

‘Killing Khamenei A War Goal’: Israel

Trans Asia News

Tehran: Israel on Thursday directly threatened to assassinate Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, declaring that his leadership poses an existential threat to the Jewish state.

"Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei can no longer be allowed to exist," Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said on Thursday, after an Iranian missile struck Tel Aviv and damaged a major hospital used by both civilians and the military, according to media reports.

"The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will do everything they can to eliminate the Iranian leader," Katz posted on X (formerly Twitter).

Drawing a parallel to World War II, Katz stated that if Israel had existed during the Holocaust, it would have acted to eliminate Hitler—and now views Ayatollah Khamenei in the same light. He added that eliminating Khamenei aligns with the IDF's broader war objectives, which include removing Iran's nuclear threat and neutralizing its missile capabilities.

The remarks follow reports



that former U.S. President Donald Trump previously vetoed an Israeli plan to assassinate Iran's now 89-year-old Supreme Leader, though he later remarked that his patience with Khamenei was "wearing thin."

Katz also announced that Israeli forces have been instructed to intensify attacks on Iranian targets.

"The Prime Minister and I have instructed the IDF to increase the intensity of strikes on Iranian military and governmental targets in Tehran in order to eliminate threats to Israel and destabilize the Ayatollah's regime," he said.

In Tehran, | [More on P10](#)



Targeting Khamenei Risks Regional Chaos: Sistani

Agencies

Iraq's top religious authority, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Sistani, has issued a stark warning against targeting Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, saying such a

| [More on P10](#)

Iran-Israel War 500 Kashmiri Students Set To Fly Home Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Amid the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel, at least 500 students from Kashmir studying in Iran are likely to board flights to India from Turkmenistan on Friday, as part of ongoing evacuation efforts.

The Jammu and Kashmir Students Association (JKSA) confirmed that nearly 600 Indian students—500 of them from Kashmir—have already been safely moved from Qom to Mashhad, a border city in Iran.

According to Nasir Khuehami, convener JKSA said, "This is the second group of students. They were initially moved to Qom, where they stayed for three days. Their evacuation is now in progress."

He said the students are

enrolled at various institutions, including Islamic Azad University, Iran University of Medical Sciences, and Shahid Beheshti University. "From Mashhad, they are expected to cross into Turkmenistan, and from there, board flights to Delhi," he added.

The JKSA said it remains in constant contact with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Indian Embassy in Iran to ensure the students' safety and smooth repatriation.

On Thursday, at least 90 Kashmiri students were flown back to India from Armenia, JKSA said. An additional 20 students from other Indian states were part of the same group.

Earlier this week, the Indian Embassy in Tehran issued an official communication to universities across

| [More on P10](#)

Kashmir Sizzles: Srinagar Logs Hottest June Day In 2 Decades Qazigund Breaks 37-Yr Record, Kokernag Hottest In 27 Yrs

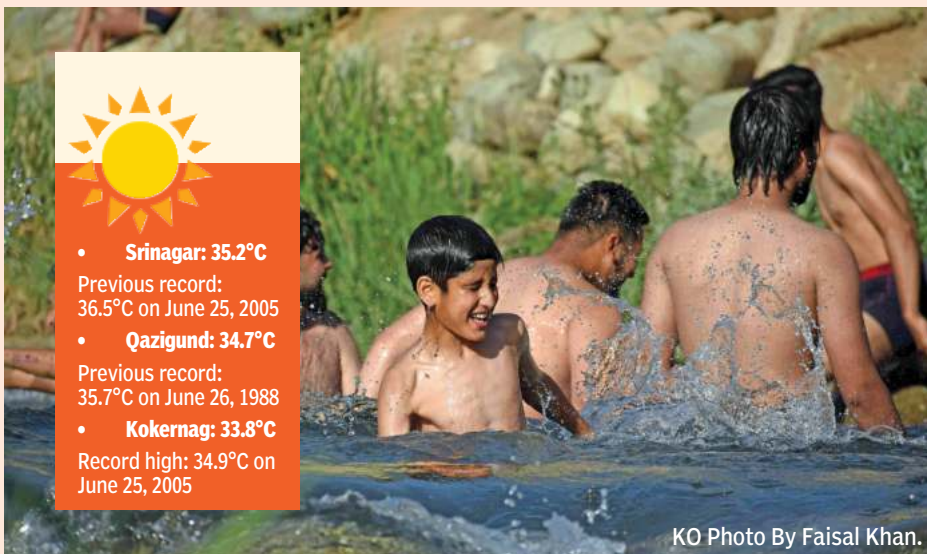
Observer News Service

Srinagar: The heatwave sweeping across Kashmir has shattered temperature records across the Valley, with several towns witnessing their hottest June days in decades, according to data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 35.2°C on Thursday, the hottest June day in the city in 20 years and a staggering seven degrees above normal. The last time Srinagar experienced comparable heat was on June 25, 2005, when the mercury hit 36.5°C, the all-time high for the month.

In Qazigund the temperature soared to 34.7°C, marking the hottest June day in 37 years. The previous record for the town was 35.7°C, registered on June 26, 1988.

South Kashmir's Kokernag recorded a maximum temperature of 33.8°C, making it



the second-hottest June day on record. The highest remains 34.9°C, also from June 25, 2005.

Gulmarg remained the coolest at 25.9°C, which was still 3.5 degrees above normal. Pahalgam clocked

29.6°C, also well above its seasonal average by 5.5 degrees.

With no significant rainfall forecast in the coming days, officials have advised people to stay indoors during peak hours and remain hydrated,

especially vulnerable groups like children and the elderly.

Data compiled by the local Meteorological Department shows a significant drop in rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir this month. Samba recorded | [More on P10](#)

Soaring Demand, Low Supply: J&K Faces Power Crisis Amid Heatwave

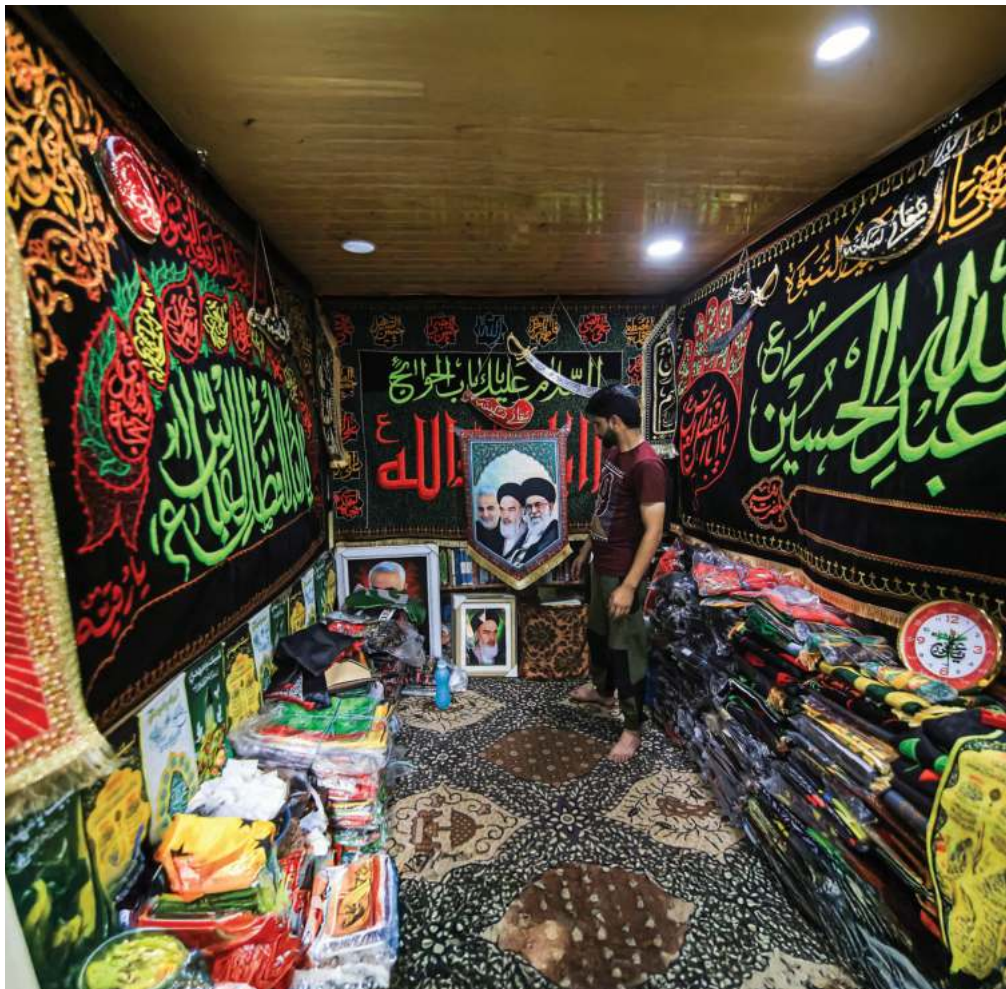
Amid soaring temperatures, Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department (PDD) is facing lopsided power supply and demand—thus pushing thousands to face the scorching heat wave. An official said that there is a power demand of over 3000 Megawatts

across Jammu and Kashmir.

"From the Jammu division, there is a power demand of more than 1600 MW and in the case of Kashmir division, we are getting a power demand of approximately 1350-1400 MW of power. Currently, we are catering nearly 2800

MWs of power," the official said.

The official further said: "There is a power deficiency of nearly 150 MW from the Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project wherein we are currently producing only 750 MWs of power. Usually during this season we were producing | [More on P10](#)



A vendor arranges religious banners and posters ahead of Muharram in Zadibal, Srinagar. KO Photo By Faisal Khan.

Terror, Trade & Technology Dominate Modi's G7 Pitch

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing world leaders at the G7 Outreach Session on Thursday, called for decisive global action against countries that support terrorism, specifically naming India's neighbourhood as a "breeding ground" for such activities—a veiled reference to Pakistan.

Citing the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, Modi described it as a "direct assault on the soul, identity, and dignity of every Indian" and said turning a blind eye to terrorism for vested interests would be "a betrayal of humanity."

"Terrorism is the enemy of humanity. There must be no place for double standards," Modi said. "Are we truly serious about addressing terrorism? Will we act only when it knocks on our own doors?"

He criticised the global inconsistency in sanctions and accountability, stating, "On one hand, we are quick to impose sanctions based on our own preferences, while on the other, nations openly supporting terrorism continue to be

rewarded."

Focus on Global South, Energy & AI

Shifting focus to energy security and the Global South, Modi emphasised the disproportionate impact of global conflicts on vulnerable nations. "India considers it a responsibility to bring their concerns to the world stage," he said, stressing inclusive growth based on availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability.

On Artificial Intelligence, the Prime Minister noted its growing importance but warned of its energy-intensive nature. "We must regulate AI globally, ensuring it remains a force for good. AI-generated content must be clearly disclosed to counter deepfakes," he urged.

He also highlighted the need for cooperation in critical minerals, technology, and supply chain resilience, warning against their use for strategic dominance.

India-Canada Relations Begin to Thaw

In a significant diplomatic development, PM Modi met Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on the sidelines of the G7 Summit, | [More on P10](#)

Facial Recognition Tech Helps Nab OGW In Anantnag

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: An overground worker of militants was apprehended after he was flagged by the facial recognition system installed ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra in Anantnag district, police said on Thursday.

"Anantnag Police, using newly installed Facial Recognition System at Langanbal Naka, apprehended a suspected OGW flagged by the system," they said in a post on X.

The individual is in custody, and an investigation is underway, police said.

"Safety of #AmarnathYatra2025 remains our top priority," they added.

An officer said ahead of the Amarnath Yatra, which commences on July 3, police have enhanced security measures. As part of these initiatives, | [More on P10](#)

‘Technical Snags’ IndiGo Flight To Leh Returns To Delhi After 2 Hrs In Air

Observer News Service

Srinagar: An IndiGo flight en route to Leh was forced to return to Delhi on Thursday morning due to a technical issue after remaining airborne for over two hours, airline officials said.

The Airbus A320 aircraft, operating as flight 6E 2006 from Delhi to Leh, turned back midway following what the airline described as "operational restrictions" caused by the technical glitch. The flight



SpiceJet Flight Returns Minutes After Takeoff

A SpiceJet flight from Hyderabad to Tirupati returned to the city on Thursday, shortly after takeoff, due to a technical problem, sources said. Flight SG 2696, with 80 passengers on board, | [More on P10](#)

अंतरराष्ट्रीय योग दिवस 2025

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योग-संगम

Yoga Sangam

Department of Students Welfare, University of Kashmir, Srinagar

Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, Srinagar

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DC Holds Introductory Meeting With Sectoral Officers



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Thursday chaired an introductory meeting with sectoral and district officers of Srinagar at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex here.

While chairing the maiden meeting after assuming the charge, DC directed the Officers to work with utmost dedication and commitment for the welfare of people of the district. He emphasized the swift execution of works under set timelines for holistic development of the district besides, implementation of Government policies and schemes on ground in an effective and timely manner.

DC called on the Officers to be responsive and accessible to people and foster quick

decision making abilities in resolving public grievances. He stressed on maintaining close coordination among departments for holistic and well planned development of the district. He stressed them to ensure punctuality & discipline conduct as well.

Additional District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, Rifat Aftab Qureshi; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed; RTO Kashmir, Irfan Qazi; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; General Manager DIC, Hamida Akhtar, besides, Superintending Engineers of PDD, PHE, R&B, SMC, Chief Medical Officer, Sub Divisional Magistrate East/West, District Statics & Evaluation Officer, CMO, CEO, all Tehsildars, all Executive Engineers, and all district & sectoral officers were present on the occasion.

Bengal Man Found Dead In City, Probe Initiated

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A 30-year-old man from West Bengal was found dead under mysterious circumstances in Srinagar on Thursday, officials said.

An official said that the man was found unconscious and immediately taken to the SMHS hospital, however, doctors declared him dead

on arrival.

He said the man was reportedly at Hari Singh High Street and was working as a jeweller in the same area. He has been identified as Pallab Maji (30) son of Manto Maj of West Bengal.

Police have taken cognisance of the matter and further investigation has been launched in this regard.

Urs Of Hazrat Khawaja Habibullah Nowshehri (R.A) Celebrated



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Urs e Mubarak of Hazrat Khawaja Habibullah Nowshehri (R.A) was celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety at his shrine located in Nowshehra area of Srinagar city.

Today on the occasion of Mehfil-e-Sama, a cultural troupe of Cultural Unit Kashmir of Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) presented his Kalam (writing) and mesmerized

the audience by its rendition. Enthralling the audience, the cultural troupe received a great applause from the audience.

Mehfil-e-Sama, which was a special attraction in the Urs, witnessed participation from a large number of people who had come from different parts of Kashmir.

Hazrat Khwaja Habibullah Nowshehri (R.A) is one of the great saints of Kashmir, who wrote his Kalam in Arabic, Persian and Kashmiri languages.

‘Gousia Colony Drainage Left Incomplete Despite Full Payment’

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Residents of Gousia Colony (Lane B) in central Srinagar are raising serious concerns after a key drainage project remains incomplete even a year after its initiation—despite full payment allegedly being released to contractors.

Locals report that at least six drainage pipes are missing, and the soling material initially laid has been removed. The road remains ungraded and muddy, making it nearly impossible to use, especially during rains. Residents claim that no physical verification was carried out before payments were cleared.

“This isn’t just negligence; it’s outright misuse of public money,” said one resident who has been following up

with the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) for over a year without any result.

According to KNS, despite repeated complaints and verbal assurances from officials, there has been no visible progress. The stalled project and deteriorating conditions have left residents frustrated and concerned about possible corruption.

Citizens are now appealing to the Hon’ble Chief Minister and the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir to step in. They are also calling on the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to investigate the matter and hold the responsible officials and contractors accountable.

“This Smart City project has failed to deliver even basic infrastructure. It’s time development plans reach the ground, not just paperwork,” said another resident.



IN A QUEST FOR CUSTOMERS, a vendor rows his fruit-laden boat through the shimmering waters of Dal Lake.

KO PHOTO, SAMEER HUSSAIN

Drainage Work Delay Troubles Humhama Residents

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Residents of Tawheed Bagh and Arco Residency in Humhama continue to face major hardships due to the slow progress of ongoing drainage work. Despite assurances from the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), the area remains in disarray with open drains, broken roads, and rising safety concerns.

The drainage project has been ongoing for over a month, leaving roads dug up and major pathways blocked. Locals said the area has become unsafe and unhygienic, especially for children and the elderly.

Earlier this month, SMC claimed to have carried out “temporary clearance” to ease the situation. However, locals said the measures have been ineffective, and they are forced to navigate debris-filled, uneven roads daily.

