

Rs 10,637 Cr Boost

J&K Bags 19 Major Road, Tunnel Projects

Peer-Ki-Gali, Sadhana Tunnels Among Key Projects Approved



Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a major infrastructure push, the Central Government has approved 19 significant road and tunnel projects worth ₹10,637 crore for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The move, part of the Ministry of Road Transport and

Highways' action plan for 2025–26, includes the construction and upgradation of 296 kilometres of National Highways aimed at improving connectivity, troop mobility, and access to remote and tourist areas. Among the approved works is the Peer-Ki-Gali tunnel | [More on P10](#)

LG, CM Express Gratitude To LG

LG Manoj Sinha has expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari for sanctioning Rs 10,637 crore worth road and tunnel projects for the Union Territory. "Extremely grateful to Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji & Hon'ble Union Minister for Road Transport | [More on P10](#)

Pak Extends Airspace Ban For Indian Aircraft

Agencies

Islamabad: Pakistan authorities on Monday announced to extend the airspace ban on Indian aircraft for another month.

The ban was initially imposed on April 23 for one month in the wake of tension between the two countries following the Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed at least 26 people.

Later, it was extended for another month on May 23, when ties had deteriorated due to the four day conflict as India

launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 and destroyed terror infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan.

According to a NOTAM, or Notice to Airmen, issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority, the ban has been extended from June 23 to July 23.

"Pakistan airspace not available for Indian registered aircraft and aircraft operated/owned or leased by Indian airlines/operators including military flights," it said.

India's strikes | [More on P10](#)

Iran Retaliates, Pounds Largest US Base In Gulf

Tehran Says, 'Era of Hit and Run Is Over'

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Iranian armed forces launched a missile barrage at American military bases in Qatar Monday night in a retaliatory operation a day after Iranian nuclear sites were targeted by US bombers.

Sirens were also heard in Bahrain and Iraq which also host US military bases.

The retaliatory strike — codenamed "Annunciation of Victory" — comes just one day after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered airstrikes on Iran's main nuclear facilities in Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan. Iranian officials called the U.S. attacks an "act of blatant military aggression" and vowed to



retaliate forcefully.

In a statement released Monday evening, Iran's armed forces said the missile strike targeted Al Udeid Air Base, the largest U.S. military installation in the Middle East and a critical

node in the Pentagon's military architecture across West Asia.

"Under the directive of the Supreme National Security Council and the command of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, | [More on P10](#)

How Will Gulf Crisis Hit India's Oil Security?

Any blocking or disruption of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz — a narrow passage connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea — will have significant global and regional impact, including India's energy

security, strategic affairs experts said on Sunday. Following the US bombing of three major Iranian nuclear sites this morning, Tehran has indicated that closing the Strait of Hormuz for shipping is one of the options | [More on P10](#)

Skylock: Iran-Israel War Grounds Flights, Reroutes The World

Trans Asia News

Bengaluru: A wave of grounded flights, diverted routes, and shuttered airspaces has thrown global aviation into disarray as the Iran-Israel conflict explodes into a full-blown regional crisis, with U.S. military strikes adding fuel to the fire.

From Tel Aviv to Tehran, and across key Gulf and Levantine skies, commercial airlines have been forced into emergency mode, suspending services and rerouting aircraft to avoid a combat zone that sits at the crossroads of East and West.

British Airways, Air

France-KLM, Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines, American Airlines, and United Airlines are among the global carriers to either cancel or divert flights that typically pass through the region. Over the weekend, British Airways rerouted and canceled multiple Gulf-bound flights, with one Dubai-bound aircraft forced to turn back to Heathrow after entering Egyptian airspace.

Lufthansa suspended its routes to Tehran and Tel Aviv and declared it would avoid Iranian, Iraqi, and Israeli airspace altogether. Singapore Airlines paused its Singapore | [More on P10](#)

Employment, Entrepreneurship, & Education Top Priorities: LG

» Says J&K Attracted ₹28,400 Cr in Industrial Incentives in Just 2.5 Years

» Recruitment Surge from Private Sector a Boost for J&K Economy: LG

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that employment generation, entrepreneurship, and industrial growth remain top priorities for the Union Territory, with investment projects worth 45,000 crore already completed or under implementation in Jammu and Kashmir.

He made these remarks while addressing the Mega Job Fair 2025 organised by Cluster University of Jammu in collaboration with Desh Bhagat University Punjab, held at Padma Shri Padma Sachdev Government PG College for Women, Gandhi Nagar.

Calling the job fair a significant step toward bridging the gap between education



and employment, the LG said the initiative would empower youth to showcase their skills and contribute meaningfully to building a "Viksit Jammu Kashmir and Viksit Bharat."

Highlighting recent reforms under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lieutenant Governor said the government has focused on aligning education with

industry needs, creating robust employment avenues, and attracting private investment in the region.

