugary beverages, late-night screens, and not enough movement.

"Our girls are drinking soda, skipping meals, eating cheese-loaded snacks, and then not moving an inch," says Dr. Nusrat. "It's a ticking time bomb."

There's also another problem: social silence.

Many girls feel too embarrassed to talk about irregular periods or facial hair. Mothers often dismiss it. Teachers don't talk about it in schools. "We need more awareness," says Dr. Iffat. "Girls must know what's happening in their bodies."

Medical treatment does exist. Pills containing Myo-Inositol or insulin-sensitizers like metformin are commonly prescribed. But most doctors now push for a different kind of medicine: lifestyle change.

"Even losing 5% of body weight can make periods return," says Dr. Nusrat. "That's two to four kilos for many girls. And you don't need a gym. Just walking briskly, avoiding processed sugar, eating home-cooked food, drinking enough water—it all helps."

Stress is another silent culprit. The body responds to mental tension by releasing cortisol, another hormone that can trigger insulin resistance.

Add erratic sleep patterns, social media doomscrolling, exam pressure, and it's a storm.

Sleep matters too. "Girls are staying up till 2am, eating chips at midnight," says Dr. Iffat. "The body's natural rhythm is disrupted. Hormones go out of sync."

So what works? Not pills. Not surgery. Just a return to the basics: move more, eat real food, sleep on time, and unplug.

Some girls are turning their lives around. Iqra started walking every morning. She stopped drinking fizzy drinks, switched to homemade meals, and began journaling to manage stress.

"My periods came back after three months," she says, smiling. "I didn't even take medicines."

The problem is real. The numbers are scary. But the solution isn't out of reach.

The real challenge is not just medical, it's cultural. Can families talk openly about menstruation? Can schools educate girls early? Can society stop treating hormonal health as a private shame?

As PCOD creeps silently into the lives of young Kashmiri women, it's not just their bodies that are hurting, it's their confidence, their fertility, and their future.

But it doesn't have to be this way. The healing can begin with small, consistent steps: on the plate, on the track, and in the mind.

Amaar Mir is a research scholar at the University of Kashmir. He can be reached at amaarmir77@gmail.com

Study Indicates Incidence Of Rheumatoid Arthritis Increased 13% Since 1990

Press Trust Of India

Rheumatoid arthritis affected nearly 18 million people worldwide in 2021 -- an over 13 per cent rise in cases since 1990, a study has found.

According to the study, more young people are being diagnosed with this disease, which became geographically widespread with time.

Rheumatoid arthritis, a chronic autoimmune condition, occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its healthy tissues, especially those in joints, leading to inflammation, pain and stiffness.

The study, published in the journal Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases, found that population growth impacted the disease's burden in most countries, including India, Pakistan and Spain, while ageing impacted the most in Thailand, China and Poland.

The regions high on the sociodemographic index were hit the hardest, while those low witnessed an increase, it said.

"While previous Global Burden of Disease (GBD) studies have provided important insights, they have largely focused on high-level descriptions and visualisations at global and national scales, failing to capture local disparities or the dynamic interactions between socioeconomic development and disease trends," said principal investigator Queran Lin from Imperial College London.



Coordinated by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington, GBD studies analyse data from over 200 countries and territories to map trends in disease prevalence, severity and deaths attributable to 371 diseases between 1990 and 2021.

"In 2021, RA (rheumatoid arthritis) affected 17.9 million people globally, with a 13.2 per cent increase in incidence rate from 1990-2021, trending younger and broader," the authors wrote.

They were "able to generate the most granular disease burden estimates to date, offering a new framework for guiding precision public health across diverse populations", Lin said. The study also projected that the regions with a low-middle sociodemographic index could see an increase in burden by 2040 due to ageing and population growth, while the burden in regions high on the index could decrease.

Controlling smoking could

curb deaths due to the chronic disease in high-smoking regions (such as China) by 16.8 per cent and the burden on the population by over 20 per cent, the authors said.

Japan showed a decline in burden of rheumatoid arthritis (by over 22 per cent) despite having a high sociodemographic index, which the authors said might reflect nationwide early diagnosis programs, widespread use of biologic therapies and a diet rich in anti-inflammatory components.

The authors called for localised policies and resource allocation, particularly in the regions having low-middle sociodemographic index. "Demographic changes and uneven health infrastructure exacerbated RA burdens and disparities worldwide, with high SDI areas hardest hit while low SDI regions saw increases. Trend analysis empowered targeted policies such as localised smoking control to address these inequities," the authors wrote.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified for the general public that the electricity connection bearing Consumer ID No. 0213040006593, which is presently registered in the name of: Ali Mohammad Tantray S/o Khazir Mohammad Tantray R/o Katipora Mohallah, Pattan is intended to be changed in the name of: Abdul Rahman Tantray S/o Ali Mohammad Tantray R/o Katipora Mohallah, Pattan Therefore, it is requested that the necessary correction/transfer be made in the official records. If anyone has any objection to this correction/transfer, they may approach the concerned office of the Power Development Department (PDD) within 7 days from the date of this notice. No objection will be entertained thereafter.

fko

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION SUMBAL
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

FRESH NIT No: 23 of 2025-26/SUMBAL
Dated:-18-06-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are being invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with the J&K UT Government, CPWD, Railways, and other State/Central Governments for the following work:

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	EMD in shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG(In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1	Upgradation of Jaffer Mohalla inner link at Madwan by way of 75mm thick wet mix, 50mm thick bituminous macadam, 25mm thick Semidense, finished with 6mm thick seal coat. Machine mix laid by paver.	19.68Incl. C/o Bitumen and GST	800/-	39360/-	10 Days	Cities & Towns	BEE/CEE Civil having Mou with registration HMPO

Position of AAA:- Authorization given by Deputy Director Planning PW(R&B) Department vide No.PWD-PLNG/260/2025-05/E-7649952 Dated:-22-05-2025.
Position of funds:- Available
T.S:- Granted

1. The bidding documents, which would include qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications/drawings, a bill of quantities (B.O.Q), a set of contract terms and conditions, and other details, can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in on the dates listed below: -

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	18/06/2025 from 1.00P.M.
3	Bid submission Start Date	18/06/2025 from 1.00P.M
4	Bid Submission End Date	23/06/2025 upto 4.00 P.M.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	24/06/2025 at 11.00 A.M in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal.