“The roads are still broken and dangerous. Even basic movement is risky. There have been no workers or contractors at the site for days,” locals said, expressing frustration over the lack of visible progress.

They added that the so-called clearance has done little to improve accessibility or safety. “This is not a solution. What happens in case of a medical emergency? How do people cross this rubble?” locals asked.

According to KNS, Many parents are also concerned about the safety of school-going children. Locals said students have to walk through unsafe roads every day, increasing the risk of injury.

An SMC official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that while temporary clearance was done, further



THE ROADS ARE STILL BROKEN AND DANGEROUS. Even basic movement is risky. There have been no workers or contractors at the site for days,”

ther progress depends on the surface settling before macadamisation can begin. “We are aware of the concerns and are committed to completing the project,” the official said.

However, residents argue that the roadbed has been poorly prepared and

may not hold. “A water tanker recently got stuck in a pothole, showing how serious the problem is,” locals said.

They have urged the authorities to accelerate the work and complete the drainage project before the onset of the monsoon.

NIT Faculty Co-Edit International Book On Waste Utilization

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Two faculty members from the Civil Engineering Department at NIT Srinagar, Dr. Vivek and Dr. Sandeep Samantaray, have co-edited a reputed research book titled “Waste Utilization in Geotechnical Practice”. Wiley, a leading international academic publisher, has published the book.

It focuses on using different types of waste materials in geotechnical engineering work, such as improving soil, building embankments, and supporting foundations. The book highlights how waste can be safely and effectively used in construction, offering both environmental and economic benefits.

Dr. Vivek said the book was completed after several years of hard work and multiple revisions. “It is a proud moment for us. This book is the result of long efforts, and it reflects our goal of promoting sustainable and practical solutions in civil engineering,” he said.

“We hope this book will serve as a useful reference for engineers and researchers who are working to reduce environmental damage while building strong and durable infrastructure. It’s a small step toward greener engineering practices,” Dr. Vivek added.

Dr. Sandeep Samantaray said the motivation behind the book was to address two major challenges: waste disposal and the need for sustainable construction.



“Across the world, engineers are looking for safe ways to use waste instead of sending it to landfills. In this book, we have shown how materials like fly ash, slag, construction debris, and other types of waste can be reused in geotechnical projects without compromising safety or strength,” he said.

Dr. Sandeep said their focus was not just on the science, but also on practicality. This book talks about real-world applications, how to test waste materials, understand their behavior, and use them responsibly in different construction settings,” he said.

“Jammu and Kashmir is a region with challenging terrain and environmental concerns. We believe the knowledge shared in this book will help in designing infrastructure that is both strong and environmentally friendly,” Dr. Sandeep added.

Both faculty members expressed their gratitude to the NIT Srinagar administration, including the Di-

rector and the Registrar, for their continuous encouragement, institutional support, and research-friendly environment, which made this publication possible.

The book explains the properties of various waste materials, how to test and use them in construction, and what environmental impacts they may have. It also looks at the cost benefits and rules related to using waste in building projects. The authors believe this book can help address the growing problem of waste disposal while supporting safer and more eco-friendly development.

Improper waste disposal can pollute underground water and take up large areas of land. The book shows how some of this waste can be used as an alternative to traditional building materials, which can help reduce environmental harm and cut construction costs.

Dr. Vivek has 8 international and national patents granted in transportation engineering and has published more than 19 research papers. His research focuses on pavement materials, road design, and the use of geotextiles.

Dr. Sandeep has taken part in over 50 international conferences and published 40 journal papers. He also holds 11 patents. His main research interests are in watershed management, waste materials, and sustainable environmental planning.

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- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

 <div>HIJRI CALENDAR 23 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>7:48</td></tr><tr><td>ISHA</td><td>9:30</td></tr></table>	FAJR	3:34	ZUHR	12: 32	ASR	5:32	Magrib	7:48	ISHA	9:30
FAJR	3:34										
ZUHR	12: 32										
ASR	5:32										
Magrib	7:48										
ISHA	9:30										

This Day In History

- 451 - Battle of the Catalaunian Plains: Roman and Visigoths forces defeat Attila the Hun in north east France
- 1212 - French and Spanish crusaders unite against the Almohaden at Toledo
- 1214 - The University of Oxford receives its charter
- 1530 - German Parliament joins to Augsburg together
- 1547 - Count Philip van Hessen captured
- 1567 - Jews are expelled from Brazil by order of regent Don Henrique
- 1582 - Bishop Domingo de Salazar of Manila suppresses the Philipppines
- 1591 - Mauritius and Willem van Nassau occupy Devente
- 1631 - The sack of Baltimore: the Irish village of Baltimore is attacked by Algerian pirates
- 1656 - Polish King Jan II Casimir recaptures Warsaw
- 1756 - Siraj ud-Daulah Nawab of Bengal takes Calcutta from the British
- 1779 - Battle of Stono Ferry fought near Charleston, South Carolina (American Revolutionary War)
- 1812- British Governor Stamford Raffles storms the kraton (palace) of Yogyakarta on Java, capturing its ruler Hamengkubuwono III [1]
- 1819- The SS Savannah reaches Cork in Ireland after a 29 day and 11 hour voyage from Savannah, Georgia to become the 1st steamship to cross the Atlantic or any other ocean
- 1825- Coronation of Charles X, the last Bourbon King of France
- 1826- Siam and Britain sign trade and peace treaty
- 1837- Queen Victoria at 18 ascends British throne following death of uncle King William IV. She rules for 63 years till 1901.
- 1867- US President Andrew Johnson announces the Alaska Purchase
- 1866 - Italy declares war on Austria beginning the Third Italian War of Independence
- 1864- Battle of Kinston, North Carolina and Battle of Abingdon, Virginia1894 French bacteriologist Alexandre Yersin discovers bacillus responsible for the bubonic plague in Hong Kong (Yersinia pestis named in his honor)
- 1919 - Treaty of Versailles: Germany ends incorporation of Austria
- 1944 - Soviet forces conquer Wiborg
- 1960 - Federation of Mali and Senegal become independent of France
- 1981 - Mudjahedin uprisers against Iran regime
- 1983 - Iran moves into northern Iraq (casualties top 13,800 in ten days)
- 1994 - Bomb attack on Islamic centre in Mashad Iran (70 killed)
- 1995 - Space probe Ulysses begins 2nd passage behind the Sun
- 1996 - Space Shuttle STS 78 (Columbia 20), launches into space
- 2012 - Western Libyan tribal clashes kill 105 people and injure 500
- 2015 - Heat wave peaks in southern Pakistan, goes on to kill about 2,000 people from dehydration and heat stroke
- 2015 - 1000 humanoid robots named "Pepper" sell out in under a minute (\$1,600 each) in Japan, according to its creator SoftBank Robotics Corp.
- 2016 - China's super computer tally overtakes the US; Chinese 93 petaflop Sunway TaihuLight is world's No. 1
- 2018 - US President Trump signs Executive Order ending family separation at the border for illegal immigrants.
- 2019- Chinese President Xi Jinping meets Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang, the first Chinese president to visit North Korea in 14 years
- 2019- Iran shoots down a US drone over the Straits of Hormuz escalating tension between the two countries
- 2020- Highest-ever temperature recorded in the Arctic circle, 38C (100F) in Verkhoyansk, Siberia
- 2020- Historic dust cloud from the Sahara desert reaches the Caribbean, largest for half a century
- 2021- Brazil's COVID-19 death toll passes 500,000, the second highest in the world
- 2021- China announces it has administered 1 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine
- 2023- Site of Julius Caesar's assassination in Rome, Largo Argentina square, dating back to third century BC, opens to the public for the first time

NORTHERN RAILWAY
RECRUITMENT OF PART TIME DENTAL SURGEON ON CONTRACT BASIS

Walk-in-Interview for 01 post of Part Time Dental Surgeon on Contract Basis, initially for a period of one year, to be posted at Sub-Divisional Hospital, Amritsar will be held on 03.07.2025 at Committee Hall of Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Firozpur. Interested Candidates can download the application form and all related Terms and Conditions from the website www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in (>News&recruitment info>Recruitment info). For any query contact us on 9878823457 and 9540096053.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE **1824/25**

US Resumes Student Visas, But Requires Access to Social Media Accounts

Press Trust Of India

Washington- The US State Department said on Wednesday it is restarting the suspended process for foreigners applying for student visas but all applicants will now be required to unlock their social media accounts for government review.

The department said consular officers will be on the lookout for posts and messages that could be deemed hostile to the United



States, its government, culture, institutions or founding principles.

In a notice made public on Wednesday, the department said it had rescinded its May suspension of student visa processing but said new applicants who refuse to set their social media accounts to "public" and allow them to be reviewed may be rejected.

It said a refusal to do so could be a sign they are trying to evade the requirement or hide their online activity.

The Trump administration last month temporarily halted the scheduling of new visa interviews for foreign students hoping to

study in the US while preparing to expand the screening of their activity on social media, officials said.

Students around the world have been waiting anxiously for US consulates to reopen appointments for visa interviews, as the window left to book their travel and make housing arrangements narrows ahead of the start of the school year.

On Wednesday afternoon, a 27-year-old Ph D student in Toronto was able to secure an appointment for a visa interview next week. The student, a Chinese national, hopes to travel to the US for a research internship that would start in late July.

"I'm really relieved," said the student, who spoke on condition of being identified only by his surname, Chen, because he was concerned about being targeted.

"I've been refreshing the website a couple of times every day."

Students from China, India, Mexico and the Philippines have posted on social media sites that they have been monitoring visa booking websites and closely watching press briefings of the State Department to get any indication of when appointment scheduling might resume.

In reopening the visa process, the State Department also told consulates to prioritise students hoping to enroll at colleges where foreigners make up less than 15 per cent of the student body, a US official familiar with the matter said.

2 Indian Students in US Jailed for Multi Million Dollar Fraud

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Two Indian nationals studying in the United States have been sentenced to federal prison in separate but similar fraud cases involving elaborate scams that targeted elderly Americans and resulted in millions of dollars in losses.

Kishan Rajeshkumar Patel, 20, who entered the U.S. on a student visa, was sentenced this week to 63 months (over five years) in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Patel participated in an online phishing conspiracy that impersonated U.S. government officials and used fear tactics to extract money and gold from senior citizens.

"The conspiracy used various online phishing methods and impersonated U.S. government officials, while Patel fraudulently received the cash and gold from victims, conveying a portion to co-conspirators and keeping a percentage for his own benefit," the DOJ said.

An investigation determined the scheme defrauded at least 25 elderly victims, with an intended loss of \$2,694,156. Patel was arrested on August 24, 2024, in Granite Shoals, Texas, while attempting to collect what he

believed was \$130,000. He has remained in federal custody since August 29.

"This defendant took advantage of his visa status in our country and participated in an international fraud scheme," said U.S. Attorney Justin Simmons, adding, "Patel defrauded vulnerable American citizens out of millions of dollars by impersonating government officials and preying on his victims' fears of adverse government action." His co-defendant, Dhruv Rajeshbhai Mangukia, also an Indian national, pleaded guilty on June 16, 2025, and is awaiting sentencing.

In a related but separate case, Moinuddin Mohammed, another Indian student, was sentenced earlier this year to eight years in prison for a similar scam that defrauded elderly Americans of nearly \$6 million. His case also involved impersonation tactics and international laundering of the stolen funds. While all three were in the U.S. on student visas, U.S. authorities have not disclosed the educational institutions they were enrolled in.

The U.S. Justice Department and FBI continue to urge caution, particularly among seniors, against unsolicited communications from individuals claiming to represent government or law enforcement agencies.



TASS news agency First Deputy Director General Mikhail Gusman, left, and Xinhua News Agency President Fu Hua, right, attend a meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin, center, with the heads of international news agencies at the newly renovated St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, Thursday, June 19, 2025. Photo | AP

Putin Says Russia Could Help Broker A Deal Between Iran And Israel

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA: Russian President Vladimir Putin offered Wednesday to help mediate an end to the conflict between Israel and Iran, suggesting Moscow could help negotiate a settlement that could allow Tehran to pursue a peaceful atomic program while assuaging Israeli security concerns.

Speaking to senior news leaders of international news agencies, Putin noted that "it's a delicate issue," but added that "in my view, a solution could be found."

Asked how Russia would react if Israel kills Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Putin refused to answer, saying that "I don't even want to discuss such a possibility."

Khamenei has rejected US calls for surrender in the face of more Israeli strikes and warned that any military involvement

by the Americans would cause "irreparable damage to them."

Putin said he shared Moscow's proposals with Iran, Israel and the United States.

"We are not imposing anything on anyone; we are simply talking about how we see a possible way out of the situation. But the decision, of course, is up to the political leadership of all these countries, primarily Iran and Israel," he said.

Russia has maintained a delicate balancing act in the Middle East for decades, trying to navigate its warm relations with Israel even as it developed strong economic and military ties with Iran, a policy that could allow Moscow to play power broker.

Putin's comments follow a mediation offer that he made in a call with U.S. President Donald Trump last weekend.

Trump said Wednesday that he told Putin to stay focused on finding an endgame to his own conflict with Ukraine.

"I said, 'Do me a favor, mediate your own,'" Trump said he told Putin. "I said, 'Vladimir, let's mediate Russia first. You can worry about this later.'"

The comments represented a shift for Trump, who earlier this week said he was "open" to Putin's offer to mediate in the Middle East.

Over 200 Russians remain at Iran's nuclear power plant

Putin, meeting with senior news leaders of international news agencies including The Associated Press on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, emphasized that Russia has a trusting relationship with Iran and helped built its first nuclear power plant in Bushehr on the Persian Gulf south of Tehran.

He said that over 200 Russian workers are involved in building two more reactors in Bushehr, adding that "we agreed with the Israeli leadership that their security will be ensured."

Iran FM Fires Back, Sets Stage for High-Stakes Geneva Talks

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: As the Middle East teeters on the edge of wider conflict, Iran issued a defiant warning to Israel while confirming upcoming talks with European powers in Geneva. The diplomatic overture follows a wave of Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear sites and a fiery threat from Israel's defence minister to assassinate Iran's Supreme Leader.

"By now, the whole world should know that Iran solely acts in self-defence," Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said in a message posted on the social media platform X. He accused Israel of manufacturing regional conflict to derail diplomacy, while reaffirming Iran's right to act in self-defence.

Araghchi said that Iran has refrained from targeting countries supporting Israel, and warned of Israel's attempts to "expand the flames to the region and beyond."

"Even in the face of the most outrageous aggression against our people, Iran has so far only retaliated against the Israeli regime and not those who are aid-



ing and abetting it. Just like Netanyahu manufactured this war to destroy diplomacy, the world should be highly alarmed about increasing attempts by the failing Israeli regime to get others to bail it out and to expand the flames to the region and beyond.

The foreign minister reaffirmed Iran's position against nuclear armament, saying: "Iran has proven in action what it has always publicly committed itself to: we have never sought and will never seek nuclear weapons. If otherwise, what better pretext could we possibly need for developing those inhuman weapons than the current aggression by the region's only nuclear-armed regime?"

Despite the harsh rhetoric, Araghchi confirmed plans to meet with the foreign ministers of Britain, France, and Germany in Geneva, at the request of the

three European powers. The talks, reported by Iran's semi-official Mehr news agency, are expected to take place on Friday, although no specific agenda has been disclosed. The meeting will mark the first high-level diplomatic engagement since Israeli strikes on Iran sparked a sharp escalation in regional hostilities.

The European push for dialogue comes at a critical moment, as fears mount over the possibility of full-scale conflict. Western media have reported that an EU representative is also expected to attend the Geneva talks, underscoring the international concern over the crisis.

Araghchi concluded his post by stating that, with the exception of what he called "the illegitimate, genocidal and occupying Israeli regime," Iran remains committed to diplomacy. "We are serious and forward-looking in our outlook," he wrote.

The international community now looks to Geneva, where the outcome of Friday's anticipated talks could set the tone for what comes next in one of the most volatile regional crises in recent memory.

Bypolls For 5 Seats In 4 States Largely Peaceful, High Turnout In Bengal

Press Trust of India

Ludhiana: Bypolls were held in five Assembly segments across Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat and Kerala on Thursday, with the Kaliganj seat in West Bengal registering a polling percentage of nearly 70 by 5 pm.

The polling that commenced at 7 am and concluded at 6 pm was largely peaceful, with the exception of a few isolated incidents, officials said.

Fourteen companies of central forces were deployed across the constituency to ensure free-and-fair polling.

Minor tension was reported from a few booths.

At Chandghar Adarsha Vidyapith's booth number 56, the Congress alleged that its polling agent was forcibly removed by TMC workers, an allegation denied by the ruling party.