"Our efforts since 2021 have helped connect young job seekers directly with employers," he said, adding that the presence of local companies at the fair reflects the growing momentum in industrialisation and trade in the UT.

He informed that under the New Industrial Development Scheme, industries in J&K have availed ₹28,400 crore worth of incentives in just two and a half years. Investment proposals worth ₹25,000 crore are currently at various stages, including ₹10,000 crore worth of completed projects that have begun production. The remaining ₹15,000 crore worth of | [More on P10](#)

10-day Summer Vacations For Colleges



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Department has revised the summer vacation schedule for Government Degree Colleges in the Kashmir Division.

As per the new order, vacations will now be observed from June 24 to July 3, 2025, instead of the earlier announced dates of July 15 to July 24.

This change has been made through | [More on P10](#)

Heatwave Alert: Srinagar May Touch 36°C Today

Rain, Thunderstorms Expected in J&K From June 25

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Srinagar is expected to witness the hottest day of the season on Tuesday, with maximum temperatures likely to touch 35–36°C. The entire Kashmir Valley is currently under a heatwave alert, with hot and humid conditions forecast to continue throughout the day. Independent weather forecaster Aadil Maqbool has predicted that Srinagar may record a maximum of 36°C, making it the season's peak so far.

However, a major shift in weather conditions is expected from Wednesday. According to the Meteorological Department, intermittent spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-showers are likely across many parts of Kashmir starting June



Srinagar: 34.6°C
Qazigund: 33.4°C
Pahalgam: 28.8°C

Kupwara: 33.5°C
Kokernag: 32.6°C
Gulmarg: 25.2°C

25. Director of the MeT department, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said that the rain activity is expected to continue till June 27, with the possibility of heavy showers at isolated places in the Jammu

division.

Between June 28 and 30, the department forecasts intermittent rain and thundershowers at scattered places. A similar pattern is expected | [More on P10](#)

Suspected GPS Interference

Air India Express Delhi-Jammu Flight Returns Mid-Air

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: An Air India Express flight from Delhi to Srinagar via Jammu returned to its origin airport before landing here on Monday afternoon, officials said.

A spokesman of the airline said the flight returned to Delhi as a precautionary measure following a suspected "GPS interference" and an alternative aircraft was later provided to the passengers to reach their destination.

The officials said that the flight IX-2564 was supposed to land in Jammu around noon before leaving for Srinagar, but it hovered over the Jammu airport for

sometime before its pilot decided to return to Delhi without landing.

The weather and the runway were clear, but it seems the pilot could not find an appropriate landing area, they said.

"Our Delhi-Jammu flight returned to Delhi as a precautionary measure following a suspected GPS interference incident. Subsequently, an alternative flight was organised to connect guests to Jammu," said an Air India Express spokesperson.

"We regret the inconvenience caused. Instances of GPS signal interference have been reported by operators while | [More on P10](#)

JKTDC Board Reconstituted; CM To Head

Agencies

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has announced the re-constitution of the Board of Directors of the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation Limited (JKTDC).

According to a Government Order issued by the General Administration Department, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir will serve as the Chairman, while the Hon'ble Minister In-Charge of the Tourism Department will be the Vice-Chairman.

The re-constituted Board will comprise the Chief Secretary, Advisors to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Additional Chief Secretary to the Hon'ble | [More on P10](#)

48,000 Heatstroke Cases, Glaciers Vanishing Asia Is Warming Twice As Fast As The World — 2024 Was A Tipping Point



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Asia, the largest continent in the world with around 60 per cent of the global population, is now warming nearly twice as fast as the global average, according to a report released Monday.

The sea surface in Asia is also warming at nearly double the global average over the past decades, said the World Meteorological Organization's "State of the Climate in Asia in 2024" report.

"In the two most recent sub-periods (1961-1990 and 1991-2024), Asia, the continent with the largest land mass, extending to the Arctic, has warmed faster than the global land and ocean average," the report said.

In 2024, the average

temperature in Asia was about 1.04 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average, making it either the warmest or second warmest year on record, depending on the dataset.

Many parts of the region saw extreme heat events this year.

Prolonged heatwaves hit East Asia from April to November. Japan, the Republic of Korea and China broke monthly average temperature records repeatedly. India reported nearly 48,000 cases of heatstroke and 159 deaths due to extreme heat in 2024.

Sea levels rose faster than the global average on both the Pacific and Indian Ocean sides of Asia, increasing risks for low-lying coastal areas, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said.

Reduced winter snowfall and extreme summer heat severely affected glaciers.

In the central Himalayas and Tian Shan, 23 out of 24 glaciers lost mass. This has increased the risk of disasters like glacial lake outburst floods and landslides and poses a long-term threat to

water security.