2. Bids must be accompanied by a Treasury Challan (dated between the bid submission start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in M.H. 0059 in the name of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal (tender inviting authority) as the cost of the tender document.
3.At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload earnest money/bid security equal to 2% of the Advertised Cost in the form of CDR/FDR/ BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal The successful bidder will have to provide Performance Security @ 5% at the time of contract award, strictly in accordance with the Government's circular instructions from time to time. The earnest money/bid security of 2% will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of a Performance Security of 5% of the total cost, which will be released after successful completion of the DLP/Maintenance Period.
4. The date and time of bid opening shall be notified on the Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and automatically communicated to bidders via an e-mail message sent to their e-mail address. Responsive bidders' bids will be opened online on the same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B DivisionSumbal (tender receiving authority).
5. Bids for the work shall be valid for 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
6.1 Bidders are advised to download the bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as the "Bidders Manual Kit" option on the website www.jktenders.gov to familiarize themselves with the bid submission process.
6.2 In order to participate in the bidding process, bidders must obtain a 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' under the Information Technology Act of 2000. Any approved Vendor can provide bidders with a digital certificate.
6.3 Bidders must submit their bids in electronic format with a digital signature online. No physical bids will be accepted.
6.4 Bids will be opened online in accordance with the time schedule specified in Para-1.
6.5 Bidders must upload online scanned copy of all required documents (within the document upload limits) with their technical bid.
Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
7 The department will not be held responsible for any delays in online submission due to unanticipated circumstances.
8 The original Treasury Challan (Cost of tender document) and other Uploaded bid documents shall have to be produced on demand by the successful bidder at the time of contract signing, and in the case of unsuccessful bidders, 2 percent EMD in the form of CDR/ FDR/ BG pledged to the tender receiving authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal, will be released only after production of Original Treasury Challan of uploaded Scanned copy (Cost of tender document).
9 Bidders are advised not to change the contents of the BOQ (Bill of Quantities). They should never attempt to create similar BOQ manually.
10 Bidders should be fully cognizant that if the documents uploaded/ submitted on the basis of which the contract was awarded are later discovered to be fake/not genuine, the contract will be cancelled and the Contractor/bidder will be blacklisted from participating in this Division/ Department for a period of three years, in addition to the performance security deposited for the said work being forfeited.
11 Price escalation and Taxes: The bidder's percentage shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes up to the completion of the work. Taxes shall be deducted from the contractor's bills on the gross amount of the bill at the time of recovery at the rates in effect at the time of recovery.
12 Bidders are advised to use the "My Documents" area in their R&B e-Tendering portal user account to store any required documents.
13 All bidders must UPLOADthe following information and documents with their bids, in addition to the qualification criteria / qualification information, (All documents pertaining to the bid must be in English):

- All bidders must submit copies of original documents defining their constitution/legal status, place of registration, and principal place of business, as well as their cell phone number and e-mail address.
- Valid Contractor/Firm Registration Certificate issued by a competent authority in accordance with the Contractor Registration Act with latest Renewal (Only digitally issued No. R&B/Sbi/25/1733-39.

Dated:-18-06-2025.

Sd./
Camp Clerk

Sd./
Head Draftsman

Sd./
T.O

Sd./
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Sumbal

DIPK-2640/25
dated: 18-06-2025



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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J&K Bank Signs DDF Agreement With JPDCL



Observer News Service

JAMMU- Reinforcing its significant role in financial oversight, J&K Bank has executed the Direct Debit Facility (DDF) Agreement with Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL). The agreement, developed in collaboration with REC Power Development and Consultancy Ltd (RECPDCL), underscores the Bank's commitment to ensuring seamless financial operations and transaction security in high-value infrastructure projects.

As Direct Debit Account Agent, the Bank will oversee structured payment mechanisms for the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) project, facilitating automated disbursements, financial transparency, and compliance adherence. Through this initiative, the Bank positions itself as the driving force behind the financial framework supporting smart metering in JPDCL's operational network.

The formal signing of the agreement took place between Managing Director (JPDCL) Chowdhary Mohammad Yasin

(IAS), General Manager & Divisional Head (Jammu) Sunit Kumar, and GM (Smart Metering – RECPDCL) Mukul Aggarwal during an event attended by senior officers including Chief Manager Atul Sethi, FA & VAO (JPDCL) Pawan Sharma (JKAS), and DGM (Tech) Rishab Jain. Their presence highlighted the collective commitment toward ensuring financial accountability and operational excellence in the implementation of smart metering technology.

Commented on the development, Divisional Head (Jammu) Sunit Kumar said, "J&K Bank remains at the forefront of financial discipline and governance. By streamlining automated payments and reinforcing accountability, we ensure that critical infrastructure projects operate with precision and efficiency. This agreement exemplifies our leadership in financial management and operational security."

With this agreement, the Bank further cements its reputation as the premier financial institution driving structured payments across large-scale utility projects.

Govt To Shortly Notify Rules For Mandatory Use Of Indian Standard Time: Joshi



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The government has decided to make mandatory the use of Indian Standard Time for all legal, commercial, digital and administrative activities, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Wednesday.

This initiative will translate into more secure digital transactions, accurate billing in utilities, reduced cybercrime risks and synchronised timekeeping in transportation and communication. Presently, several systems rely on foreign sources of time.

To make Indian Standard Time (IST) mandatory, the government will shortly notify Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025. The draft rules were issued in January 2025 for stakeholders' feedback.

On Wednesday, the Department of Consumer Affairs organized a round table conference on Time Dissemination here.

Joshi emphasized on the strategic significance of the Time Dissemination Project being implemented by the department in collaboration with CSIR-NPL and ISRO.

He said the upcoming rules will mandate synchronization of all legal, commercial, digital and administrative activities with IST, "prohibiting the use of alternative time references unless explicitly authorised".

"We are notifying the rules. In that, we are now One Nation One Time... These rules will be mandated very shortly. Exact date will be decided at a later stage," Joshi told reporters here.

"In today's data-driven world, the un-synchronised clocks lead to digital mismatches, investigation challenges and network inefficiencies. Several systems currently rely on foreign timing sources like GPS, posing the risk of cyber attacks, inconsistency and non-traceable time stamps," he said.

This project addresses a longstanding gap of institutionalising the IST as the official legal time of India, the minister said.

"Since we have decided to implement and notify these rules... and that is going to be mandatory, we had a round table conference of all stakeholders..." the minister said adding that "very shortly, IST will be a reality. We will have our own time".

Sitharaman Ask Fintechs To Find Solutions To Prevent Digital Arrests, Cyberfrauds

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday asked fintech startups to come out with solutions to deal with the rising incidence of digital arrests, cheating by fly-by-night operators, and other kinds of cyberfrauds.



Lauding the success of fintechs, the Finance Minister said they have helped in speeding up financial inclusion, and taking the payment system to even the far-flung areas of the country.

Speaking at the Digital Payments Awards 2025 Ceremony here, Sitharaman said it is important to ensure that startup companies come up with solutions so that people are not arrested at home digitally, or fly by night operators don't take away their money.

Another major threat, she pointed out, is 'deep fake', which is causing a lot of damage to the public in large.

"Today, we should take care of addressing them so we need a set of fintech companies which are constantly working to give solutions for the newer challenges which are arising," Sitharaman said.

She also called upon the fintech sector to further expand the digital lending facilities to the key MSME sector.