Ghosh, after casting his vote, expressed confidence of victory.



While the deaths of the incumbent MLAs necessitated the bypolls in one seat each in Gujarat, West Bengal and Punjab, the resignation of two legislators led to the polling in Kerala and another seat in Gujarat.

At Kaliganj in West Bengal's Nadia district, a voter turnout of 69.85 per cent was recorded till 5 pm.

"Polling has been peaceful. There was no report of any incident from anywhere in and around the constituency. Till 5 pm, the polling was 69.85 per cent," an election official told PTI.

Sources said the polling percentage may go further up as there were queues outside polling booths.

The bypoll was necessitated by the death of Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLA Nasiruddin Ahamed in February. His daughter, Alifa Ahamed, was fielded in the bypoll by the ruling TMC.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) nominated Ashis Ghosh for the contest, while Congress candidate Kabil Uddin Shaikh is in the fray with the support of the CPI(M).

However, he objected to the polling procedure, alleging that officials deliberately applied the indelible ink on his middle finger instead of the index finger under the "insistence" of TMC agents.

"First, they missed putting the ink on my finger when I went to vote. Then, after I noticed it and returned, they deliberately marked my middle finger. This is a pre-planned political conspiracy by the TMC," the BJP candidate alleged.

Poll officials confirmed that no rules were violated but said they have sought a report from the district magistrate regarding the incident.

Election Commission (EC) officials removed party flags and festoons found within 100 metres of several polling booths. Voters were not allowed to carry mobile phones inside polling stations and were instructed to deposit the devices at designated spots under the supervision of EC-appointed volunteers.

Kerala's Nilambur constituency saw a steady voter turnout of 59.68 per cent till 3 pm.

Sonia Stable, Recovering Well: Hospital



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi- Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who was hospitalised owing to a stomach-related issue, is stable and recovering well, the hospital said on Thursday.

The 78-year-old Congress

leader was admitted to the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on June 15.

According to Dr Ajay Swaroop, the chairman of the hospital, Gandhi is responding positively to treatment.

"Her health is stable, and a specific diet plan has been introduced today as part of her ongoing care. She remains under close observation," he said in a health update issued on Thursday morning.

While her recovery is progressing steadily, the hospital has not yet decided on a discharge date. Doctors said the decision will be made based on her overall recovery.

A team of senior doctors is closely monitoring her condition, the statement said.

NEWS MAKERS

Countries Race To Evacuate Nationals As Israel-Iran Conflict Escalates

Governments around the world are evacuating thousands of their nationals caught up in the rapidly spiralling Israel-Iran conflict, organising buses and planes and in some cases assisting people crossing borders on foot.

Foreigners have rushed to leave both countries after Israel launched an unprecedented bombing campaign on Friday targeting Iran's nuclear and military facilities, sparking retaliation from Tehran.

With Israel's air space closed and the two countries exchanging heavy missile fire, many people are being evacuated via neighbouring countries.

Europe

European countries have already repatriated hundreds of their citizens from Israel.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia have taken 181 people home on government planes.

"The evacuees were taken to an airport in a neighbouring country by buses. They crossed the border on foot," the Czech defence ministry said in a statement.

Germany scheduled flights for Wednesday and Thursday via Jordan, while Poland said the first of its citizens would also arrive back

on Wednesday.

Greece said it had repatriated 105 of its citizens plus a number of foreign nationals via Egypt, while a private plane with 148 people landed in the Bulgarian capital Sofia on Tuesday.

United States

The US ambassador to Israel announced plans on Wednesday for evacuating Americans by air and sea.

The embassy was working on evacuation flights and cruise ship departures for "American citizens wanting to leave Israel," Ambassador Mike Huckabee posted on social media.

China

China has evacuated more than 1,600 citizens from Iran and several hundred more from Israel its foreign ministry said on Thursday those efforts would continue.

Australia

Australia has started evacuating around 1,500 citizens from Iran and more than 1,200 from Israel, although missile barrages have made it too risky for civilian aircraft, its foreign minister said.

"We have taken the opportunity to get a small group of Australians out of Israel through a land border crossing," Foreign Minister Penny Wong told national broadcaster ABC.

Pakistan

Pakistan has shut its border crossings with neighbouring Iran, except to Pakistanis wanting to return home.

Around 3,000 Pakistanis have moved back from Iran since the conflict started, foreign ministry spokesman Shafqat Ali Khan told reporters on Thursday.

The families of diplomats and some non-essential staff from Iran have also been evacuated.

India

Around 110 students who fled Iran over the land border with Armenia have landed in New Delhi, a foreign ministry spokesperson said Thursday. There are around 10,000 Indian citizens in Iran.

New Delhi also said on Thursday it planned to evacuate all Indian nationals in Israel who wish to leave. There are around 30,000 Indians in Israel.

"Their travel from Israel to India will be facilitated through the land borders and thereafter by air to India," a foreign ministry statement said.

Japan

Japan has ordered military planes to be on standby for around 1,000 Japanese nationals believed to live in Israel, and around 280 in Iran, according to government ministers.

The Japanese embassies in Iran and Israel are preparing to use buses to evacuate citizens to neighbouring countries, a government spokesman said.

Indonesia

Indonesia is preparing to evacuate around 380 of its citizens currently in Iran by land, Jakarta's foreign minister said Thursday.

At least 11 Indonesians in Israel have also asked to leave.

Vietnam

Vietnam, which has more than 700 citizens in Israel and dozens in Iran, said it was working to ensure their safety.

The foreign ministry said on Thursday that 18 Vietnamese from Iran were evacuated, 16 of whom returned to Vietnam. It did not provide further information on evacuations from Israel.

Philippines

The Philippines is preparing to repatriate 28 Israel-based Filipino workers out of 178 who asked for help, the Department of Migrant Workers said on Thursday.

At least 21 Philippine government officials have also crossed into Jordan by land from Israel, the foreign ministry said

AP

DC Gbl Finalizes Arrangements For Int'l Yoga Day Celebration

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: In preparation for the upcoming International Yoga Day celebrations, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, chaired a meeting of senior officers at DC Office Complex here to review and finalize the arrangements.

During the meeting, it was decided that the main district-level Yoga Day event will be held at the Government Physical College of Education, Gadoora. In addition, similar yoga sessions will be organized at Manasbal, Sonamarg, and other designated locations across the district to ensure widespread participation.

DC directed all line depart-

ments to make necessary preparations at the venues well in advance to facilitate smooth conduct of yoga sessions across the district.

District Officer AYUSH and DYSSO were specifically instructed to coordinate with all concerned departments for ensuring foolproof and seamless arrangements for the celebrations.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Manzoor Ahmad Bhat; CEO Sonamarg Development Authority, Bilal Mukhtar; Chief Education Officer, EO Municipality, District Youth Services and Sports Officer (DYSSO), District Officer AYUSH, and representatives from various departments.

Development On Track, Public Concerns Being Addressed: Javed Dar



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Minister Javed Dar on Thursday dismissed the perception of a "dual system" in Jammu and Kashmir as unfortunate, asserting that the government is fully functional and working diligently to address public issues and push forward with its development agenda.

Speaking during his visit to Baramulla, Dar said, "Unfortunately, a narrative of a dual system in Jammu and Kashmir is being created, but the reality is that the government is doing its work sincerely."

He emphasized that both the Chief Minister and the council of ministers are engaged on the ground, resolving grievances and fulfilling electoral commitments.

Dar acknowledged the heightened expectations among the public, attributing it to the six-year absence of elected local governance, which had severely hindered developmental efforts. "The system had col-

lapsed due to the vacuum, but now we are back on the ground with renewed commitment," he said.

The Minister also explained initial delays in developmental execution, citing winter formation of the government and subsequent Assembly sessions and planning processes. However, he said that multiple departments—including Roads & Buildings (R&B), Public Health Engineering (PHE), and Rural Development (RDD)—have now begun active implementation.

"The coming months will witness a vigorous development phase across Jammu and Kashmir. We will honour the promises made during the elections with full dedication," he stated.

He assured that the government remains accessible and responsive. "Whether it's ministers, the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah himself or his advisor, everyone is actively listening to people's concerns. We are committed to delivering results at the pace people expect," Dar said.

INFRASTRUCTURE CRISIS

127 Kupwara Govt Schools Without Electricity

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Government schools in Kupwara district are operating under severely deficient conditions, with hundreds lacking essential amenities like electricity, drinking water, libraries, and even proper buildings.

According to official data, 127 schools in the district have no electricity, depriving children of lighting and ventilation amid soaring summer temperatures.

Mohammad Hussain Khan, a local resident, remarked, "There are children between 7 and 10 years of age who go to school amid this scorching heat only to find themselves getting roasted in concrete ovens being mistaken as classrooms. Nowhere in the entire country have we found such examples of neglect in the education sector."

FRS Installed By Anantnag Police Detects OGW

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: In a significant development particularly ahead of the forthcoming Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY-2025)—the Facial Recognition System (FRS) deployed by District Police Anantnag at Langanbal Naka detected an Over-Ground Worker (OGW) Thursday at approximately 1700 hrs.

The individual, a resident of Seer Hamdan (Police Station Mattan jurisdiction) with a prior FIR registered in 2005, was working as a carpenter. He was subsequently handed over to the Police Station Pahalgam for further legal action, a police spokesman said in a

statement issued to Kashmir Observer. This swift interception highlights the impact of technology-driven policing and is to send a clear deterrent message to miscreants as SANJY-2025 approaches, the statement reads.

District Police Anantnag has already enhanced electronic surveillance along all yatra access corridors to ensure a safe and seamless pilgrimage experience. Anyone attempting to disrupt public order—or threaten pilgrims' safety—will be swiftly identified and dealt with under law, it said, adding that District Police Anantnag remains committed to leveraging modern surveillance tools to safeguard citizens and pilgrims alike.



AMID THE SUMMER HEAT, locals find solace in the refreshing waters of Shrunz Waterfall in Baramulla district.

KO PHOTO, SAMEER HUSSAIN

KASHMIR IS SAFE

Union Tourism Minister Assures Topmost Security For Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Thursday visited the site of the recent terror attack in Pahalgam and praised the resilience and spirit of the Kashmiri people, calling it the "real soul of Kashmir." He also assured that topmost security measures would be in place for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

Shekhawat, on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, began his day by paying tribute at the site of the April 22 attack that left 26 people dead, including tourists, a pony operator, and a Nepalese national. Sharing his experience on social media, he wrote, "A heavy heart but one filled with hope... the quiet resolve to not let fear define them is the real soul of Kashmir."

The minister was especially moved by the courage of Sajjad Ahmad Bhatt, a local who risked his life to save an injured tourist during the attack. "In a moment of fear and chaos, he chose courage and humanity above all," Shekhawat posted, sharing a video titled "Meeting the Pahalgam Hero."

Shekhawat also interacted with tourists and locals, lauding the return of everyday vibrancy to the region. "The unwavering hospitality and strength of the people is what makes Kashmir



#IncredibleIndia," he said.

As part of his itinerary, the minister visited several heritage sites, including the ancient Martand Sun Temple in Mattan, the Avantiswami Temple in Pulwama, and the Naranag Temple complex in Ganderbal. At the Martand site, he appealed to pilgrims and tourists to respect and help preserve the valley's environment and historical legacy.

"Kashmir is safe. The Amarnath Yatra is safe. The Government of India and the UT government are fully committed. You will not get even a scratch," he told reporters after visiting the Martand temple. The annual Yatra is scheduled from July 3 to August 9.

He urged the people of India to explore Kashmir beyond its scenic beauty. "I appeal to the 140 crore people of India to try to get to know about Kashmir's heritage, its historical grandeur and divinity," Shekhawat said. Commenting on the preser-

vation of heritage monuments, the minister noted that while restoration work has been initiated by the Archaeological Survey of India and state authorities, much more needs to be done to protect centuries-old cultural assets.

Later in the evening, Shekhawat met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for a dinner interaction. "We had a positive and forward-looking discussion on the development of the tourism sector in J&K," he said, adding that they discussed infrastructure enhancement, promotion of heritage sites, and sustainable livelihood generation through tourism.

Sharing images from his visit, Shekhawat praised the local hospitality industry for their determination to keep Kashmir vibrant and welcoming despite recent setbacks. He reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to minimizing the impact of the attack on the region's tourism sector.

CM Omar Expresses Satisfaction Over Amarnath Yatra Arrangements

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday reviewed the delivery of essential services and supplies, and expressed satisfaction with steps taken by the administration for a comfortable annual Amarnath Yatra beginning July 3.

The 38-day-long Yatra is scheduled to start from the twin routes — the traditional 48-kilometre Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the 14-kilometre shorter but steeper Baltal route in Ganderbal district — to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine of Amarnath. The first batch of pilgrims will leave for Kashmir from Bhagwati Nagar a day before the start of the Yatra.

"I reviewed the situation concerning hot weather conditions in Jammu. All officers, including the divisional commissioner, were present. I asked about the arrangements for Muharram and the Amarnath Yatra. I am satisfied with the steps taken in this direction," Omar told reporters in Samba.

He further said, "Now we are waiting for pilgrims so that their Yatra is comfortable."

Officials apprised the chief minister of the ongoing preparations for the Amarnath Yatra, with detailed arrangements from Lakhanpur — the gateway to J-K — to Lambar at Banihal in Ramban.

He was informed about the RFID, registration centres,



“

"Now we are waiting for pilgrims so that their Yatra is comfortable."

lodgement centres, langar facilities and other key preparations made by the administration for the smooth conduct of the Amarnath Yatra.

The chief minister asked the concerned officials to provide wide publicity to the cut-off timings for travel on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, which will be the same for pilgrims and tourists during the Amarnath Yatra period.

Omar chaired a high-level meeting in Jammu to review the delivery of essential services and supplies, and the steps taken by the administration during the current summer season in the Jammu division.

During the meeting, Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar briefed the chief

minister and gave a presentation on the functioning of different line departments and their action plan for summer preparedness, an official spokesperson said.

It was informed that the Jammu Power Development Corporation Limited has maintained a sufficient buffer stock of transformers and has also devised time-slots for power curtailment to prevent overload on grid stations.

According to PTI, he emphasised adherence to the curtailment schedule of the Power Development Department (PDD), with minimum power outages and prevention of overheating of power lines and transformers.

The functioning of the Jal Shakti Department and Jammu Municipal Corporation was also discussed with regard to the adequate supply of water tankers, water sprinklers, anti-smog guns and proper maintenance of water coolers to provide relief to citizens.

Taking cognisance of the water scarcity issues in some newly populated areas, the chief minister directed the commissioner of Jammu Municipal Corporation and the Jal Shakti Department to provide immediate relief to residents through water tanker services.

Omar also reviewed the forest fire response mechanism of the Forest Department and the readiness of Fire and Emergency Services to tackle any such situation.

Reservation Promise Broken, Students Betrayed: Para

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader and MLA Waheed Ur Rehman Para on Thursday lashed out at the Jammu and Kashmir government for failing to fulfil its six-month-old promise to address the controversial reservation policy through a subcommittee report.

Para stated, "Six months ago, the J&K government assured us they would resolve the reservation issue via a subcommittee report. That deadline has come and gone, and in the meantime, thousands of students are heartbroken, their trust in the system shattered, and their futures on hold."

Calling it a "deliberate denial of justice," he said students who've already endured violence, lockdowns, and instability are now being denied fair representation in government opportunities.

The former MLA from Pulwama added that the current National Conference-led administration has the authority to revoke BJP-era policies through an administrative order. "But the party that vowed to reverse the BJP's damage is now complicit in perpetuating it. If this is their response to a youth issue within their control, what does that say about their stance on Article 370, statehood, or the Wakf Amendment Bill?"

Para described the erosion of merit in Kashmir as not just



a political matter, but a national security concern. "J&K is a border state where youth are vulnerable to militancy, radicalism, and cross-border influences. If Kashmiri youth are left hopeless, it will only empower subversive elements, destabilizing a generation and jeopardizing the future."

He warned that continued inaction would force youth into an impossible choice—either pursue education with no guarantees, or rebel against a system that's failed them. "The government must act now with the urgency this issue demands," he asserted.

Pledging solidarity, Para said, "We stand with our students—free of political affiliations—in their pain and concerns. Their struggle is genuine, and we will fight alongside them until justice is achieved."

The subcommittee in question has remained silent for the past six months, with no update or report, while student protests demanding fair, rationalized reservation policies continue across Jammu and Kashmir.

Pulwama's Circular Road To Be Free Of Garbage In 15 Days

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: In a major relief to the residents of Pulwama, authorities have announced that no further garbage will be dumped along the Circular Road, and that the current waste will be cleared within two weeks.

This comes after sustained public pressure over the years regarding the unsanitary conditions caused by unregulated dumping near residential areas, particularly near the Government Degree College (GDC) for Women.