Sitharaman further said Indian fintech innovations have the potential to become global public goods that can benefit other emerging and developed economies. This will open new markets for our firms.

payments through UPI are now accepted at select merchant outlets in seven countries, including Bhutan, France, Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the UAE.

"Our players must aim to export our successful models abroad and capture global markets. We have the talent, we have the market scale, and we have the proven solutions," she said. This, she said, will open up new markets for domestic firms.

Indian fintech market is projected to grow to over USD 400 billion by 2028-29.

"That's not too far away. Just three years. Reflecting on an anticipated annual growth of 30 per cent. The scale of opportunity is immense. I firmly believe its best chapters are yet to be written."

"Together, let us 'Innovate, Include, and Inspire'. Innovate new solutions fearlessly, include every citizen in your vision, and inspire the world with what India can achieve," she said.

Noting that India now actually accounts for almost half of

all real-time digital transactions in the world, she said direct benefit transfer (DBT) has saved a lot of money by plugging leaks.

About Rs 44 lakh crore have been transferred through DBT since 2014 and Rs 3.48 lakh crore have been saved.

The Minister said the speed at which innovation is happening in India is just a dream for many other countries.

"Several advanced countries are nowhere close to the kind of momentum our fintech companies have achieved, not just in terms of progress in their respective areas, but also in creating entirely new paradigms. This is something which is very unique of the Indian fintech sector," she said.

A World Bank study noted that through Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), India achieved an 80 per cent financial inclusion rate in just six years.

Some observers who have gone through this report have said that this feat would have otherwise taken nearly 50 years, Sitharaman said.

TOGETHER, LET US 'INNOVATE, INCLUDE, AND INSPIRE'. Innovate new solutions fearlessly, include every citizen in your vision, and inspire the world with what India can achieve,"

Sebi To Introduce Special Measures To Facilitate Voluntary Delisting Of certain PSUs

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Markets regulator Sebi on Wednesday decided to introduce special measures to facilitate voluntary delisting of public sector undertakings, where the government owns 90 per cent or more of shares.

Among the measures include relaxations from requirement of two-third threshold for approving delisting by public shareholders and in the mode of computation of floor price.

Under current rules, delisting is successful if promoter shareholding reaches 90 per cent. Moreover, the floor price for delisting is calculated using several pricing metrics such as 60-day average price and highest price in the last 26 weeks.

These rules can make delisting costly for PSUs due to high market prices despite low book values or weak financials.

"In certain Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) with minimal public float, the shares are traded frequently at prices which are not com-



mensurate with operations, net worth, profitability and other financial parameters of the company. If such PSUs are to undertake delisting, the current norm of 60 days' volume weighted average market price makes it financially burdensome to delist such companies," Sebi said after the conclusion of its board meeting.

In view of these drawbacks and to facilitate delisting of such PSUs, the board approved amendment to Sebi (Delisting of Equity Shares) norms for introduction of a special measures for PSUs (other than banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and insur-

ance companies). Those under the ambit of any financial sector regulator are to undertake voluntary delisting through fixed price delisting process when the shareholding of the Government of India as a promoter equals or exceeds 90 per cent.

Further, these PSUs can delist without meeting minimum public shareholding norms. Moreover, delisting can happen at a fixed price -- at least 15 per cent premium over the floor price -- regardless of trading frequency.

The regulator decided to abolish the requirement for two-thirds public shareholder approval in cases where the promoter plus PSU holding is already 90 per cent.

Regarding handling unclaimed money, Sebi said that such money should be transferred to the stock exchange for 7 years and then moved to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) or the regulator's IPEF. Further, investors can claim the amount during this period.

Corporate Sector Key Pillar Of Nation's Economic Growth, Development: Prez Murmu

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said that the corporate sector is a key pillar of the nation's economic growth and development.



While addressing officer trainees of the Indian Corporate Law Service, she noted that their decisions would influence not only policies and regulations but also the trust that citizens and investors have in the country's institutions.

As officers entrusted with the implementation and enforcement of corporate laws, "your role will be central in nurturing a business environment that is transparent, accountable, and conducive" to innovation and entrepreneurship, the President said.

"The corporate sector is a key pillar of our nation's economic growth and development," Murmu told the trainees, who had called on her at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Referring to the Companies Act of 2013, she highlighted their responsibility to ensure that the law is not only enforced but also understood, respected, and applied in a way that promotes justice, fairness, and opportunity for all.

The officer trainees of the Defence Aeronautical Quality Assurance Service and Central Labour Service also met the President.

Addressing the trainees, she asserted that quality in military aviation is not just about meeting technical specifications—it is about ensuring operational safety, mission preparedness, reliability, and strategic superiority.

"You have a prime responsibility to ensure that all military

aviation stores, whether indigenously produced or imported, meet the stringent quality and airworthiness requirements at par with the highest global standards," Murmu said.

The president further emphasised that augmenting defence capabilities requires not only strengthening public sector undertakings but also actively handholding and enabling the private sector.

"By integrating private enterprises into the defence ecosystem through supportive policies and technology transfers, India can accelerate indigenisation efforts and position itself as a global defence manufacturing hub," she added.

Citing 2025 as the 'Year of Defence Reforms', she urged the trainees to develop innovative approaches to transform the armed forces into technologically advanced, combat-ready forces capable of multi-domain, integrated operations.

"As you take on the challenges of public service, you should remember that your decisions and actions have the power to transform lives. In your respective domains, you will be the torchbearers of good governance, transparency, and accountability," the president said.

In addressing the probationers of the Central Labour Service, she remarked that they are the custodians of the law, responsible for upholding compliance with labour laws that protect workers' rights and dignity.

Goyal In London To Discuss FTA Implementation, Ways To Promote Trade, Investment

Press Trust Of India

LONDON/NEW DELHI- Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is in London on a two-day official visit to discuss issues related to the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and explore ways to boost trade and investment between the two countries, an official statement said on Wednesday. During the visit, Goyal will hold a bilateral meeting with the UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds.

"Both leaders will review the progress made in the ongoing FTA negotiations and chart out a clear, time-bound roadmap for its finalisation and implementation," the commerce ministry said.

Goyal and Reynolds are scheduled to make their first joint public intervention since the FTA negotiations concluded last month at the India Global Forum (IGF) UK-India Week in a session - Agreement to Action in the UK-India FTA.

Reynolds has earlier said that "this trade agreement is a huge economic win for the UK — the biggest trade deal since Brexit and the best deal that India has ever offered".



The trade deal is estimated to increase bilateral trade in the long run by GBP 25.5 billion every year — from the current annual estimate of GBP 41 billion — as tariffs are slashed across key sectors on both sides. The FTA is now undergoing a process of legal text formalisation before it can come into force.

India and the UK had announced the conclusion of the FTA on May 6. The pact aims to eliminate duties on labour-intensive Indian exports such as leather, footwear and clothing, while easing imports of UK products like whisky and cars.