An official from the Municipal Committee Pulwama told Observer News Service that a private firm has been awarded the contract to shift all accumulated waste from the Circular Road sites to the designated solid waste management facility. "This process will be completed within 10 to 15 days," he confirmed.

He added that a new dumping site in the Newa area has already been identified and will become operational within a month. The Managing Director of Swachh Bharat Mission has now taken over the tendering process after earlier bids failed to attract responses locally.

For years, locals have lamented the health hazards and nuisance caused by the waste. "The stench makes it difficult to even open windows. We've been raising this issue for years, but nothing happened," said Rouf Ahmad, a local activist.

Zeeshan Ahmad Bhat, another resident, said, "The garbage has led to a rise in stray dogs and is a threat to our health and safety."

Residents have repeatedly criticised the administration for dumping waste in a populated area, calling it an irresponsible move that jeopardised public health.

According to KNO, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, admitted delays in operationalizing the Newa facility, attributing them to poor response in the tender process. He reiterated the administration's commitment to resolving public grievances and assured that dumping operations will soon shift away from residential zones.

The timely execution of the plan is expected to provide significant relief to the town's residents, who have long sought an end to the indiscriminate waste disposal practices in Pulwama.

SSP Budgam Chairs Public Meeting Ahead Of Muharram

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In view of the upcoming holy month of Muharram, SSP Budgam Nikhil Borkar Thursday convened a public meeting at Magam to review preparations and ensure a peaceful observance of religious events. He was accompanied by SDPO Magam Mohd Ashraf Lissery and SHO Magam Mudassir Zaroo.

The meeting was attended by a wide cross-section of the local population, including youth leaders, Shia community representatives, trade union members, market associations, Awqaf Committee members, and volunteers from Magam, Kanterbug, Kanihama, Watmagam, Habbak, Nooripora, and adjoining villages.

Various issues and demands related to Muharram arrange-

ments were raised by the participants. SSP Budgam gave a patient hearing and addressed several police-related concerns on the spot, a police spokesman said in a statement issued Kashmir Observer.

Directions were issued immediately to concerned officers for prompt redressal. Issues falling under the ambit of civil administration will be taken up with the relevant authorities.

The participants expressed their full cooperation with the police and civil administration and assured that all religious events during Muharram would be conducted peacefully and in an atmosphere of harmony.

The meeting reflected strong community engagement and reinforced the shared commitment to maintaining peace and order during the sacred period.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to information of all the general public that I have lost registration number plate of my motorcycle (with gear) bearing registration number JK15A 6967, while I was travelling from Wangipora to Sumbal Colony, Bandipora few weeks before. If anybody have found it, he/she may please return it back on the below mentioned address as soon as possible, otherwise, I am going to apply for duplicate of the same from the concerned Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Bandipora. If anybody has any objection in this regard, he/she may submit the same to the concerned authority within week's time from the date of publication of this notice, after that no objection shall be entertained.

Farooq Ahmad Parry S/O Sonallah Parry
R/O Wangipora, Sumbal, District Bandipora
Mobile Number: 9149797072

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KO VIEW

Weapons of
Mass Distraction

The recent statement by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi underscores a critical and deeply alarming reality in the Middle East: the Israeli regime's continued aggression—underpinned by unverified accusations and enabled by Western complicity—is not only futile but dangerous. In a world that once claimed to be governed by a rules-based international order, the unchecked actions of Tel Aviv and its backers have exposed the hollow core of that system, revealing it to be a selective tool used to justify hegemony rather than uphold justice.

Iran's consistent position on its nuclear policy has been one of restraint and transparency. The country remains a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), has repeatedly allowed inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and has on multiple occasions reiterated its commitment to never developing weapons of mass destruction. As Araghchi noted, if ever there was a pretext to pursue nuclear deterrence, it would be now—when Iran is under direct threat from the region's only nuclear-armed power: Israel. Yet Iran has abstained from such a course, demonstrating in action what it claims in principle.

Despite this, Israel has persistently sought to shift international focus toward Iran's nuclear program, relying on innuendo, falsified intelligence, and speculative allegations. These efforts have been used to justify preemptive sabotage, cyberattacks, and assassinations—all flagrant violations of international law. The objective is clear: to cripple Iranian sovereignty and forestall any potential for regional balance that threatens Israeli dominance. But this strategy is both misguided and unsustainable.

Netanyahu's manufactured crisis—aimed at derailing diplomacy—illustrates a dangerous pattern. Every diplomatic opening, whether it be the JCPOA or backchannel dialogues, has been met with Israeli sabotage. The rationale is not Iran's behaviour, but the very possibility of détente between Iran and the West, particularly the United States. The Israeli leadership knows that its regional impunity hinges on perpetual conflict, and peace between Iran and the U.S. would undercut the entire justification for its aggressive posture.

Israel's undeclared but widely acknowledged nuclear arsenal remains a glaring hypocrisy in global non-proliferation discourse. That the only nuclear-armed state in the region—a state outside the NPT and with no international oversight—leads the charge against Iran on nuclear concerns should be seen as the height of duplicity.

Israel's military campaigns, from Gaza to Lebanon to Syria, have yielded immense destruction but little in the way of strategic gain. The idea that further escalation—now possibly drawing in American forces openly—will yield different results is illusory. Iran, as Araghchi asserts, has thus far retaliated with restraint, targeting Israeli assets without expanding conflict to those merely aiding it.

Furthermore, the potential for escalation holds severe implications far beyond the immediate theatre of conflict. Countries like India, which have vital energy, trade, and diaspora ties with both Israel and Iran, face significant geopolitical and economic risks. The destabilisation of the region could disrupt global oil flows, spike inflation, and draw regional powers into unwanted alignments or confrontations—exacerbating tensions across Asia and beyond.

As the world watches, the question is no longer about Iran's intentions—it is whether the international community will continue to enable impunity or finally uphold the principles it so often professes, and whether it will continue to reward belligerence while ignoring the restraint that, ironically, has become the exception rather than the norm.

FINANCIAL FIX

The Drift We Can't Ignore

To prevent a generational breakdown, we must invest in skills, structure, and support, now.

Irshad Mushtaq

Across Kashmir, a silent crisis is unfolding. Young people are slipping into lives filled with distraction, dependency, and disconnection. Gaming addictions, drug use, and digital fatigue are symptoms of a deeper problem: a lack of direction. Education alone won't fix this. Degrees mean little if they don't lead to confidence or opportunity. What's missing is a system that teaches practical skills—how to earn, how to build, how to think independently. Without this, even the brightest students lose steam.

The economy doesn't offer enough choices, and families often carry too many burdens to help. But silence at home, and inaction in society, only push the young further away. They need spaces that value them. They need routines, not lectures; encouragement, not pressure.

Technology could help, if used well. But too often, it's the opposite. Instead of learning or earning online, many scroll their days away, bored and numb. Without guidance, even powerful tools become traps.

This is not just a government problem. Communities must step in. Schools must go beyond textbooks. Parents must engage with care, not control. It's a collective job to make sure the next generation doesn't grow up lost.

Kashmir cannot afford to treat its youth as an afterthought. Their potential is real. But without structure, that potential goes nowhere. What's needed is not another policy paper, but real, everyday support. A generation is watching. The question is: are we ready to show up?

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

A Generation in Freefall
New data shows a silent surge in addiction and fatal crashes among Kashmir's youth amid record unemployment.

It doesn't start with a shrill anymore. It starts with silence.

A boy rides his bike too fast down a lane in downtown Srinagar. A girl takes a pill she says helps her sleep. A student skips another class, eyes red, shoulders heavy.

You don't hear these things on the news. But this is how a generation dies.

Kashmiri youth are not just struggling. They're slipping. And we are looking the other way.

For decades, we've talked about conflict. About cross-border tensions, internet bans, lockdowns. But while we've watched the headlines, something else crept in. Something quieter and crueler: a sense of hopelessness.

Ask yourself: what happens to a young person who grows up under situational stress? Who never knows if everything will be okay next week? Who watches their father wait for a job that never came? What happens when your dreams seem smaller than your pain?

Many in Kashmir say, they run. Sometimes they run on bikes, engines roaring through narrow streets, chasing a feeling they can't name. Speed becomes a language, a release. The louder the throttle, the quieter their thoughts.

But this isn't freedom. It's a shortcut to the grave. We've buried too many sons like this. Skid marks on roads, grief in every corner of a home.

Other times, they turn to drugs. Not always heroin or smack, though that too. Sometimes it's cough syrup. Painkillers. Anxiety meds. Whatever's easy to find and hard to trace.

They start small. A friend offers a pill to relax. A sip to feel better. Then they're hooked before anyone notices.

By the time they reach a rehab center, if they ever do, their spirit is already half gone.

You think I'm exaggerating?

Here's the data: A national survey in 2023 found that Jammu and Kashmir has one of the highest substance abuse rates in the country. In some districts, over half the youth reported using drugs. Hospitals report a surge in opioid cases. Rehab centers are full. And still, barely anyone talks about it.

Why would they?

In Kashmir, we're taught to be silent. To stay strong. Not to show pain. That silence is killing us.

And no, it's not just "bad parenting" or "bad company." It's not just one poor choice. It's a system that failed them.

An economy that shut its doors. An education system that limps. A mental health crisis no one dares to name. It's years of anxiety stacked on top of uncertainty. It's promises made, and broken, again and again.

Tell me: how do you plan a future when the internet might be shut off tomorrow? How do you dream of college abroad when you aren't sure about home? How do you heal when no one told you it was okay to be hurt?

So what do we do?

We stop pretending this is normal. We stop blaming the youth for

their own collapse. We stop whispering when someone says the word "addiction." We talk about it, loudly, clearly, and without shame.

Parents need to look beyond report cards. Ask your child what they're carrying inside. Listen without judgment. Teachers must see the student behind the syllabus.

Religious leaders, start talking about this from the pulpit. Not in vague terms. Name it. Addiction. Depression. Suicide. Say the words. Break the spell.

And to the youth: You don't have to run. You don't have to numb yourself. You're not weak for feeling too much. You're not alone. There is strength in asking for help. There is power in choosing to live, fully, painfully, beautifully.

We need more counselors in schools. More helplines that actually answer. More places where young people can just show up and talk.

We need policies that don't just police, but protect. We need leaders who see beyond statistics and into stories.

This is a war we can still win. But only if we start fighting it. Not with guns. With honesty. With care. With urgency.

Right now, Kashmir's future is bleeding out in silence. Not from bullets. But from all the things we refuse to see.

The author can be reached at
suwaidasajad0x@gmail.com

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This is a war
we can still win.
But only if we
start fighting it.
Not with guns.
With honesty.
With care. With
urgency.”

The Workers Kashmir Forgot
Out of view, and often out of reach of the law, manual scavenging remains part of life in Kashmir.

Haqnawaz Qayoom

One morning in Anantnag, a sanitation worker was sent down into a clogged sewer. He wore no safety gear. The rope tied around his waist snapped. He fell into the pit and lost consciousness. By the time help arrived, he was gone.

His death didn't make the news. No compensation was offered and no case was registered under the law that prohibits manual scavenging.

This practice, cleaning human waste by hand, is illegal in India under the 2013 Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act. Yet it continues silently, across the country and here in Kashmir.

Nationally, over 770,000 people are estimated to still do this work. In 2021 alone, India recorded 58,098 deaths linked to manual scavenging. Most died from inhaling poisonous gases inside septic tanks or sewer lines. Many more were left with chronic lung disease, skin infections, and no support.

In Kashmir, official numbers are hard to find. But the practice persists in both urban and rural areas. Septic tanks in homes, hotels, and hospitals are often cleaned manually. The workers are paid in cash, hired informally by contractors or residents. They are not recorded as sanitation staff. So when accidents happen, and they do, there is no legal trail.

Part of the problem is infrastructure. Most homes in Kashmir aren't connected to a proper sewage network. Septic tanks fill up every few months and need to be emptied. Without suction machines or modern tools, someone climbs in. Municipal bodies sometimes provide clean-

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ing trucks, but these don't reach all areas. In narrow lanes and older neighbourhoods, the only option becomes a human one.

Another issue is how the law defines the work. According to Section 7 of the 2013 Act, if a person wears any "protective gear," they are no longer considered a manual scavenger.

But the law doesn't clearly define what qualifies as protection. This loophole makes it easy for employers to claim compliance and avoid responsibility.

Letter to Editor

Kashmiri Students Returned from Iran to an Empty Welcome

When I heard that our students, evacuated from Iran, had landed at Delhi Airport this morning, I felt a sense of relief. But that feeling didn't last long. What followed was not relief, but disappointment and disbelief.

These young students, most of them from our Valley, had just gone through days of uncertainty in a foreign land. They should have been welcomed with care and comfort. Instead, they stepped into an airport where there was no one from their own administration to receive them. Not a single official from the Jammu and Kashmir government showed up. Other states were there. Their representatives met their students, helped them, stood by them. Ours were left alone.

I find it painful that our government didn't

even think it necessary to send someone. These children are not just students—they are sons and daughters of Kashmir. At the very least, they deserved a warm welcome and a safe plan to get them home.

But what shocked me even more was the travel arrangement that followed. Deluxe buses. Over 600 kilometers by road. After all they've been through, we're asking them to sit on a bus for hours on end, through highways and heat, tired and anxious. That's not just careless. That's inhuman.

We have planes. Why weren't special flights arranged? Why wasn't this thought through in advance? Why does it always feel like our youth are an afterthought?

I've spoken to families today. Their voices

were full of fear, frustration, and helplessness. They had been waiting at home, trusting that the government would do right by their children. But what they saw today was silence.

Even at the airport, there were no sleeping spaces, no briefings, no arrangements. Just uncertainty. Just waiting. Just more exhaustion. How does this reflect on our governance?

This is not about politics. This is about responsibility. About care. About being human.

I urge the administration to stop this long road journey plan. Arrange air travel. Show these children, and their families, that we see them, that we care. It's the least we can do.

Sincerely,
Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen
Former Minister, Jammu and Kashmir

Aashiq Hussain Andrabi

In August 2019, as Kashmir slipped into an unprecedented communications black-out, a young woman walked with her father to the local police station, the only place with a working phone line. She needed to make one call. She was waiting to hear back about her Ph.D. application.

That call led to an interview. By the next morning, she was on a bus, heading out of the Valley with nothing but a bag and a sense of urgency.

Almost six years later, Dr. Shaista Anayat Naz is a postdoctoral fellow at IIM Amritsar, studying how artificial intelligence is reshaping human thought, emotion, and behaviour.

At the heart of her research is a set of difficult questions: Why are we growing emotionally attached to machines? What happens when people begin to trust AI more than themselves? And what do we lose when technology replaces memory, judgment, even intimacy?

Born and raised in Kashmir, Dr. Naz brings a rare perspective to the field of human-computer interaction. Her work sits at the intersection of psychology, ethics, and emerging tech, focused not just on what machines can do, but on how they're changing the way we live and relate.

In this interview, she reflects on her academic journey, the pressures facing Kashmiri youth, and why research, at its best, should slow people down and make them think.

What was your childhood like in Kashmir?

I had an eventful childhood, shaped by two places and a thousand silences. We're originally from a village called Badroo in Kulgam, but political unrest forced us to leave when I was still a child. My family moved to Jammu, and after some years, we returned to Anantnag. Those early years were full of movement, but also full of meaning.

The person who left the deepest mark on me was my grandfather. He was a lawyer, full of questions and always reading. I grew up sitting beside him, flipping through newspapers and books.

At school, I was outgoing, always speaking up in debates, signing up for games and cultural events. But at home, I was more inward, more reticent. I found comfort in reading, skating, cycling. Our home gave education the highest priority, and in that atmosphere, it felt natural to grow with books and questions for company.

Your journey from an MBA to a Ph.D. and now a post-doc sounds incredible. How did these experiences shape your thinking?

I always knew I wanted to pursue an MBA. That clarity came to me in eleventh grade. What I didn't know was that the road would take me much further.

During and after my MBA, I started two small ventures. They weren't headline stories. They didn't go viral or make it big. But they kept me afloat. They paid for my education and gave me something more lasting - a deep curiosity about how people interact with technology.

I started noticing how users reacted to even simple AI tools, how they placed trust in things that didn't breathe but could talk. That curiosity became a fire. I didn't want

What troubles me most is how many bright students waste their best years chasing government jobs. I understand the desire for security, but it's turning into a trap.

I may not change the world. But if I can spark awareness, if a few people begin to ask better questions, that would be a good start.

This Kashmiri Woman is Making AI More Human

She doesn't just study machines. She studies us, and what we're losing by handing over our minds to them.

to stop learning, so I moved into research. My Ph.D. at Central University of Jammu was a turning point. Unlike my MBA, which was filled with familiar faces and local voices, the university was a world of its own. There were students from all corners of the country, each carrying their own questions, accents, and dreams.

That diversity changed me. It taught me that real education starts when you're no longer surrounded by people just like you.

At IIM Amritsar, where I'm doing my post-doc now, I've found a space that encourages both thought and transformation. It's not just about publications or academic rigour. It's about becoming someone who can contribute to the world with clarity and purpose.

I always tell my students, don't chase degrees, chase experiences that make you grow.

You study how people interact with technology, especially AI voice assistants. What sparked your interest in this field?

It started during my startup phase. I saw how people use technology not just to get things done, but to feel understood. There was something strange and fascinating about how people spoke to machines with emotion. They asked questions, made requests, and often sounded like they were speaking to a friend.

That puzzled me. I kept wondering what it meant to place trust in something that can't feel. During my Ph.D., I began to explore these patterns more seriously. I looked at how voice assistants shape user behaviour, how they tap into emotions, how we start to lean on them psychologically.

There was no single moment. Just a growing pattern of interest. And along with that came worry. Because once you begin to

see how deeply these tools are influencing thought and behaviour, you can't help but ask: where are the limits? Who sets the rules? And who protects the user?

But as a Kashmiri woman, what kind of obstacles did you face while pursuing higher education?

Honestly, I've been lucky. My parents have always stood by me. I never had to fight for their support. But that doesn't mean the road was smooth.

Being from Kashmir came with its own weight. I belong to the generation that grew up during the years of frequent shutdowns and long curfews.

In 2019, we had to shut down our startup because of the internet blackout. That was also when I was applying for Ph.D. programs. With no internet or phone service, I had no way of checking emails or calls. My father and I used to go to the local police station to make phone calls. One of those calls led me to an interview slot at Central University. We left that same evening, and I gave the interview the next morning.

When the internet returned months later, I saw I had offers from five or six other universities. But by then, it was already too late.

Outside my home, people had their opinions. Some told my parents not to let me study too much. Others said a woman's salary is haram. I've heard all kinds of things, but I've learned to stay focused.

I believe education is not just about jobs. It's about building a life with purpose. And I believe every woman should be financially independent. Not just for herself, but for the power it gives her to make choices.

With social media and smartphones everywhere, how do you think today's tech is shaping young minds?

It's changing everything, from how we read to how we think. Today, learning is often chopped into thirty-second clips. Students scroll through reels, headlines, tweets. They get fragments, not the full picture. And that has consequences. It becomes harder to focus, harder to reflect.

But I also see the possibilities. AI can help students learn at their own pace. It can open doors to ideas they might never encounter otherwise. The key is balance. We need to teach students not just how to use technology, but how to think while using it. Otherwise, we risk raising a generation that knows how to search, but not how to understand.

In Kashmir, we've seen both sides of this. We've known what it means to live without access. And we've known what it feels like when tech becomes a lifeline. The lesson is clear: let tech help you think better. Don't let it think for you.

Can today's tech, which is so focused on quick fixes and likes, still be used for real learning and growth?

Yes, but it depends on how we build the environment around it. I've seen students in Kashmir use technology to access libraries, lectures, mentors from around the world. I've also seen them use it to waste hours on distraction.

Technology itself is neutral. It becomes meaningful only when paired with intention. When we create spaces that encourage deep questions, thoughtful conversations, and patient learning, technology becomes a tool for growth. But when we use it only for speed and attention, it becomes noise.

You've done work on how people interact emotionally with AI. What do you hope your research will do for people?

I don't think I've done anything big yet. But I'm asking questions that matter to me. Why are we forming emotional bonds with machines? What happens when people trust AI more than themselves? What are we losing when we let machines replace memory, judgment, even connection?

I want my research to make people pause. To think about how they relate to their phones, their apps, their digital habits. And I want developers to think harder about the tools they build. Who are they helping? Who are they hurting?

I may not change the world. But if I can spark awareness, if a few people begin to ask better questions, that would be a good start.

How has your Kashmiri upbringing shaped the way you think about technology and people?

Kashmir teaches you to feel more and speak less. You grow up surrounded by beauty and silence, by resilience and loss. That makes you watch things differently. You notice what others miss.

Here, technology isn't just comfort. It's access. It's voice. Sometimes, it's the only bridge between a person and the world. That makes me take tech seriously. Not as a convenience, but as a force that can shape lives.

My culture reminds me to slow down, to listen carefully, to act with care. It reminds me that research must serve people, not just impress professors.

What would you tell young students in Kashmir who want to pursue research or higher studies?

Do it only if it excites you. Research is slow. It's full of rejections and self-doubt. If you're not in love with it, it will feel like punishment.

What troubles me most is how many bright students waste their best years chasing government jobs. I understand the desire for security, but it's turning into a trap. I've seen Ph.D. scholars apply for Class IV jobs. Not because they want to, but because they feel they have no choice.

We need to shift how we think about success. It's not about cracking a government exam. It's about building something you care about. I had someone ask me why I didn't apply for a +2 lecturer job. I smiled. If that was my dream, I wouldn't have spent ten years in research. It's not about status. It's about knowing what you want.

As AI gets more powerful, what should researchers and companies be doing to keep it ethical and human-centered?

They need to ask better questions. Not just whether something works, but whether it helps. Whether it harms. Whether it respects the people who use it.

My own work constantly reminds me that technology is not passive. It shapes people's choices, behaviours, even their relationships. So we have to stay aware, stay grounded. We need to design tools that are responsible, not just efficient.

I believe researchers have a duty to speak up. Not just about what's possible, but about what's right.

The writer is a senior scribe based out of Pulwama, Kashmir.

My Kashmir Diary Is Full of Questions, Not Quotes

The truce may have stopped the shelling, but it did little to settle the fear or answer the troubling questions that hang over homes closest to the border.

Sandeep Pandey

In early May, I travelled through border villages in Poonch, Rajouri, Uri. The visit came just days after the latest round of cross-border shelling ended as abruptly as it began.

There were no sirens, no briefings, no plans. Just silence, followed by explosions.

In Poonch, I met Sanjeev Kumar, a schoolteacher who no longer speaks in full sentences.

On May 7, before dawn, his family tried to flee after a night of tension.

His 13-year-old son, Vihan, had been anxious all evening. He solved a math worksheet to calm down. Minutes later, their car was hit by a shell.

When Sanjeev woke up, blood blurred his sight. His wife was unconscious. His son, gone. When he lifted Vihan's chin, part of the boy's brain was on his hand. "I just want to know why we weren't told anything," Sanjeev said.

That's the only question people here are asking.

They've lived through conflict. But this time felt different. More sudden, more performative, less connected to the people it harmed.

While TV anchors debated airstrikes, children hid under staircases.

"We were told it was routine," said a grocer in Uri. "Then the ground shook."

Nobody came to visit the wounded or console the bereaved initially. But then came delegations from Delhi and Srinagar. By then, people had already drawn their own conclusions.

"Are we citizens," one man asked, "or just buffers on border?"

Then came a different kind of story, one not shaped by politics or press conferences.

On April 22 in Pahalgam, when gunmen opened fire on tourists, one man stepped forward. His name was Syed Adil Hussain Shah. He had no weapon. He tried to stop the attackers with his bare hands. He was shot and killed.

His brother, Naushad, told me he mourns the tourists as much as Adil.

"Please don't stop coming to Kashmir," he said. "There are more Adils here."

Adil's act didn't make it to the prime-time debates. But here, it's what people remember. He didn't wait for instructions. He didn't ask who the victims were. He simply acted.

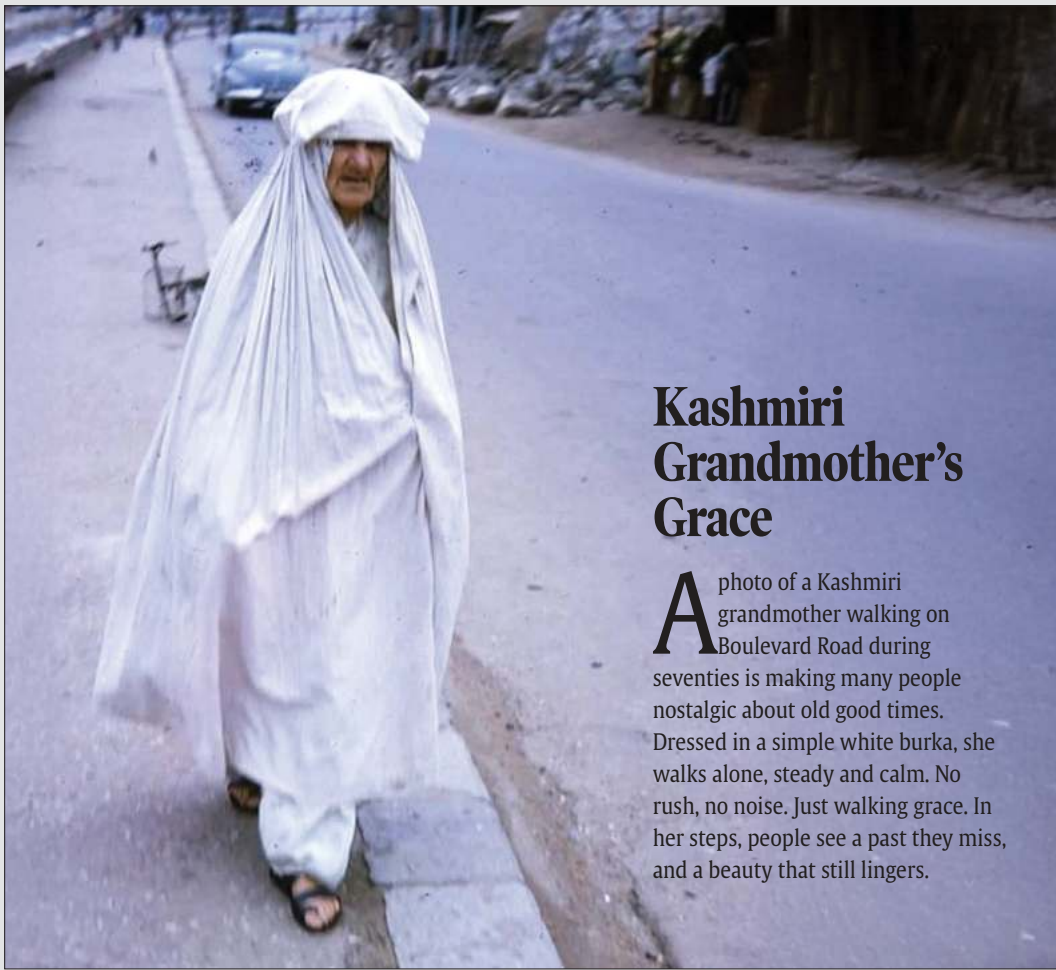
In Kashmir, not everyone has the option to flee. Some stay. Some protect. That's what Adil did, not for applause or headlines, but because it was right.

As the news cycle moves on, his story stays with me. Not for how it ended, but for what it revealed.

In a place where violence is often abstracted into talking points, Adil reminded us what it means to show up, for strangers, without hesitation.

And maybe that's what defense really looks like.

Sandeep Pandey is a social activist and General Secretary of the Socialist Party (India). He visited Jammu and Kashmir in May 2025 as part of the Kashmir Solidarity Mission.



Kashmiri Grandmother's Grace

A photo of a Kashmiri grandmother walking on Boulevard Road during seventies is making many people nostalgic about old good times. Dressed in a simple white burka, she walks alone, steady and calm. No rush, no noise, just walking grace. In her steps, people see a past they miss, and a beauty that still lingers.

'One-Two Cups Of Black Coffee Daily Could Lower Risk Of Death By 14%'

Press Trust Of India

Drinking a cup or two of black coffee daily could lower risk of death by 14 per cent, but adding milk or sugar could diminish the benefits, according to a new study.

The same link was not observed for coffee with high amounts of added sugar and saturated fat, researchers said.

"The health benefits of coffee might be attributable to its bioac-

tive compounds, but our results suggest that the addition of sugar and saturated fat may reduce the mortality benefits," Fang Fang Zhang, from Tufts University in the US, and senior author of the study published in The Journal of Nutrition, said.

Data nine consecutive cycles of the US' National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) from 1999 to 2018, linked to national death data, was analysed. Responses of more than 46,000 adults aged 20 years and above who completed first-day 24-hour dietary ques-



tionnaires were looked at. Coffee consumption was categorised by type — caffeinated or decaffeinated — sugar, and saturated

fat content, and outcomes of death studied included those from any cause, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.

"Few studies have examined how coffee additives could impact the link between coffee consumption and mortality risk, and our study is among the first to quantify how much sweetener and saturated fat are being added," first author Bingjie Zhou, a PhD graduate from Tufts University, said.

The authors wrote, "Consuming black coffee and coffee with low levels of added sugar and saturated

fat was associated with a 14 per cent lower risk of all-cause mortality, compared with no coffee consumption."

Consuming two to three cups a day could lower the risk of death due to any cause by 17 per cent, whereas taking more than three cups daily was not associated with additional reductions, the researchers said.

Further, the link between coffee and a lower risk of death by cardiovascular disease weakened when more than three cups of coffee were taken a day, they added.

'Managers In India's Life Sciences Research Companies Believe Labs Are Future-Ready'

Press Trust Of India

Lab environments in India's life sciences research companies could be "future-ready" in terms of being technologically advanced, adaptive and sustainable, a new survey of senior and middle management suggests.

The findings of the 'Global Life Sciences 2025 Survey Report' by Unispace, an Australia-based firm that designs offices, suggest that the country's life sciences industry is ready for a rapid evolution in research and development (R&D).

The findings also reveal a focus of Indian business leaders on sustainability, such as prioritising smart energy infrastructure, with a high interest in solar power and ventilation for energy efficiency.

About 400 senior and mid-level managers, including CEOs, lab managers and scientists, from pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical technology firms across the US, the UK, Switzerland, and India were surveyed.

Sixty-six per cent of the respondents "believe their labs are highly adaptable for future growth, and 65 per cent say their facilities are already well integrated with new technologies -- both figures standing significantly above the global averages of 56 per cent," the report said.

"These findings reflect a forward-thinking approach among



These findings reflect a forward-thinking approach among Indian leaders who are actively aligning their labs with long-term strategic goals

Indian leaders who are actively aligning their labs with long-term strategic goals," it said.

Further, 56 per cent of the respondents were found to prioritise smart, AI-driven or digital technologies in lab environments, which is perceived to foster innovation and "inspire futuristic lab developments".

However, while most of those surveyed -- 80 per cent -- said their labs support cross-functional collaboration, the figure was found to trail the global average of 85 per cent, highlighting that there is room for improvement in enabling collaboration between dispersed

teams, authors of the report said.

Fifty-four per cent of the participants also highlighted the need for highly flexible, modular designs optimised for cross-functional collaboration.

"These insights reflect India's strong focus on building future-ready lab spaces that are not only technologically advanced but also adaptive and sustainable," the authors wrote.

Creating spaces that support employee well-being, visually striking and well-furnished labs, and a nature-inspired design were among other aspects that the managers surveyed in India thought were important.

(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)
(UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CITY ROADS (SMC) DIVISION SRINAGAR.
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NIT No:- E-NIT/20/CRD/SMC/SGR/2025-26DATED: 18-06-2025.
For and on behalf of the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e-tenders (in Single cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments.

S.No	Name of Work	Advt. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Dnc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit @2% of Adv. Cost	Completion days	Class of Contractor	M.H of A/C
1	Improvement of lane near Ujala Hospital.	8.00	300/-	16000/-	10 Days	CEE/ DEEC Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
2	Upgradation of various links on Hokersar Bund road on RHS of Hokersar (Chinar Point) Zainakote.	7.46	300/-	14920/-	10 Days	CEE/ DEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
3	Improvement/ upgradation of main trunk road leads to Doon School Zainakotebwo p/1 nallah muck and BM Grade 2 nd .	9.15	600/-	18300/-	12 Days	CEE/ DEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
4	Improvement/ upgradation of link at Al Hijaz Lane and Anjuman Lane at Rampora.	17.99	800/-	35980/-	15 Days	BEE/ CEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
5	Upgradation of lane opposite to Kawoosa Hospital at UmerabadHokersarbwo Grade 1st, Grade 2 nd .	1.30	200/-	2600/-	10 Days	DEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
6	Macadamization of link road near H/o Hamid Rashid to Shakeel Ah Bakhsi near Hotel to Leon Rajibagh.	6.88	300/-	13760/-	10 Days	CEE/ DEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
7	Cement concrete lane at Baba Pora Zoonimar Mehboob Alam Masjid to shop of Ghulam Qadir and allied links.	20.13	800/-	40260/-	15 Days	BEE/ CEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)

AAA/ Accorded.