It targets to double trade between the two economies to USD 120 billion by 2030. The agreement is yet to be formally signed and implemented.

Goyal will also meet Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves to discuss macroeconomic priorities, financial cooperation, and investment facilitation between the two countries.

ICRA Forecasts Small Dip In GDP Growth At 6.2% In 2025-26

Press Trust Of India

KOLKATA- Leading rating agency ICRA, in its latest outlook, said India's real GDP growth for 2025-26 will be 6.2 per cent, down from 6.5 per cent in the preceding financial year.

Real Gross Value Added (GVA) growth is also expected to ease to 6 per cent from 6.4 per cent.

Regarding inflation, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is expected to be above 3.5 per cent, while the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) will be over 1.8 per cent for the current fiscal, the report added.

ICRA has forecast the fiscal deficit to be 4.4 per cent of GDP for 2025-26, with the current account deficit projected at 1.2 per cent to 1.3 per cent during the same period.

According to ICRA, rural demand is likely to remain upbeat, aided by

Rabi cash flows and above-normal reservoir levels.

It also said that the combination of the sizeable income tax relief in the Union budget for 2025-26, rate cuts leading to lower EMIs and moderation in food inflation is expected to boost household disposable incomes.

The report added that the tepidness in India's merchandise exports is expected to continue in the near term.

Services exports are likely to outpace merchandise export growth, according to the ICRA outlook.

The Centre's capital expenditure is budgeted to rise by 10.1 per cent in 2025-26, which will boost investment activities, it added.

However, private capital expenditure may gain some traction on the face of a muted outlook for exports and uncertainty around trade policies, the report said.

Stock Markets Fall For 2nd Day Amid Soaring Middle East Tensions

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower on Wednesday as soaring tensions in the Middle East and caution ahead of the US Fed interest rate decision hit investor sentiment.

Surrendering its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 138.64 points or 0.17 per cent to close at 81,444.66. After a weak opening, the index hit a high of 81,858.97 in morning deals but failed to hold onto gains later. The barometer dipped 346.29 points or 0.42 per cent to hit a low of 81,237.01. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged lower by 41.35 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 24,812.05, marking its second day of losses.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services was the biggest loser dropping by 1.79 per cent. Adani Ports fell by 1.55 per cent, Hindustan Unilever by 1.35 per cent, Bajaj Finserv by

1.16 per cent, and Nestle by 0.95 per cent. Losses in ICICI Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, NTPC and HCL Tech also dragged the index down.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank surged by 5.12 per cent after a report expressed optimism over its performance in the coming 12 months.

Titan rose by 1.99 per cent, Mahindra & Mahindra by 1.24 per cent and Maruti by 1.12 per cent.

"The domestic market failed to maintain the opening gains as the continuing tensions in the Middle East & volatility in oil prices dragged the overall sentiment. However, auto and consumer discretionary gained in expectations of a demand revival," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Israeli warplanes pounded Iran's capital overnight and into Wednesday as Iran launched a small barrage of missiles at Israel with no reports of casualties.

Silver Rallies To Hit Fresh Peak, Gold Gains Rs 540

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Silver prices rallied Rs 1,000 to hit a record high of Rs 1,08,200 per kilogram while gold gained Rs 540 to stay above Rs 1 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday as the Israel-Iran conflict intensified on its sixth day, driving investors to safe-haven assets.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal had closed at Rs 1,07,200 per kg in the preceding session on Tuesday.

On Friday, silver had revisited its previous all-time high of Rs 1,08,100 per kg.

"Silver prices extended gains and crossed USD 37 per ounce level in the international markets for the first time since February 2012. Weakness in the rupee is supporting bullion prices in the domestic markets," Rahul Kalantri, Vice-President - Com-

modities, Mehta Equities, said.

As per the Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed by Rs 540 to Rs 1,00,710 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 500 to Rs 99,950 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, the most traded August contract for gold futures was trading at Rs 99,411 per 10 grams, lower by Rs 130 per 10 grams.

Additionally, silver futures for July contract jumped by Rs 753 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,09,748 per kg.

Spot gold fell 0.23 per cent to USD 3,380.97 in the global markets.

According to Kotak Securities, gold prices are holding below USD 3,400 per ounce, as dollar strengthened with traders focussing on escalating Middle East tensions.

Solutions To Problems Can't Come From Battlefields: PM In Croatia

Press Trust Of India

Zagreb: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India and Croatia have agreed that whether it is Europe or Asia, solutions to problems cannot come from battlefields, asserting that dialogue and diplomacy is the only way ahead.

In his media statement following talks with his Croatian counterpart Andrej Plenković, Modi said both leaders agree that "terrorism is an enemy of humanity" and it is inimical to forces that believe in democracy.

"We agree, whether in Europe or Asia, solutions to problems can't be found from battlefields, and dialogue and diplomacy is the only way," he said.

His comments come amid an escalating situation in West Asia as the military confrontation between Israel and Iran intensified.

Modi said that for any country, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty is essential.

During the meeting, Modi also said it was a "happy co-incidence" that both he and Plenković were given the opportunity to serve a third term by the people of their respective countries last year.

"With this mandate, in our third terms, we have decided to give three-time pace to our bilateral ties," he asserted.

"Held productive talks with my friend, Prime Minister

Andrej Plenković in Zagreb. Our talks covered many sectors, aimed at making the India-Croatia bond even stronger. We will be working closely in the fields of defence and security, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, IT, renewable energy, technology and more. Synergies in areas like semiconductors, shipbuilding, connectivity and more will also be greatly beneficial," Modi said in an X post.

The two leaders reviewed the full spectrum of India-Croatia bilateral relations and explored avenues to deepen collaboration in various sectors, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on X.

Prime Minister Modi thanked Croatia for its steadfast support to India in fighting cross-border terrorism. The leaders also called for further deepening India-EU strategic ties, he added.

Modi was accorded a ceremonial welcome on his arrival for the talks.

He is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit the Balkan nation.

In his remarks, Plenković said his meeting with Modi reflects the importance and strength of relations between the two countries.

"We also said that global situation in terms of security is very volatile. So, it is important to have the most influential actors worldwide to give their contribution to peace, de-escalation of conflict, and to respect

the rule of international laws," the Croatian prime minister said.

He added that the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Israel-Iran situation also figured in the discussions.

He further said that Croatia expressed sorrow over the recent terror attack in India.

"We have understood very well, Indian Prime Minister's message on fighting against terrorism, because that is the biggest threat to global stability," he underlined.

Modi in his address said, "We are really grateful to the Croatian PM and the government" for the solidarity, adding, "In such a difficult time, support of our friendly nations was very important".

He also said the two leaders agreed that in today's global scenario, a partnership between India and Europe holds immense importance.