• The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specification, 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 per the schedule of dates given below:

Scheduled Dates & Time of Online Tenders.			
1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice Online	19-06-2025.	
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM	19-06-2025 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	19-06-2025	FROM 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	24-06-2025	UPTO 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	25-06-2025 at 10:00 A.M in the office of the Executive Engineer City Roads SMC Division Srinagar.	

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Bank Receipt as a tender fee paid in the Municipal Account No: **0216010200000007** payable at J&K Bank Branch Dood Ganga Baggarden, Srinagar payable at Srinagar (With NIT No. and S.No. of work mentioned) by simply uploading a copy of necessary Bank Receipt.

2. Bids must be accompanied with Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) @2% of the advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar which shall be uploaded with the tender documents at the time of tendering. The same shall be released after receipt of 5% of performance security which should be valid till completion of DLP from the successful Bidder.

3. The date and time of opening of 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 on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar (Tender receiving authority).

4. The bids for the work shall remain Valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

5. The lowest bidder (L1) also called the successful Bidder has to produce a performance security amount equal to 5% (five percent) of the contract value in the shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG immediately after the opening of financial bids, but prior to fixation of contract. The validity period of the FDR/ BG for requisite amount shall be upto DLP. Any FDR/ BG having less validity period shall not be entertained. The CDR/ FDR/ BG shall be released after successful completion of the Defect Liability Period (DLP).

6. If any bidder / tenderer withdraws/ modified his bid during the period of validity etc, the Department is at liberty to suspend the bidder for one year or as shall be deemed suitable by the tender inviting Authority. Same shall hold good if the bidder fails to produce performance security within the specified time.

7. The successful bidder (L1) shall have to furnish hard copy of the uploaded documents viz Registration card duly renewed, Valid GST Registration, PAN Card, GSTR-3B etc. alongwith Treasury Challan Receipt.

8. The execution of works falling under the jurisdiction of LAWDA shall be subject to NOC from LCMA (LAWDA) Department.

NIT/20/CRD /SMC/SGR/2025-26/e-tendering/
DATED:-18-06-2025.

DIPK-2723/25 dated:-19-06-2025 Executive Engineer,
City Roads (SMC) Division, Srinagar.

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

Kashmir Observer is a one stop information bank for you. Watch live debates, talk shows and documentaries on critical issues facing Kashmir on KO youtube channel.

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CS Explores Ways To Boost J&K's Skill Ecosystem With Union Secretary MSDE



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Thursday met with Union Secretary of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Atul Kumar Tiwari, to discuss strategies for enhancing the skill development and entrepreneurship initiatives across the Union Territory.

Present on the occasion were Regional Director, V Babu, MSDE; Director, National Council for Vocational Education & Training, Colonel Gunjan Chowdhary; Secretary SDD, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan; Director, Employment, Shahzad Alam besides other concerned officers.

The productive discussions centered on leveraging the new central schemes and strengthening the existing programs to create a more robust skill ecosystem in J&K.

The Union Secretary provided a comprehensive overview of the newly launched Centrally Sponsored Scheme aimed at modernizing the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across the nation. He said that this innovative scheme would operate on a Hub and Spoke model with identified Centres of Excellence (CoEs) serving as the central hubs. He encouraged the UT to actively participate in this scheme and submit detailed proposals to harness its

benefits for modernization of ITIs in the region.

The Union Secretary highlighted the considerable scope for J&K to enhance its engagement in other crucial Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) such as the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) and Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP). He reiterated the Ministry's unwavering commitment towards providing full support to J&K in maximizing the uptake of these vital programs.

The Chief Secretary, on his part, underscored the critical need for a holistic vision for skill development in the UT to tide over the problem of unemployment. He emphasized the importance of seamlessly linking skill acquisition with sustainable livelihood opportunities and integrating education with entrepreneurship to foster a dynamic and self-reliant workforce. Efforts will also be made to strengthen the convergence between various Centrally Sponsored Schemes to ensure greater adoption and more impactful outcomes for J&K, he added.

Among the key components discussed in the meeting included prioritizing submission of detailed proposals for modernization of J&K ITIs under the new Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Union Secy Reviews Skill Scheme Progress In J&K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Union Secretary, Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Atul Kumar Tiwari, Thursday chaired a high level meeting at Civil Secretariat here to review the progress on implementation of PM Vishwakarma, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), SANKALP, STRIVE and other MSDE initiatives currently underway across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Secretary J&K Skill Development Department Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Director NCVT, Director SDD, Mission Director JJM, Mission Director SDD, Director Horticulture Jammu, Director Colleges J&K, representatives of SKUAST Jammu, SKUAST Kashmir, IUST, Jammu University and NIT Srinagar besides officers from Tourism, Handicrafts and Handloom, Industries and Commerce and Education departments.

Addressing the officers, the Secretary called for aligning the training programs with local economic potential and emerging industry trends. He

directed the officers to conduct short term training programmes through NIT Srinagar for youth in order to make them skillful regarding the emerging market trends.

The Secretary impressed upon the representatives of the Higher Education Department to take advantage of various schemes of the Ministry institutionalized for skilling college going students to make them job worthy. He highlighted that skilling of youth is one of the pillars of National Education Policy-2020, adding that the educational institutions across J&K should take maximum benefit of these courses available on Skill India portal and other platforms.

During in-depth deliberations on PM Vishwakarma, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), SANKALP, STRIVE and other schemes, the Secretary called for re-modeling of all underperforming PM Vishwakarma centres across J&K. He underlined that Jammu and Kashmir is known for artisanal heritage and this landmark initiative will help in preserving and promoting the craft industry here.

Indian Money In Swiss Banks Triples On Banking Funds, Customer Deposits Up Only 11%

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI/ZURICH- Indian money parked in Swiss banks more than tripled in 2024 to 3.5 billion Swiss francs (nearly Rs 37,600 crore) on the back of a huge jump in funds held through local branches and other financial institutions, annual data released by Switzerland's central bank showed on Thursday.

However, money in customer accounts of Indian clients rose by only 11 per cent in the year to 346 million Swiss franc (nearly Rs 3,675 crore) and accounted for just about one-tenth of overall funds.

The sharp increase in the overall funds follows a 70 per cent decline in funds parked by Indian individuals and firms in Swiss banks, including through local branches and other financial institutions, in 2023 to a four-year low of 1.04 billion Swiss francs.

This is the highest since 2021, when the total Indian money in Swiss banks had hit a 14-year-high of CHF 3.83 billion.

These are official figures reported by banks to the Swiss National Bank (SNB) and do not indicate the quantum of the much-debated alleged black money held by Indians in Switzerland. These figures also do not include the money that Indians, NRIs or others might have in Swiss banks in the names of third-country entities.

The total amount of CHF 3,545.54 million, described by the SNB as 'total liabilities' of Swiss banks or 'amounts due to' their Indian clients at the



end of 2023, included CHF 346 million in customer deposits (up from CHF 310 million at 2023-end), CHF 3.02 billion held via other banks (up from CHF 427 million), CHF 41 million (up from CHF 10 million) through fiduciaries or trusts, and CHF 135 million as 'other amounts' due to customers in form of bonds, securities and various other financial instruments (down from CHF 293 million).

The total amount stood at a record high of nearly 6.5 billion Swiss francs in 2006, after which it has been mostly on a downward path, except for a few years including in 2011, 2013, 2017, 2020, 2021 and 2023, as per SNB data.

According to the SNB, its data for 'total liabilities' of Swiss banks towards Indian clients takes into account all types of funds of Indian customers at Swiss banks, including deposits from individuals, banks and enterprises. This includes data for branches of Swiss banks in India, as also non-deposit liabilities.

On the other hand, the 'lateral banking statistics'

of the Bank for International Settlement (BIS), which have been described in the past by Indian and Swiss authorities as a more reliable measure for deposits by Indian individuals in Swiss banks, showed an increase of nearly 6 per cent during 2024 in such funds to USD 74.8 million (nearly Rs 650 crore).

It had dropped by 25 per cent in 2023, by 18 per cent in 2022 and by over 8 per cent in 2021, after rising by nearly 39 per cent in 2020.

This figure takes into account deposits as well as loans of Indian non-bank clients of Swiss-domiciled banks and had shown an increase of 7 per cent in 2019, after declining by 11 per cent in 2018 and by 44 per cent in 2017.

It peaked at over USD 2.3 billion (over Rs 9,000 crore) at the end of 2007.

Swiss authorities have always maintained that assets held by Indian residents in Switzerland cannot be considered as 'black money' and they actively support India in its fight against tax fraud and evasion.



THE TOTAL AMOUNT STOOD AT A RECORD HIGH OF NEARLY 6.5 BILLION SWISS FRANCS IN 2006, after which it has been mostly on a downward path, except for a few years including in 2011, 2013, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, as per SNB data.

RBI Issues Project Finance Norms For Banks NBFCs

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The Reserve Bank on Thursday issued norms to provide a harmonised framework for financing of projects in infrastructure and non-infrastructure sectors by banks, NBFCs and other regulated entities.

The Reserve Bank of India (Project Finance) Directions, 2025 lay down the revised regulatory treatment upon change in the 'date of commencement of commercial operations' (DCCO) of such projects in the backdrop of a review of the extant instructions and analysis of the risks inherent in such financing.

The RBI said the directions entail the adoption of a principle-based regime for resolution of stress in project finance exposures, harmonised across regulated entities (REs).

It also entails rationalisation of permissible DCCO extensions with an overall ceiling of three years and two years for infrastructure and non-infrastructure sectors,



respectively.

For the purpose of application of prudential guidelines contained in the latest norms, projects have been broadly divided into three phases -- design phase, construction phase, and operational phase.

"In under-construction projects where the aggregate exposure of the lenders is up to Rs 1,500 crore, no individual lender shall have an exposure which is less than 10 per cent of the aggregate exposure," the RBI said.

For projects where aggregate exposure of all lenders is more than Rs 1,500 crore, the exposure floor for an individual lender shall be 5 per cent or Rs 150 crore, which

ever is higher.

Further, a lender shall ensure that all applicable approvals/clearances for implementing/constructing the project are obtained before financial closure.

An indicative list of such pre-requisite approvals/clearances includes environmental clearance, legal clearance, regulatory clearances, as applicable to the project, the RBI said.

On resolution of stress, it said a lender shall monitor the performance of the project and any buildup of stress on an ongoing basis and shall be expected to initiate a resolution plan well in advance.

"Occurrence of a credit event with any of the lenders during the construction phase, shall trigger a collective resolution in terms of the prudential framework," RBI said and added the reference to 'default' in the prudential framework shall be read as 'credit event' for the purpose of project finance accounts, unless specified otherwise.



Aviation Min Reviews Safety Measures, Passenger Facilitation, Airline Performance

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The Civil Aviation Ministry on Thursday conducted a comprehensive review of safety measures, passenger services, and airline performance in the wake of recent flight rescheduling due to multiple factors, such as post-accident checks and closing of certain airspaces amid geopolitical tension, an official release said.

The ministry also said it remains committed to full transparency relating to the ongoing investigation and will follow all mandated protocols and norms in the larger interest of the highest standards of passenger Safety and convenience.

The meeting came in the backdrop of the London-bound Air India flight AI171 carrying 242 passengers and crew members crashed in Ahmedabad on June 12. All but one on board the plane died, along with 29 on the ground when the aircraft smashed into a medical complex in the Meghaninagar area of the city shortly after its take-off.

At the meeting, conducted virtually to review ground-level preparedness and passenger support mechanisms with all airport directors and chaired by Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu, a close liaison with airlines was emphasised.

phased to ensure passenger issues are addressed swiftly, the release said.

Naidu also held a high-level meeting with the Chairman and Managing Director of Air India, it said.

At the comprehensive review meeting, it was also directed that availability of food, drinking water, and adequate seating facilities at terminals must be ensured, particularly during flight delays or congestion and that sufficient personnel must be deployed at key touch points to manage passenger grievances proactively, it added.

The airport directors were requested to extend all possible assistance to airlines facing operational disruptions, including gate reassignments and logistical support, it said, adding that to maintain a safe and secure airport environment, they were directed to reinforce wildlife hazard management, including the deterrence of birds and stray animals.

During the meeting, it was noted that due to the evolving situation in the Middle East, enhanced safety checks, and a ban on night flying in Europe, Air India is facing reduced aircraft availability.

As a result, Air India will temporarily scale down operations, restructure flights, and announce changes through the media, it said.

Sensex, Nifty Extend Losses Into 3rd Session On Mounting Geopolitical Tensions

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower for the third straight session on Thursday, in line with weak trends in global markets, as geopolitical uncertainties due to the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict unnerved investors.

The US Fed's decision to keep interest rates unchanged and rising global crude prices also dampened market sentiment, experts said.

In a largely volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 82.79 points, or 0.10 per cent, to settle at 81,361.87. During the day, it hit a high of 81,583.94 and a low of 81,191.04, gyrating 392.9 points. As many as 3,018 stocks declined, while 959 advanced and 140 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 18.80 points or 0.08 per cent to 24,793.25.

"The Indian equity index experienced range-bound movement with a negative bias as cautious sentiment spread across the globe, driven by concerns over the potential US involvement in the Middle East conflict."

"Investor mood was further affected by the Fed's decision to keep interest rates unchanged while signalling persistent inflation and slower economic growth, which weighed on software export stocks," Vinod



Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

From the Sensex firms, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finance, Tech Mahindra, IndusInd Bank, Nestle and Tata Steel were among the major laggards.

In contrast, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel and Maruti were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 1.77 per cent and the midcap index lost 1.64 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, services dropped 1.68 per cent, realty (1.63 per cent), utilities (1.61 per cent), power (1.24 per cent), IT (1.14 per cent), metal (1.18 per cent) and commodities (1.05 per cent). Auto emerged as the only gainer.

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in the negative territory, while South Korea's Kospi ended marginally higher.

European markets were trading lower in mid-session deals.

When India-UK Trade Deal Was Reached Over A Chocolate Ice Cream

Press Trust Of India



A Free Trade Agreement brings stability to economic conditions between two countries. It also gives confidence to businesspeople that tariff rates will remain constant. There's certainty about the friendship between the two countries, business climate will be predictable, and therefore it encourages two-way investment, apart from, of course, promoting trade in goods and services,"

LONDON- Dubbed a "landmark deal" between India and the UK, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations last month concluded during a walk in London's Hyde Park when Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal was treated to a chocolate ice cream by his UK counterpart Jonathan Reynolds.

"I owe him one," joked Goyal on Wednesday as he shared insights from the discussions during an interview with PTI on the sidelines of the India Global Forum (IGF) UK-India Week summit here.

"When I received Secretary Reynolds' message inviting me to join him for a walk at Hyde Park (on May 2) — he knows that I'm fond of walking there every time I'm in London — I had not imagined that we'll



get talking about the few issues that were left for us to be able to conclude the Free Trade Agreement and the Double Contribution Convention (DCC) agreement," he shared.

"In the course of our walk there, we were able to close the nuances in a very practical manner, which was fair for both countries, which was a balanced agreement, and will

lead to shared prosperity for businesses and the people of both countries," he said.

On May 6, both sides confirmed the FTA negotiations, which began in January 2022,

had been concluded, and expected to double annual bilateral trade to USD 120 billion by 2030.

"A Free Trade Agreement brings stability to economic conditions between two countries. It also gives confidence to businesspeople that tariff rates will remain constant. There's certainty about the friendship between the two countries, business climate will be predictable, and therefore it encourages two-way investment, apart from, of course, promoting trade in goods and services," said Goyal.

"It also encourages collaborations and joint ventures, where you are not only looking at each other's markets, but you're looking at capturing world markets together," he said.

During an earlier intervention at the IGF Summit, the minister had likened the FTA to a "good marriage" and, when

asked to elaborate, he noted on a lighter note how "every marriage is long-lasting by and large, we believe marriage is very sacred, not to be taken very lightly".

Concerning the timeline for the FTA coming into force, he added: "I believe that similarly, the UK-India partnership will convert very quickly into an enforceable agreement after the UK Parliament goes through its processes."

"We in India have a much faster process, comparatively, so we'll be ready as soon as the legal scrubbing is done and the document is sorted out. We believe the businesses and offshoots of this partnership will certainly add a lot of vibrancy and joy to this partnership and benefit from its very, very important elements that have been agreed between the two countries."

BIS JKBO Inaugurates 12 BIS Students Chapters At NIT Srinagar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Jammu & Kashmir Branch Office (JKBO), Thursday inaugurated twelve BIS Students Chapters under its flagship initiative to strengthen engagement between academia and the development and promotion of standards in India.