During the meeting, four memoranda of cooperation were signed in the areas of agriculture, culture, and science, and a memorandum between the ICCR and the University of Zagreb, related to the study of Indology, Plenković said.

"We also discussed economic relations, our exchange in trade," he said, adding they also talked about the efforts to conclude the India-EU free trade agreement, which Croatia supports.

AMARNATH YATRA

Police Directed To Set Up Additional Checkpoints In Jammu Range

Agencies

Jammu: Ahead of the Amarnath Yatra, police have been asked to identify locations to set up more checkpoints in the border districts of Jammu, Samba, and Kathua for the security of pilgrims.

The 38-day-long yatra is scheduled to start on July 3 from the twin routes – the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the 14-km shorter but steeper Baltal route in Ganderbal district – to the 3,880-metre-high shrine of Amarnath.

The first batch of pilgrims will leave for Kashmir from Bhagwati Nagar a day before the start of the yatra.

"All the officers were directed to strengthen all the nakas (checking points), especially during night hours. They were also directed to identify places where more nakas can be established for the security of the yatrīs," a police spokesperson said.

This was conveyed to the police officers by Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Jammu-Samba-Kathua

range, Shiv Kumar Sharma, during a security audit of various police and paramilitary deployments in and around the base camp, lodgements, yatra route, CCTV installations, and parking areas.

Sharma conducted a security review of Ram Mandir Purani Mandi, Geeta Bhawan Parade, the base camp at Bhagwati Nagar, various routes, and the highway, the spokesperson said.

He also interacted with officers and security personnel of the CISF deployed at Ram Mandir Purani Mandi, in Jammu and directed them to remain extra alert at their posts, the spokesperson said.

All Station House Officers (SHOs) were also directed to remain alert and intensify security measures and patrolling during night hours.

The Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu serves as the main base camp for Amarnath pilgrims before they proceed to the Kashmir Valley to pay obeisance at the 3,880-metre-high shrine of Amarnath.

Air India Cancels 3 Int'l Flights Over Maintenance, Technical Issues

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: Air India has cancelled three of its international flights on Wednesday owing to various reasons, including maintenance and technical issues.

Two of these flights were cancelled after the passengers had already boarded the aircraft, the airline said.

The airline said it had to cancel its Toronto-Delhi flight AI188 of June 18 due to extended maintenance and consequently operating crew coming under regulatory flight duty time limitation norms.

Passengers, who had already boarded the aircraft, were disembarked following cancellation of the flight, it said.

Also, flight AI996 from Dubai to Delhi on June 18, 2025 was cancelled due to technical reasons and passengers were disembarked after boarding, as per Air India.

However, the airline's flight AI2145 from Delhi to Bali was cancelled after it was advised to return to Delhi mid-way due to reports of volcanic eruption near the destination airport Bali, in the interest of safety, Air India stated.

The flight safely landed back in Delhi and all passengers were disembarked.

Air India said its teams on the ground are making alternative

arrangements for the passengers to fly to their respective destinations at the earliest.

Full refunds on cancellation or complimentary rescheduling have also been offered to passengers. Air India said it is anticipating some disruptions (in its flight operations) due to the continuing enhanced checks on the airline's Boeing 787 fleet coupled with airspace restrictions and inclement weather.

On June 13, a day after the B787-8 crash that killed 241 people on board, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation ordered enhanced surveillance of Air India's Boeing 787 fleet, comprising 26 787-8 and seven 787-9 planes.

Since the Ahmedabad crash, Air India cancelled 66 flights to be operated with Boeing 787 between June 12th and June 17th. Multiple flights have been cancelled or delayed citing technical issues.

At a review meeting with top executives of Air India and Air India Express, aviation safety regulator DGCA flagged concerns regarding recent maintenance-related issues reported at Air India and "advised the airline to strengthen internal coordination across engineering, operations, ground handling units and ensure availability of adequate spares to mitigate passenger delays.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Heart Attacks In

under the age of 70. Public health experts call it a "generational crisis in slow motion."

"This is not just a problem of the old anymore," said a senior cardiologist at SKIMS, the region's top referral hospital. "Every week, we see new cases of heart attacks in patients under 40. Some don't even make it to the hospital."

So why is this happening?

A combination of lifestyle changes, chronic stress, substance abuse, and gaps in the healthcare system is fueling the surge.

Kashmir has one of the highest tobacco use rates in India. Around 38 to 56 percent of adults in the Valley smoke or use tobacco products. In rural heart patients, smoking rates touch 76 percent. Hookah, locally known as jaejeer, is deeply woven into social life.

But addiction doesn't stop at tobacco. In 2022, an official study found that nearly 8 percent of youth in Kashmir were addicted to opioids or other hard drugs. Doctors warn this is placing a direct strain on young hearts and blood vessels.

But the triggers aren't only physical.

A 2015 survey by Médecins Sans Frontières found that nearly 45 percent of adults in Kashmir showed symptoms of psychological distress. Doctors now believe that prolonged exposure to stress—curbs, violence, unemployment—is accelerating cardiac wear and tear in young men.

"When you're in a state of stress for years, the body never gets to rest," continued the cardiologist quoted above. "Cortisol stays high. Blood pressure rises. The heart suffers."

Then there is the diet.

Kashmiri cuisine, rich in oil, salt, and red meat, has evolved in unhealthy ways. Traditional staples like greens and lentils are giving way to fast food and packaged snacks.

A 2024 study found alarming rates of obesity, poor diets, and low awareness of heart-health markers like cholesterol or blood pressure among Kashmiri youth.

"There's very little education around prevention," said Dr. Sajad Bhat, a physician in Kupwara. "People come in only after the damage is done."

Kashmir's cold months pose their own threat. With temperatures below freezing, people stay indoors, activity declines, and blood vessels constrict. Doctors say hypoxia, lower oxygen levels at high altitude, makes things worse for those with existing conditions.

But perhaps the biggest challenge is healthcare access.

In Srinagar, tertiary hospitals like SKIMS and SMHS can manage cardiac emergencies. But in Kupwara, Pulwama, and Shopian, most public hospitals lack specialists, cath labs, or defibrillators. If a heart attack strikes at night, patients may have to travel four hours for emergency care.

Cost is another barrier. An angioplasty in a private hospital can cost over 1.2 lakh, far beyond what most families can afford. Public hospitals are overcrowded, with long waitlists for surgery and limited post-operative care.

Perhaps the most worrying sign, experts say, is how little we know. No region-wide data tracks how many

people monitor their blood pressure or cholesterol each year. Without that baseline, planning prevention becomes guesswork.

Asifa, a 31-year-old mother from Anantnag, was diagnosed with hypertension during pregnancy but didn't return for follow-ups. One evening, she collapsed while feeding her child. Doctors said she had suffered acute heart failure.

"No one told me it could come back like this," she said. "I thought I was fine after the delivery."