The event was hosted by the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Srinagar – a premier technical institute and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)-signed partner of BIS. As part of this strategic collaboration, the Students Chapters will work to foster a culture of quality consciousness, standardization, and consumer awareness among the youth.

Tilak Raj, Director & Head, BIS JKBO, formally handed over the BIS Students Chapter certificates to the respective mentors of NIT Srinagar. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Dr. Iqra Altaf Gillani, Nodal Officer of the BIS Students Chapter at NIT Srinagar, along with the following designated mentors from various departments:

- Dr. Iqra Altaf Gillani – Nodal Officer, Department of Information and Technology
- Dr. Tanveer Rasool – Department of Chemical Engineering
- Dr. Shakeel Ahmad Waseem – Department of Civil Engineering

- Prof. Adnan Qayoum – Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Dr. Pankaj Kumar – Department of Electrical Engineering
- Dr. Tanveer Rasool – Department of Chemistry
- Dr. Vijay Kumar – Department of Physics
- Dr. Owais Ahmad – Department of Mathematics
- Dr. Mohammad Ahsan Chishti – Department of Computer Science and Engineering
- Dr. Amandeep Singh – Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering
- Dr. Aravi Muzaffar – Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering
- Dr. Ajaz-UI-Islam – Department of Management Studies

These Students Chapters will act as catalysts in promoting the ethos of standardization through various student-led activities, projects, and industry-academia interactions.

The event was effectively coordinated by Ashish Kumar Dwivedi, Standards Promotion Officer, BIS JKBO, who also briefed the faculty mentors on various online features of the Standard Promotion Portal—the digital gateway connecting BIS with its Students Chapters. He highlighted how the portal facilitates seamless interaction, resource sharing, activity reporting, and engagement between BIS and academic institutions.

IRAN-ISRAEL WAR

Students Evacuated To Be Brought Back In Deluxe Buses: CM

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday announced that students evacuated from Iran will be ferried from Delhi to the Union Territory in deluxe buses.

As many as 90 students from Jammu and Kashmir were among the 110 people evacuated from war-affected Iran on Wednesday. They were taken to Armenia before being flown to Doha. The students arrived in Delhi from the Qatari capital early

Thursday.

In a post on X, the chief minister's office said the resident commissioner has been directed to arrange deluxe buses of the Jammu & Kashmir Road Transport Corporation to transport the students.

"The Chief Minister has taken note of the request of the students evacuated from Iran regarding the quality of buses arranged to transport them from Delhi to J&K," the Office of the Chief Minister said.

"The Resident Commissioner has been tasked with coordinating with the JKRTC to ensure proper deluxe buses are arranged," it said.

Abdullah shared the post from his official X handle.

In another post, the chief minister said, "94 of our students evacuated from Iran have safely reached Delhi. The Government is making transport arrangements to ensure their smooth journey home, which will be in place within the next few hours".

Two faculty members from NIT Srinagar co-edit Intl. book on 'Waste Utilization in Geotechnical Practice'



Observer News Service

Srinagar, June 19: Two faculty members from the Civil Engineering Department at NIT Srinagar, Dr. Vivek and Dr. Sandeep Samantaray, have co-edited a reputed research book titled "Waste Utilization in Geotechnical Practice". Wiley, a leading international academic publisher, has published the book.

It focuses on using different types of waste materials in geotechnical engineering work, such as improving soil, building embankments, and supporting foundations. The book highlights how waste can be safely and effectively used in construction, offering both environmental and economic benefits.

Dr. Vivek said the book was completed after several years of hard work and multiple revisions. "It is a proud moment for us. This book is the result of long efforts, and it reflects our goal of promoting sustainable and practical solutions in civil engineering," he said.

"We hope this book will serve as a useful reference for engineers and researchers who are working to reduce environmental damage while building strong and durable infrastructure. It's a small step toward greener engineering practices," Dr. Vivek added.

Dr. Sandeep Samantaray said the motivation behind the book was to address two major challenges: waste disposal and the need for sustainable construction.

"Across the world, engineers are looking for safe ways to use waste instead of sending it to landfills. In this book, we have shown how materials like fly ash, slag, construction debris, and other types of waste can be reused in geotechnical projects without compromising safety or strength," he said.

Dr. Sandeep said their focus was not just on the science, but also on practicality. This book talks about real-world applications, how to test waste materials, understand their behavior, and use them responsibly in different construction settings," he said.

"Jammu and Kashmir is a region with challenging terrain and environmental concerns. We believe the

knowledge shared in this book will help in designing infrastructure that is both strong and environmentally friendly," Dr. Sandeep added.

Both faculty members expressed their gratitude to the NIT Srinagar administration, including the Director and the Registrar, for their continuous encouragement, institutional support, and research-friendly environment, which made this publication possible.

The book explains the properties of various waste materials, how to test and use them in construction, and what environmental impacts they may have. It also looks at the cost benefits and rules related to using waste in building projects. The authors believe this book can help address the growing problem of waste disposal while supporting safer and more eco-friendly development.

Improper waste disposal can pollute underground water and take up large areas of land. The book shows how some of this waste can be used as an alternative to traditional building materials, which can help reduce environmental harm and cut construction costs.

Dr. Vivek has 8 international and national patents granted in transportation engineering and has published more than 19 research papers. His research focuses on pavement materials, road design, and the use of geotextiles.

Dr. Sandeep has taken part in over 50 international conferences and published 40 journal papers. He also holds 11 patents. His main research interests are in watershed management, waste materials, and sustainable environmental planning.

Apart from Dr. S. Samantaray and Dr. Vivek from NIT Srinagar, this book has been edited by Dr. S. Samantasinghar, Dr. A. S. Sahoo, and Dr. D. P. Satapathy from Bhubaneswar, and Dr. S. K. Mohanty from SM Consultants, Bhubaneswar, respectively.

The book is now available through Wiley's global publishing platform and is expected to help students, engineers, researchers, and professionals working in the field of civil and environmental engineering.

Bajaj Allianz Unveils Tuhund Khatir– A Health Insurance Tailored for the People of J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar, 19 June 2025: Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, one of India's leading private general insurers, has introduced 'Tuhund Khatir'—a pioneering health insurance product meticulously designed to meet the specific healthcare needs of the residents of J&K. More than just a health plan, Tuhund Khatir is a commitment to the people of J&K, ensuring access to quality healthcare with coverage tailored to the state's unique medical landscape. Understanding that healthcare challenges, costs, and treatment availability vary across regions, Bajaj Allianz has developed Tuhund Khatir to offer personalised coverage rather than a generic, one-size-fits-all solution. This plan is crafted for the people of J&K, keeping in mind hospital infrastructure and affordability, ensuring that residents get the protection they need.

Designed with affordability and accessibility in mind, Tuhund Khatir offers extensive coverage with premiums customised specifically for the

people of J&K. The policy is available in both individual and floater variants, making it an ideal solution for individuals and families alike. With flexible sum insured options ranging from INR 5 lakh to INR 20 lakh, Tuhund Khatir ensures that everyone—from young professionals to elderly citizens—can find a coverage option suited to their unique healthcare needs.

The Tuhund Khatir health insurance plan offers extensive coverage, including inpatient hospitalisation, pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses, and day care procedures. It also covers advanced treatments such as robotic surgeries and stem cell therapy; ensuring policyholders receive access to modern medical care. The policy includes organ donor expenses as part of the base cover, alleviating the financial burden associated with life-saving transplants. With a lifetime renewal option, Tuhund Khatir guarantees continuous coverage without age restrictions, providing long-term security for individuals and families.

To further enhance protection, the plan offers a variety of

optional add-ons. The Unlimited Sum Insured Reinstatement feature allows policyholders to restore their sum insured unlimited times within a policy period after making a claim, ensuring extra security and uninterrupted financial support during medical emergencies. That is not it, the Super Cumulative Bonus rewards customers with up to 200% sum insured for claim-free years, enhancing coverage year after year.

For those opting for cashless claims, the Cashless Discount reduces premiums, making the policy even more cost-effective. Additionally, the Accidental Death Cover provides financial security to families in the unfortunate event of a policyholder's accidental demise. Together, these features make Tuhund Khatir a truly comprehensive and customizable health insurance solution designed to meet the unique needs of residents in J&K.

Speaking on the launch, Dr. Tapan Singhel, MD & CEO, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, said, "India's diversity is its greatest strength, and healthcare needs

are no exception. With Tuhund Khatir—Insurance made for you—we are redefining health insurance by tailoring it to each state's unique medical ecosystem. From treatment costs to disease patterns, healthcare challenges vary across regions, and insurance must evolve to reflect this reality. By offering affordable, feature-rich coverage designed for every Indian, we are making health financial security accessible, relevant, and truly personal. We believe that healthcare security should not be a privilege but a right for every Indian, and Tuhund Khatir is a step towards making that a reality."

To make Tuhund Khatir even more accessible, Bajaj Allianz offers special discounts for family coverage, loyalty benefits, and direct online purchases. The policy also promotes a healthier lifestyle by offering a wellness discount at renewal. To qualify for a 5% discount, you need to achieve 7,500 steps daily for at least 24 days each month over a minimum of 9 months. If you raise your daily goal to 10,000 steps, you will be eligible for

a 10% discount. This product goes beyond the basics with an innovative cover called Festive Bonus. In the event of emergency hospitalization due to acute illness or accidental injury during a festival week in J&K, policyholders receive an additional INR 1,000 per day of hospitalization, up to 10 days in a policy year.

Customers can easily purchase Tuhund Khatir through Bajaj Allianz General Insurance's extensive network of branches, partner banks, agents, and digital platforms. It is also available online at www.bajajallianz.com and via the Bajaj Allianz 'Caringly Yours' mobile app. With the launch of Tuhund Khatir in J&K, Bajaj Allianz is setting a new benchmark for health insurance in the region by making it personal, meaningful, and truly beneficial for the people it serves. By focusing on affordability, state-specific pricing, and comprehensive protection, Bajaj Allianz ensures that everyone in the country has the opportunity to secure the best healthcare coverage without financial strain.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

'Killing Khamenei

Iranian authorities stated that the primary target of their Thursday morning strike in southern Israel was a military and intelligence facility, not the hospital. Israeli emergency services reported that at least 47 people were injured in the attack.

"The main target of the attack was the Israeli Army Command and Intelligence Base (IDF C4I) and the Army Intelligence Camp in the Gav-Yam Technology Park, located near Soroka Hospital," Iran's state news agency IRNA reported.

It added that the hospital was "only exposed to the blast wave," insisting the strike was a "direct and precise hit" on a military facility.

Analysts have described Israel's new rhetoric as edging closer to calls for regime change in Iran. However, many believe Israel lacks the power and capacity to topple the Islamic Republic. Despite nearly 20 months of military operations, Israel remains bogged down in Gaza, where Hamas—a relatively small, non-state actor—continues to function both militarily and politically, despite Israel's sustained efforts to dismantle it.

In contrast, Iran is a major regional power with a population of over 90 million and millions of loyal supporters. It has long anticipated a possible Israeli-American military campaign and is reportedly well-prepared to defend itself.

Israel launched an aerial assault on

Iran on Friday, resulting in the deaths of nearly 700 people and injuries to several thousand, according to initial reports. In retaliation, Iran has been pounding Israeli territory with ballistic missiles and drones, causing widespread damage and prompting Tel Aviv to request direct U.S. intervention.

Targeting Khamenei

move could plunge the entire region into chaos.

Known for his restraint in political matters, Ayatollah Sistani released a rare statement from Najaf on Thursday, cautioning that any decision to target Iran's "supreme religious and political leadership" would have "grave consequences for the region."

"Any such illegal, irreligious, and immoral move would drive the situation out of control and foment widespread chaos, increasing the suffering of nations in the region and seriously jeopardising the interests of all stakeholders," Sistani warned.

The warning came in response to a direct threat by Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, who, during a visit to a damaged hospital near a missile hit site in Tel Aviv, declared, "The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) will do everything they can to eliminate the Iranian leader."

Earlier this week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not rule out the possibility of assassinating the 89-year-old Iranian leader.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump also weighed in, saying the U.S. would

not kill Iran's Supreme Leader "for now," but demanded Tehran's "unconditional surrender" and hinted at possible military action.

In a separate statement, Ayatollah Sistani urged the international community to stop Israel's aggressions against Iran by "putting pressure on this usurping regime and its supporters."

Meanwhile, Iraq's Fatah Alliance, led by Hadi al-Amiri, said on Thursday it expects a religious decree (fatwa) for jihad to be issued by Ayatollah Sistani if the aggression continues.

Sistani's last call for jihad came in 2014, when he issued a landmark fatwa urging Iraqis to take up arms against ISIS. That led to the formation of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), now a key player in Iraq's security and politics.

Kashmir Sizzles:

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 reported normal precipitation levels.

Summer Break

effective from Saturday. Within Srinagar Municipal limits, schools will

operate from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM and outside municipal limits, schools will run from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM

The decision comes amid record-breaking temperatures across Kashmir, with authorities advising limited outdoor exposure for students and vulnerable groups.

Soaring Demand,

900 MWs of power but due to the low water level we are utilizing only five plants out of six and are currently able to generate only 750 MWs."

He also said that the department was generating a maximum of 900 MW of power from Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project. "A maximum of 900 MWs and minimum of 848 MWs of power is being generated from all phases of this power plant," he added.

The official said that it was producing 210 lakh units of energy per day from our 13 generation stations.

In Jammu and Kashmir there is a total of nearly 1200 MWs hydel power production capacity of which 900 MW is from the Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project.(KNO)

500 Kashmiri

Iran, stating: "We have made arrangements for the evacuation of Indian students. They may be permitted to leave the University, as facilitated by the Embassy of India, Tehran, which takes full responsibility for this planned movement and the students' security." -With inputs from KNO

Terror, Trade &

marking the first in-person interaction since Carney assumed office. Both countries agreed to reinstate their High Commissioners and resume senior ministerial and working-level engagements to rebuild trust.

"They reaffirmed the importance of a constructive and balanced partnership grounded in mutual respect," read a joint statement. Talks on resuming the stalled Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) were also discussed, with a long-term view of achieving a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Modi described the meeting as "excellent," adding on X (formerly Twitter): "India and Canada are connected by a strong belief in democracy, freedom and rule of law... We look forward to working closely to add momentum to our friendship."

Both leaders reaffirmed shared interests in areas such as clean energy, mobility, digital transformation, food security, and critical minerals, while underlining a common commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

IndiGo Flight To

undergoing maintenance, the airline added.

"In the meanwhile, an alternative aircraft has been arranged to fly the customers to Leh," a spokesperson said and regretted the inconvenience caused to the passengers.

Details about the number of

passengers onboard the plane could not be immediately ascertained.

SpiceJet Flight

had taken off from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad, at 6:10 a.m. However, minutes later, the pilot detected a technical issue and contacted Air Traffic Control to seek permission to return.

In a statement, the airline said the SpiceJet Q400 aircraft experienced intermittent illumination of the AFT baggage door light after takeoff.

"Cabin pressurisation remained normal throughout. As a precautionary measure, the pilots decided to return to Hyderabad. The aircraft landed safely and passengers were deplaned normally," the airline said.

SpiceJet clarified that the aircraft did not make an emergency landing. An alternate aircraft was arranged to operate the onward journey to Tirupati.

Facial Recognition

a Facial Recognition System (FRS), comprising four high-resolution cameras, has been installed at Langanbal Naka, a key checkpoint on the Yatra route, the officer said.

"Today, during routine surveillance using the newly installed FRS, the system successfully flagged a suspicious individual whose facial data matched entries in the security database.

"Upon immediate verification and investigation, the individual was identified as an OGW affiliated with a terrorist outfit," the person said.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Gill Set To Lead Through Tough Transition

Press Trust of India

LEEDS: A new captain, a headstrong coach, a few from the old guard and some fresh faces will be determined to create a compelling narrative during the next 45 days when an in-transition India takes on an equally combustible England in a five-Test series for the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy starting here on Friday.

That only three Indian teams -- Ajit Wadekar's batch of 1971, Kapil's Devils in 1986 and Rahul Dravid's sprightly bunch in 2007 -- have won a Test series in Old Blighty in the past nine decades doesn't make for a rosy picture.

Neither does the fact that India's most devoted long-format cricketer of the past decade, Virat Kohli, has walked into Test sunset making the batting line-up look slightly thin on experience.

For the 25-year-old Shubman Gill, this series will be nothing short of baptism by fire against an England side, which has changed the conventions of Test match batting under Brendon McCullum's coaching and Ben Stokes' captaincy.

Gill's selection as India's 37th Test captain was more about what one could expect of him rather than what he has done as a batter and a leader in the traditional format. The 'Prince' does have his plate full and has a lot to prove.