Despite the bleak outlook, cardiologists insist the crisis is still reversible, if action is taken now.

They are calling for mandatory screening programs in schools and colleges, mass awareness drives in rural districts, and focused efforts to reduce tobacco use and promote traditional diets with less oil and salt.

"Parents need to understand the risks. Young people need to get their blood pressure checked. It's not expensive," said Dr. Bhat. "We can't wait for the next funeral to raise alarm."

Mental health also needs attention. Services are scarce, and stigma keeps people silent. Until that changes, the body will keep paying for what the mind absorbs.

"It's not just a medical issue," said Dr. Hilal Sofi, a Srinagar-based cardiologist. "It's a social issue. It's about poverty, education, trauma, and infrastructure. We have to treat all of it."

Back in Baramulla, Shakeel's wife still finds herself waiting for the school bell that used to bring him home.

"He was too young to die," she said.

In Kashmir, more people are thinking the same. Until, suddenly, they can't.

Srinagar May

reported normal precipitation levels.

The Met department has predicted generally dry weather till June 20, with a possibility of brief rain, thundershowers, and gusty winds at isolated places. Between June 21 and 22, the forecast suggests generally cloudy skies with intermittent spells of rain and thunderstorms at many locations. From June 23 to 24, conditions are expected to remain dry except for brief, isolated showers, while a more active wet spell is likely between June 25 and 27.

The department has also issued an advisory asking farmers to continue with their agricultural operations till June 20. It warned of moderate to heavy rain with intense showers in parts of the Jammu division between June 21 and 22, which could lead to flash floods, landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones in vulnerable areas.

Modi Rejects

took place directly between India and Pakistan through the existing channels of communication between the two armed forces, and it was initiated at Pakistan's request," he said, sharing key points of the Modi-Trump meeting.

The foreign secretary said Modi "firmly stated that India does not and will never accept mediation" and that there is complete political consensus in India on this matter.

PM Modi told President Trump in clear terms that after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, India had

conveyed its determination to take action against terrorism to the whole world.

Modi told Trump that India had only targeted the terrorist camps and hideouts in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, adding India's actions were very measured, precise, and non-escalatory, according to Misri.

"India had also made it clear that any act of aggression from Pakistan would be met with a stronger response," the foreign secretary said.

"On the night of May 9, Vice President (JD) Vance had made a phone call to Prime Minister Modi. Vice President Vance had conveyed that Pakistan may launch a major attack on India," Misri said.

Prime Minister Modi had conveyed to him in clear terms that if such an action were to occur, India would respond with an even stronger response, he said.

"On the night of May 9-10, India gave a strong and decisive response to Pakistan's attack, inflicting significant damage on the Pakistani military," he said on the phone conversation.

"Their military airbases were rendered inoperable. Due to India's firm action, Pakistan was compelled to request a cessation of military operations," he said.

Misri said President Trump enquired if PM Modi could stop over in the US on his way back from Canada.

"Due to prior commitments, Prime Minister Modi expressed his inability to do so. Both leaders agreed to make efforts to meet in the near future," he said.

The two leaders also discussed the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran.

"Both leaders agreed that for peace in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, direct dialogue between the two parties is essential, and continued efforts should be made to facilitate this," Misri said.

"With regard to the Indo-Pacific region, both leaders shared their perspectives and expressed their support towards the significant role of Quad in the region," he added.

"Prime Minister Modi extended an invitation to President Trump to visit India for the next Quad Summit. President Trump accepted the invitation and said that he is looking forward to visiting India," Misri said.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

New Delhi has been maintaining that India's fierce counter-attack that day forced Pakistan to plead for ending the hostilities.

Tehran Rebukes

Iranian official has ever asked to grovel at the gates of the White House. The only thing more despicable than his lies is his cowardly threat to 'take out' Iran's Supreme Leader."

The Iranian UN delegation stressed that Tehran rejects any form of pressure in diplomacy, stating, "Iran does NOT negotiate under duress, shall NOT accept peace under duress, and certainly NOT with a has-been warmonger clinging to relevance."

The mission warned that Iran would respond to any threat with a counter-threat.

Trump had earlier reiterated his demand for "unconditional surrender" from Tehran during his remarks to reporters outside the White House. He however changed tack hours later. "I may do it, I may not do it," Trump said in an exchange with reporters. "I mean, nobody knows what I'm going to do."

Trump added that it's not "too late" for Iran to give up its nuclear program as he continues to weigh direct U.S. involvement in Israel's military operations aimed at crushing Tehran's nuclear program.

"Nothing's too late," Trump said. "I can tell you this. Iran's got a lot of trouble."

"Nothing is finished until it is finished," Trump added. But "the next week is going to be very big—maybe less than a week."

Trump also offered a terse response to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's refusal to heed to his call for Iran to submit to an unconditional surrender.

"I say good luck," Trump said.

Supreme Leader earlier Wednesday warned that any United States strikes targeting the Islamic Republic will "result in irreparable damage for them" and that Iran would not bow to Trump's call for surrender.

Israel launched large-scale attacks on June 13, targeting Iran's nuclear facilities across several cities, as well as high-ranking military command centers.

Trump was also quoted as saying he didn't tell Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu whether the U.S. would get more involved in the war. "I told Netanyahu, 'keep going.' I talk to him every day. So far he is doing a good job," Trump said. The president stressed that Iran is "defenseless" and added he doesn't know how long they can keep on fighting under the circumstances.

Iranian media reported Wednesday that the death toll from Israeli airstrikes across Tehran and other populated areas has risen to 585, with at least 1,326 people injured since the attacks began last week.

Iran and Israel launched new missile strikes at each other on Wednesday as the air war between the two longtime enemies entered a sixth day.

Iranian armed forces launched the new phase of Operation True Promise III by unleashing a barrage of missiles, including those being used for the first time, at Tel Aviv and port city of Haifa.

Images shared on social media showed missiles fired from different parts of Iran moving in an unusual manner in the night sky and evading the multi-tier Israeli air defense systems.

Skepticism In US

costly conflicts. Steve Bannon, who served as a senior adviser to Trump during his first administration, on Wednesday said the administration should tread carefully.

"This is one of the most ancient civilizations in the world, ok?" Bannon told reporters at an event sponsored by the Christian Science Monitor. "With 92 million people. This is not something you play around with. You have to think this through. And the American people have to be on board.

You can't just dump it on them."

Bannon and other Trump allies, including Turning Point USA's Charlie Kirk and conservative pundit Tucker Carlson, have raised concerns that direct U.S. involvement in the conflict could be seen as a betrayal to some members of Trump's coalition and potentially cause a schism in MAGA world.

Trump pushed back at the notion that deepening U.S. involvement could impact his standing with his base.

"My supporters are more in love with me today, and I'm in love with them more than they were even at election time when we had a total landslide," Trump said.

India Begins Evacuation

Ministry is in touch with the Indian mission in Tehran, the Indian government has yet to issue an official statement on the matter.

In a press release, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that the safety of Indian nationals abroad remains a top priority. It confirmed that over 110 Indian students from northern Iran were evacuated and assisted in safely crossing into Armenia on Tuesday.

"These students departed from Yerevan on a special flight at 14:55 hours on June 18 and are expected to arrive in New Delhi in the early hours of June 19," the MEA said. The evacuation was coordinated by Indian missions in both Iran and Armenia.

More than 4,000 Indian nationals currently reside in Iran, nearly half of whom are students. The government expressed gratitude to the governments of Iran and Armenia for their cooperation in facilitating the first leg of the operation.

The MEA noted that it has been proactively working over the past several days to safeguard Indian citizens in Iran as the conflict with Israel intensifies. Measures include relocating Indian nationals from areas witnessing hostilities to safer zones within Iran, with evacuation plans unfolding in phases depending on available routes and conditions.

The ministry has also urged Indian nationals in Iran to remain in close contact with the Indian Embassy in Tehran and to use the emergency helpline or reach out to the 24x7 MEA control room in New Delhi for assistance.

No Stone Will Be

Chief Minister outlined key focus areas:

Water Supply: Deployment of tankers and installation of storage tanks to ensure uninterrupted water access at key locations.

Electricity and Lighting: The Power Development Department has been directed to provide uninterrupted electricity and install high-mast lights at major congregation points.

Ration and Firewood: The Food Department, in coordination with the FCI, will ensure timely distribution of essential rations and supply of firewood, particularly in rural belts.

Sanitation and Health: Health and municipal bodies will intensify sanitation drives and ensure healthcare services are readily available. Fire and Emergency Services will use

high-pressure water cannons to clean congregation areas.

The newly appointed Nodal Officer will coordinate efforts across districts and report regularly to prevent any lapses.

Earlier in the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir gave a detailed presentation covering infrastructure readiness in Shia-dominated areas. The session also addressed civic issues such as road repairs, macadamisation, street lighting, and overall public utility management.

Legislators and community leaders present at the meeting offered feedback and suggestions, which the Chief Minister welcomed as critical to ensuring inclusive and effective arrangements.

Srinagar Court

people and distort the faith of the public in the criminal justice system which "otherwise prompts me to refuse to exercise discretion for granting bail in favour of accused."

The investigating agency has to be provided with reasonable time to investigate the matter, the court underscored.

"Furthermore this court as foot soldier of an august institution cannot lose sight of the observation of worthy Additional District and Sessions Judge Srinagar in order dated 05.06.2025 and the fact the Hon'ble High Court is seized of the matter".

Besides Assistant Public Prosecutor for prosecution, a number of lawyers represented various complainants in opposing bail to the accused brothers.

"The record before the court would further indicate that the FIR has been lodged on the complaint of one Abdul Rehman Dar in the year 2022, however subsequently other complainants including Ghulam Jeelani Cheshi, Mst Tajali, Mst Naireen Iqbal, Mst Bilquis Assad by multiple complaints have applied to SHO ...,who alleged to have been duped and defrauded by the applicants (brothers) and other accused," the court said, adding, "It is no one's case before the court that the complainants have not been duped and defrauded to part with their hard earned money for purchase of land and it appears to be a multi million scam, where honest purchasers have been lured by shiny advertisements to purchase land." The land owners who were intending to sell their lands to the land brokers also have complained in their statements recorded during the investigation against the accused duo and other accused to have defrauded him.

"The allegations against the accused are heinous and need to be investigated properly as public money is involved in the matter," the court said, adding, "I am conscious at this stage, that these are allegations alone but the investigating agency is to be given time and space to investigate this allegation freely, lest we may lose the faith of general public in the criminal justice system, where even if the process of law allows the innocent to go free, but still some elements may use the situation for ulterior gains." Merely the investigating officer has remained lackadaisical in investigation of the case, cannot be a sole ground for release of the accused on bail, the court added.

Shubman At 4, I'll Stick To No. 5: Pant On Batting Order

Press Trust of India

HEADINGLEY: India vice-captain Rishabh Pant on Wednesday confirmed that Shubman Gill will bat at No. 4 in the Test series against England, while he will follow the skipper at the No. 5 slot.

The retirement of Virat Kohli had made it mandatory for India to find a new batter at No. 4, and Gill is now going to bat at the pivotal position.

"I think there is still discussion going on about who is going to play 3. But 4, 5 are definitely fixed. I think Shubman is going to bat at 4 and I am going to stick to No. 5 as of now, and rest we are going to keep on discussing that," he said.

Pant also said he maintains a wonderful relationship with Gill on and off the field.

"I think me and Shubman have a really good camaraderie off the field. If you're good friends off the field, it eventually comes on the field as well. That is something I've always believed," he noted.

"Me and him, we gel really well together. We keep on having conversations and the kind of comfort zone we have with each other, I think that is really going to be special for us."

England too will be without their retired veteran pacers James Anderson and Stuart Broad.

Pant said it was a relief to see the legendary pair missing from England line-up but was not ready to underestimate the current bunch.

"Definitely, it feels so good when both (Anderson and Broad) are not there. Because coming from the last two tours, they've been there for England for so many years and I've only come for two tours. But at the same time, they have enough ammunition as an England bowl-



ing line-up."

England Pick Pope Over Bethell

Experienced pace bowling all-rounder Chris Woakes returned to the England line-up while Ollie Pope was preferred over Jacob Bethell as the hosts on Wednesday named their playing XI for the opening Test against India.

Woakes, who missed the previous two Tests due to an ankle injury, replaces Sam

Cook, while Brydon Carse comes in for Gus Atkinson, who is sidelined with a hamstring issue.

Woakes' inclusion at number eight adds valuable all-round strength, allowing England to field Jamie Smith as a specialist wicketkeeper-batter at No. 7 while maintaining a deep batting line-up.

The hosts also named vice-captain Ollie Pope at number three, opting for experience over youth as 21-year-old Bethell

was sidelined.

Shubman Gill-led India are yet to name their XI as they are expected to field a new-look top order following the retirements of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

England XI for first Test
Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (c), Jamie Smith (wk), Chris Woakes, Brydon Carse, Josh Tongue and Shoaib Bashir.

Ganderbal Holds Yoga Sessions & Sports Events

The Department of Youth Services and Sports District Ganderbal organised a series of Yoga sessions and inter-school zonal level sports events across the district. At GHSS Ganderbal, an inspiring Yoga session was held with the participation of 110 girl students and staff members. BHS Shallabugh also joined the initiative by hosting a combined Yoga session for boys and girls.

MS Waskura organised its own Yoga session, contributing to the district-wide preparations for the June 21 celebration.

Complementing the Yoga activities, multiple sports events were also organised by the zonal offices. In Zone Kangan, BHSS Manigam claimed victory in the U-19 Girls Volleyball competition held at the Zonal Physical Education Office Kijpara.