An unusually warm Leeds (maxi-

SQUADS:

ENGLAND (PLAYING XI): ZAK CRAWLEY, BEN DUCKETT, OLLIE POPE, JOE ROOT, HARRY BROOK, BEN STOKES (C), JAMIE SMITH (WK), CHRIS WOAKES, BRYDON CARSE, JOSH TONGUE AND SHOAB BASHIR.

INDIA: SHUBMAN GILL (C), RISHABH PANT (VC & WK), YASHASVI JAISWAL, KL RAHUL, SAI SUDHARSAN, ABHIMANYU EASWARAN, KARUN NAIR, NITISH REDDY, RAVINDRA JADEJA, DHRUV JUREL (WK), WASHINGTON SUNDAR, SHARDUL THAKUR, JASPRIT BUMRAH, MOHD. SIRAJ, PRASIDH KRISHNA, AKASH DEEP, ARSHDEEP SINGH, KULDEEP YADAV, HARSHIT RANA.

MATCH STARTS: 3:30 PM IST.

unit puts the visitors on even keel. This despite the pace spearhead being available for only three Tests.

Despite the absence of Kohli and Rohit Sharma, who played his best Test cricket in the 2021 series, this could be India's best chance to put pressure on an English bowling line-up that wouldn't have the quality that James Anderson and Stuart Broad brought for two decades.

An attack comprising Chris Woakes, Brydon Carse, Josh Tongue and Shoaib Bashir with skipper Stokes to complement them doesn't exactly strike fear in the opposition ranks.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir, easily the most powerful man in the Indian change room after the departure of Kohli and Rohit, wouldn't want his already blemished record of six defeats to worsen any further. The series would be first real test of tactical acumen for Gambhir.

While Karun Nair's comeback seems to be a given if one went by slip cordon's composition during practice, where he was stationed at first slip, there will be one more batting slot that needs to be fretted upon.



AG's Office XI Beat Real Kashmir 1-0 In Srinagar Premier League

In an exciting Srinagar Premier Football League 2024-25 fixture on Thursday at TRC Synthetic Turf, AG's Office XI clinched a hard-earned 1-0 victory over Real Kashmir FC (Reserves).

"The match showcased intense competition and tactical football from both sides, but it was AG's Office XI who capitalized on their opportunity, securing all three points with a decisive goal. The victory marks a significant boost for AG's Office XI in the ongoing league campaign.

The Srinagar Premier League is being organised by the District Football Association Srinagar and held under the banner of J&K Sports Council's "My Youth My Pride" initiative.

Earlier on Tuesday, J&K Bank XI beat AG's Office XI 2-0. This was Real Kashmir (R)'s second successive defeat, losing to Kashmir Avengers FC 3-2 on Monday.

Per the schedule released by DFA Srinagar, J&K Bank XI will take on Kashmir Avengers today, Friday, at 5 PM at Synthetic Turf TRC.

District Level Badminton Girls Tourney Begins In Budgam



Under District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone, the Inter Zonal District Level Badminton Tournament for Girls Under-14 commenced on Thursday at the Indoor Sports Stadium Budgam. The event was officially inaugurated by the Activity Section of DYSSO Budgam in the presence of senior and field officials.

A large number of enthusiastic student participants from all 12 zones of the district gathered to compete in the event, showcasing their talent and sportsmanship.

"The tournament aims to provide a competitive platform to young girls and promote the spirit of sports across the district," the department said in a statement.

"The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing grassroots sports and encouraging participation among students at all levels," it added.

YSS Anantnag Holds Yoga Sessions & Sports Events

The Department of Youth Services & Sports Anantnag held mass Yoga sessions across all zones of the district as a pre-event initiative for International Day of Yoga 2025. The sessions were conducted under this year's global theme "Yoga for One Earth, One Health".

Across the district, morning assemblies saw Yogic practices led by trained instructors, Zonal Physical Education Officers, and Yoga experts. Thousands of students and officials participated with zeal, enthusiasm, and a shared spirit of wellness in Zone Achabal, Zone Mattan, Zone Verinag, Zone Bijbehara, Zone Qazigund, Zone Doru, Zone Shangus and Zone Bidder.

Meanwhile, District Level Football U-19 Boys Football Tournament, being held at HSS Dailgam, entered its semifinal stage on Day 3. On Thursday, three thrilling matches were played, with SRJK Khanabal, HSS Dailgam and HSS Arwani qualifying for the semifinal round. HSS Anantnag had already secured their semifinal berth earlier.

ISL Dropped From AIFF's 2025-26 Calendar

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has officially excluded the Indian Super League (ISL) from its 2025-26 season calendar, casting serious doubt over the future of the country's top-tier football competition.

The AIFF's recently released calendar made no mention of the ISL, which has been a central fixture of Indian football since its inception in 2014.

According to The Times of India, growing uncertainty surrounds the fate of the league, as ISL clubs have reportedly been informed by organisers that the upcoming season will not begin until issues related to the Master Rights Agreement (MRA) are resolved.

The MRA is a critical legal contract that defines the ownership and operational rights of the ISL. Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) -- a joint venture between Reliance and Star Sports -- currently manages the league and serves as AIFF's commercial partner.

Per the existing agreement, signed in 2010, FSDL pays the AIFF either ₹50 crore annually or 20% of total revenue, whichever is higher. However, this deal is set to expire in December 2025, and no renewal has been finalised yet.

Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy Unveiled Ahead Of India-Eng Tests



Press Trust of India

LEEDS: Legendary Sachin Tendulkar and James Anderson formally unveiled the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy ahead of the opening match of the five-Test series between India and England, here on Thursday.

The Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, a joint initiative between the two boards ECB and BCCI, hereon replaces the Pataudi Trophy (for series in England) and the Anthony de Mello Trophy (for series in India) for all India-England Test contests.

The trophy launch was earlier scheduled for June 14 but it was pushed for a

later date due to the tragic Air India aircraft crash in Ahmedabad.

The Pataudi family will continue to be honoured with a newly-commissioned Pataudi Medal to be presented to the winning captain of each India-England Test series.

The trophy features imagery of Anderson and Tendulkar in action, along with their engraved signatures -- a tribute to two of the sport's most iconic figures who also hold top two spots for most Tests played by any player.

While Tendulkar retired after his 200th Test more than a decade ago, Anderson played his 188th and last in 2024.

Tendulkar remains the highest run-scorer in Test history with 15,921 runs. He made his debut at the age of 16 and went on to enjoy a distinguished 24-year international career.

In 32 Tests against England, Tendulkar amassed 2,535 runs at an average of 51.73, with a highest score of 193 at Headingley in 2002.

Anderson, one of the finest exponents of swing bowling, took 704 Test wickets which is the most for any fast bowler. He ranks third on the all-time list, behind only spinners Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Shane Warne (708).

Anderson set his own standards in Test cricket against India, scalping 149 wickets in 39 matches at an average of 25.47, including six five-wicket hauls.

While unveiling the trophy, Tendulkar said Test cricket will continue to remain the pinnacle of the sport for him.

Gill Primed To Take International Stage By Storm: Kirsten



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former head coach Gary Kirsten has backed India's new Test captain Shubman Gill to "take the international stage by storm" in the marquee five-match series against England, starting in Leeds on Friday.

Kirsten, who was the mentor of IPL side Gujarat Titans that is led by Gill, feels the 25-year-old has all that it takes to be a good leader.

"I think Shubman is going to be a great leader. He's a smart cricketer -- he's got a good brain for the game and understands his game. He's very talented and a nice human being, which I think is really important," Kirsten told 'JioHotstar'.

"When you come into these leadership positions, you're going to be put under pressure, and your leadership will be tested. For any young leader, your ability to learn how to lead, improve, and grow

is constantly under scrutiny. But I believe he has all the raw materials to become a really good leader," he added.

Kirsten said from whatever he has seen of Gill, the Punjab player delivers on what he says. Gill has played only 32 Tests and averages just over 30 in the format.

"The one thing I really like about Shubman is that he walks the talk. He's very organised, very diligent with his training and preparation, and that sets a great example for other players. I think he's primed to take on the international stage by storm," the South African batting great said.

Echoing his view was former Australian opener Matthew Hayden. The imposing former opener, however, acknowledged that Gill has huge shoes to fill.

"He will have to find his footing in Test match cricket. There's a very small sample size when it comes to his experience here in England. But it takes time to build a legacy and become a legend."

Real Madrid Star Kylian Mbappe Hospitalized At CWC

Associated Press

MIAMI: Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappe has been hospitalized with an acute case of gastroenteritis, the Spanish club said Thursday.

World Cup winner Mbappe missed Madrid's opening game at the Club World Cup against Saudi Arabian team Al Hilal in Miami on Wednesday because of a fever.

Coach Xabi Alonso said he hoped the France international would be available for the team's next game against Pachuca on Sunday. But his hospitalization casts doubt over what part he might be able to play in the monthlong tournament in the United States.

Madrid said Mbappe would "undergo a series of tests and follow the appropriate course of treatment."

Mbappe's absence is a blow to the tournament, which FIFA presi-



dent Gianni Infantino hopes will be one of the elite events in soccer and rival competitions like the

Champions League and Premier League in popularity and value. After Lionel Messi, Mbappe is

arguably the biggest star in the show, with Madrid one of the favorites to lift the trophy in the inaugural edition of the tournament.

But a crowd of more than 62,000 at Hard Rock Stadium missed out on a rare chance to see him in person in the U.S. when he was unavailable for Madrid's surprise 1-1 draw by Al Hilal on Wednesday.

Gastroenteritis is also known as stomach flu and symptoms can include vomiting and diarrhea.

Mbappe's hospitalization comes almost exactly one year after he sustained a broken nose at the European Championship and had to wear a face mask to continue playing in the tournament.

JUVENTUS WIN 5-0 AGAINST AL AIN IN CLUB WORLD CUP

Randal Kolo Muani and Francisco Conceição each scored twice

and Juventus closed out the first round of the group stage in the Club World Cup with a 5-0 victory over Al Ain on Wednesday night.

The 36-time Italian champions opened the scoring at the 11th minute on Kolo Muani's header in front of 18,161 fans, many of them wearing white-and-black-striped Juventus jerseys.

Ten minutes later, Conceição dribbled the ball inside the penalty box and made it 2-0.

Kenan Yildiz scored into the lower left corner in the 31st minute and Kolo Muani's second goal four minutes into first-half stoppage time put Juventus up 4-0.

Kolo Muani's loan from Paris Saint-Germain was extended for the Club World Cup, with negotiations ongoing.

Conceição scored again from a center-field kick in the 58th minute.

GOI Issues High-Risk Chrome and Android Security Alert

Asks Users To Protect Their PC From Hackers

KO Tech Desk

Srinagar: A high-severity security alert has been issued for Google Chrome users on Windows, macOS, Linux, and smartphones running Android 13, 14, and 15, according to a new advisory from the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).
The alert warns of critical vulnerabilities in Chrome's core components—including Compositing, libvpx, V8, FileSystemAccess API, Background Fetch API, and Tab Strip—that can be exploited by remote attackers. By luring users to malicious websites, hackers could potentially steal sensitive data, execute arbitrary code, or even crash systems, leading to denial of service (DoS).

Who's Affected?

Chrome versions before 137.0.7151.55 (Linux)



Chrome versions before 137.0.7151.55/56 (Windows, macOS)

Android 13, 14, and 15 devices across all OEMs (Samsung, Xiaomi, OnePlus, etc.)

CERT-In has flagged these issues as "High Risk", warning that both individuals and organizations are susceptible. The vulnerabilities stem from "Use-after-free" flaws, out-of-bounds writes, and inappropriate API implementations, making Chrome and Android lucrative targets for cyberattacks.

What Makes This Serious?

Chrome is the most widely used browser globally, often linked to banking, email, and corporate platforms.
The bugs allow hackers to bypass traditional security measures and manipulate users into opening dangerous web pages.
Vulnerabilities in Android components—such as Framework, Runtime, Qualcomm, and Google Play—could let attackers gain elevated privileges or access private data, especially concerning users storing personal and financial information on their phones.

What You Should Do

Chrome Users:
Open Chrome > Click the three dots > Help > About Google Chrome
If your version is below 137.0.7151.55/56, update immediately via Chrome's stable channel.
Android Users:
Go to Settings > System > Software Update
Install patches once released by your phone manufacturer (OEM).

Expert Tip:

Enable auto-updates for both Chrome and your Android OS to receive critical security patches as soon as they're released. Avoid clicking on suspicious links or downloading files from untrusted sources.

Early humans survived in a range of extreme environments before global migration, study says

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Humans are the only animal that lives in virtually every possible environment, from rainforests to deserts to tundra.
This adaptability is a skill that long predates the modern age. According to a new study published Wednesday in Nature, ancient Homo sapiens developed the flexibility to survive by finding food and other resources in a wide variety of difficult habitats before they dispersed from Africa about 50,000 years ago.
"Our superpower is that we are ecosystem generalists," said Eleanor Scerri, an evolutionary archaeologist at the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology in Jena, Germany.
Our species first evolved in Africa around 300,000 years ago. While prior fossil finds show some groups made early forays outside the continent, lasting human settlements in other parts of the world didn't happen until a series of migrations around 50,000 years ago.
"What was different about



the circumstance of the migrations that succeeded — why were humans ready this time?" said study co-author Emily Hallett, an archaeologist at Loyola University Chicago.
Earlier theories held that Stone Age humans might have made a single important technological advance or developed a new way of sharing information, but researchers haven't found evidence to back that up.
This study took a different approach by looking at the trait of

flexibility itself.
The scientists assembled a database of archaeological sites showing human presence across Africa from 120,000 to 14,000 years ago. For each site, researchers modeled what the local climate would have been like during the time periods that ancient humans lived there.
"There was a really sharp change in the range of habitats that humans were using starting around 70,000 years ago," Hallett said. "We saw a really clear signal

that humans were living in more challenging and more extreme environments."
While humans had long survived in savanna and forests, they shifted into everything from dense rainforests to arid deserts in the period leading up to 50,000 years ago, developing what Hallett called an "ecological flexibility that let them succeed."
While this leap in abilities is impressive, it's important not to assume that only Homo sapiens did it, said University of Bordeaux archaeologist William Banks, who was not involved in the research.
Other groups of early human ancestors also left Africa and established long-term settlements elsewhere, including those that evolved into Europe's Neanderthals, he said.
The new research helps explain why humans were ready to expand across the world way back when, he said, but it doesn't answer the lasting question of why only our species remains today.

Courtesy: Indian Express

One week after Air India plane crash, focus shifts to decoding black box

Press Trust of India

A week after the devastating Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad claimed 270 lives, investigators on Thursday continued to sift for clues to ascertain the cause, while the government said the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau will decide where to decode the black box of the ill-fated Dreamliner.
The London-bound Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner with 242 persons on board plunged into a medical hostel complex in Meghaninagar area moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport at 1.39 pm on June 12.
A multi-disciplinary team from the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has commenced an investigation into the crash, the Civil Aviation Ministry said in a statement.
"A combined unit of the Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) has been recovered from the crash site on June 13 and another set was found on June 16. This model of aircraft has two

black box sets," it said.
The AAIB investigation is progressing steadily with all necessary support from local authorities and agencies, the ministry said, adding that key recovery work, including site documentation and evidence collection, has been completed, and further analysis is now underway.
"It has been reported in certain media outlets that the CVR/DFDR (black box) from the ill-fated AI171 flight is being sent abroad for retrieval and analysis...The decision regarding the location for decoding the flight recorders will be taken by the AAIB after due assessment of all technical, safety, and security considerations," the statement said.
The Gujarat government has clarified that it has no role in the investigation. Local firemen are helping forensic and aviation experts in their ongoing probe at the crash site, said Ahmedabad's Additional Chief Fire Officer Jayesh Khadia.
After the aircraft smashed into the medical hostel complex, its tail fin got stuck on top of the hostel canteen's damaged building and it was brought to the ground using cranes on June 14, two days after the accident, said Khadia.
"The debris, including the tail fin, is still lying at the site. There are no orders on moving the rubble to some other place," he said.
Altogether 215 victims have been identified so far through DNA matching, while 198 bodies handed over to their families, an official said.
Authorities are carrying out DNA tests to establish the identity of the victims as many bodies were charred beyond recognition or severely damaged.
The victims whose bodies have been handed over included 149 Indians, 32 British citizens, seven Portuguese nationals, and a Canadian. The mortal remains of seven persons who died on the ground have also been handed over to their relatives.
When the Dreamliner plunged into the medical college residential complex, Manisha Kachhadia and her 8-month-old son Dhyansh were in one of the buildings affected by the crash and sustained burn injuries.

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