With an integrated focus on mental, physical, and emotional well-being, YSS Ganderbal continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing holistic development among the student community.

DG YSS Inspects Progress Of Jammu's Khel Gaon

Director General of Youth Services and Sports Anuradha Gupta conducted a thorough inspection of the ongoing developmental works at Khel Gaon Nagrota on Wednesday. Stressing the urgency of timely completion, she directed concerned authorities to expedite construction to ensure the facility meets its potential as a state-of-the-art multipurpose sports venue.

Accompanied by Joint Director Jammu YSS&S Dr Vinakshi Koul, Deputy Director (Planning) Ravi Sharma, Accounts Officer Sunil Kumar Sharma, and other key officials from the Directorate, Anuradha Gupta meticulously reviewed progress on critical projects, including the Hockey Turf, Synthetic Athletic Track, Cycle Track, and Multipurpose Hall—all of which are advancing at a steady pace.

Executive Engineer Sanjeev Sharma, along with Assistant Executive Engineer Gautam Raina, Junior Engineer Kunal, and Khel Gaon Incharge Vishal Bharti Slatiaha, were present on site, assuring the DG of their commitment to delivering the projects without delay.

Sri Lankan Bowler Foxes Bangla Batters With Both Hands

Amidextrous Sri Lanka spinner Tharindu Rathnayake said he switched his bowling arm according to the weakness of the batter on strike as he took two wickets on the first day of his debut



Test match against Bangladesh on Tuesday.

Both of Rathnayake's wickets came from right-arm deliveries in the first session, but the 29-year-old also bowled with his left arm as visitors Bangladesh posted 292-3 at stumps in Galle.

"We talked about what each batsman is better at facing, and which sides they hit to. So I try to create plans around their weaknesses, and change which arm I'm bowling with according to that," Rathnayake was quoted by ESPN Cricinfo as saying.

Rathnayake is not the only ambidextrous spinner in the Sri Lanka team, with Kamindu Mendis also known to bowl with both arms. But all-rounder Mendis has taken only 31 first-class wickets in 56 matches while Rathnayake, primarily a bowler, has 337 in 73 appearances.

"I don't know which arm I've taken more wickets with. I've never looked at it properly. I've bowled a lot with both my arms," Rathnayake said.

Felt Strange: Kapil On Pataudi Trophy Renaming



Legendary all-rounder Kapil Dev on Wednesday expressed his surprise at the rebranding of the Pataudi Trophy as the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, calling the decision "strange."

Hosts England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) recently rechristened the Pataudi Trophy -- awarded to the winner of the Test series hosted by England against India -- as the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, in honour of the two legends of the game.

"It feels a little strange... like, does this also happen? But that's okay, everything works in cricket."

"At the end of the day, there is no difference. Cricket is cricket. The cricket on the field should be the same," Kapil said on the sidelines of an event organised by Three Sixty to commemorate his iconic unbeaten 175 during the 1983 World Cup match against Zimbabwe at Tunbridge Wells.

The rebranding of the trophy, which was earlier named in honour of former India captain Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi has drawn criticism from the likes of Sunil Gavaskar who called it disturbing.

The Pataudi Trophy was instituted in 2007 as the coveted prize for the winner of the series between the two teams on English soil.

Girls' Kabbadi Tournament, Multiple Yoga Sessions Held In Anantnag

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Government Higher Secondary School Marhama clinched the title of Inter School Zonal Level Kabbadi Tournament by defeating HSS Arwani in final match played on Wednesday at BMHSS Bijbehara. The tournament was organised by ZPEO Bijbehara, featuring under 17 age group girls, representing various High and Higher Secondary Schools of Zone Bijbehara. In the tournament, 72 female students participated and showcased their Kabbadi skills.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the International Day of Yoga 2025, the Department of Youth Services and Sports Anantnag organised mass yoga sessions across all educational zones.



Morning assemblies across institutions in Zones Achabal, Doru, Bijbehara, Qazigund, Shangus, Verinag, Vailoo, Mattan, and Srigufwara witnessed hundreds of students performing yoga under trained instructors.

In Zone Achabal, the main event was held at HSS Dailgam with over 650 students and 64 officials participating.

In Zone Bijbehara, a grand yoga session was conducted at BMHSS Bijbehara with participation of around 1225 students.

In Zone Mattan, the main function took place at Sakoon Park Akad, attended by 560 students and officials. In Zone Verinag, Yoga was practiced across all institutions with 490 participants. Zones Doru, Qazigund, Shangus, Srigufwara and Vailoo also held widespread yoga demonstrations.

YSS Budgam's District Level U-19 Boys Badminton Tournament Ends



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam successfully concluded the Inter-Zonal District Level Badminton Tournament for Boys Under-19 at the Indoor Sports Stadium Budgam on Wednesday. The event was held under the directions of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone.

The tournament witnessed participation from all 12 zones of the district, showcasing the exceptional talent and sportsmanship of the young athletes.

The event was officially inaugurated by the Activity Section of DYSSO Budgam in the presence of senior officials and field staff, who contributed to the smooth conduct of the competition.

The initiative aimed to provide a platform for budding players to display their skills and to promote a spirit of healthy competition and teamwork among students across Budgam.

The Department extends its gratitude to all the conveners, officials, and participants for their dedication, discipline, and sportsman spirit that ensured the event's grand success.

PL: Liverpool Play Bournemouth, Man United Hosts Arsenal

Associated Press

LONDON: Liverpool will begin its latest Premier League title defense at home to Bournemouth on August 15, while Manchester United will host Arsenal in the opening round of next season.

The Premier League released its fixture schedule for the 2025-26 season on Wednesday, giving teams and their fans a chance to start planning less than a month since the last campaign finished.

Liverpool will be bidding for a third league championship in six years, likely with Florian Wirtz in its squad, and will play the first match of the season in a Friday night start at Anfield against a Bournemouth team that finished in ninth place.

It's quite a tough beginning for Arne Slot's champions, with a trip to Newcastle in the second round followed by a home match against Arsenal -- another team in the Champions League -- a week later.

Arsenal, which finished sec-

ond for a third straight year last season, heads to Old Trafford for its first game and will play Liverpool, Manchester City and Newcastle in its opening six matches.

Everton bade farewell to its long-time home at Goodison Park at the end of last season and the first game in its state-of-the-art, 53,000-capacity stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock will be against Brighton on Aug. 23.

Thomas Frank's first Premier League game in charge of Tottenham will be at home to promoted Burnley on Aug. 16. That comes three days after Frank's competitive debut with Tottenham, the Europa League champion, against Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain in the UEFA Super Cup.

Sunderland's first Premier League game since the 2016-17 season is at home to West Ham, while Leeds hosts Everton after returning to the top flight following a two-year absence.











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