Extreme rainfall caused severe damage and heavy loss of life in several countries, while tropical cyclones brought destruction. Droughts caused major economic and agricultural losses.

"The State of the Climate in Asia report highlights the changes in key climate indicators such as surface temperature, glacier mass and sea level, which will have major repercussions for societies, economies and ecosystems in the region. Extreme weather is already exacting an | [More on P10](#)



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2

IIT Guwahati Develops Mechanism To Treat 1,000 Litre Contaminated Water For Rs 20

Press Trust Of India

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, have developed a low-cost community scale water treatment system that removes fluoride and iron from groundwater and can treat up to 20,000 litre of contaminated water per day, officials said. The findings of the research have been published in the prestigious ACS ES&T Water journal. The researchers claimed the system was highly affordable and could treat 1,000 litre of water at a paltry Rs 20.

According to Mihir Kumar Purkait, Professor at Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Guwahati, fluoride, a mineral generally used in dental care products, pesticides, fertilisers and some industrial processes, can enter groundwater either naturally or through human activities such as agriculture and manufacturing.

"Consumption of water with excess fluoride presence can lead to skeletal fluorosis, a serious health condition in which bones harden and joints become stiff, making physical movement difficult and painful. In India, states including Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, and Gujarat, among others, face high levels of fluoride in groundwater,"

Purkait said. The IIT Guwahati research team developed a four-step system that ensures a cost-effective and energy-efficient technology for contaminated water treatment. Purkait said the hydrogen and oxygen bubbles produced during electrolysis interact with air bubbles, assisting in lifting pollutant particles to the surface. The selection of electrode material



depends on factors like low cost, low oxidation potential and high electro-positivity after dissolution.

"Among available options, aluminum has proven highly effective, particularly in the removal of iron, arsenic, and fluoride under optimal operational conditions," he said.

The research team tested the developed system under real-world conditions for 12 weeks and recorded consistent performance. The results have shown removal of 94

per cent iron and 89 per cent fluoride from the wastewater, bringing the levels within safe limits set by Indian standards.

"A key feature of the developed system is its cost effectiveness, with Rs 20 per 1,000 liters of treated water, making it highly affordable. The developed technology requires minimal supervision and has a projected lifespan of 15 years with electrode replacement scheduled every six months," he said.

The study proposes a method to estimate electrode life using a built-in safety factor to ensure timely maintenance.

As a pilot project, in support with the Public Health Engineering Department of Assam, the developed technology has been successfully installed by Kakati Engineering Pvt Ltd in Changsari, Assam.

"We are also exploring the use of solar or wind power to operate the unit and to utilise the hydrogen gas generated during electrocoagulation process. By integrating smart technologies such as real-time sensors and automated controls, we will be able to further reduce the need for manual intervention, making the system more effective for remote and underserved areas," he said.

The research team also aims to combine the current system with other water treatment methods to enhance performance and provide a decentralised water treatment solution.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Birth Certificate of my son the name is entered as MOHAMMAD MOHSIN LONE while his actual name is MOHAMMAD AFAN LONE. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact EXECUTIVE OFFICER MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BUDGAM with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
FAROOQ AHMAD LONE
F/o MOHAMMAD AFAN LONE
R/o HUROO BUDGAM
CELL. 7006990727

mcb

Office of the Advocate S.Nishter Ahmad , Asma Rashid & Associates.

Caveat Notice

Be it known to the public at large and all interested persons having the locus to file any Original Writ Petition (OWP), Appeal, or any other legal proceedings before the Hon'ble High Court, District Court, or any other Court of competent jurisdiction against the Caveators — that the Caveators are filing the present Caveat Petition to ensure that no ex parte interim orders are passed without affording them an opportunity of being heard.

In the event that any such legal proceedings are initiated, the undersigned Caveators respectfully request that due notice be served upon them prior to the passing of any orders that may adversely affect their rights or interests.

Caveators:

- Syed Mohsin Ali, S/o Syed Wajid Ali, R/o Shari Bhatt, Alamgari Bazar, Srinagar, J&K.
- Syed Wajid Ali, S/o Late Aga Syed Altaf, R/o Shari Bhatt, Srinagar, J&K.

This Caveat specifically pertains to any proceedings including but not limited to Criminal Revisions or Appeals related to the Caveators at Srinagar.

SD/

S.Nishter Ahmad,

bko

Asma Rashid & Ass.

Law Firm, Chamber No.8, High Court, Srinagar.

Dated: 23/06/2025

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR, SRINAGAR

(NAAC Accredited Grade "A+")

RESULT NOTIFICATION DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Wajahat Waseem Tantary S/o Mohd Ayoub Tantary bearing University Registration No. 59064-ANG-2009 who pursued Ph.D Programme on Whole Time basis in the discipline of **Biotechnology, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research & Innovations (CIRI), School of Biological Sciences** submitted thesis titled **"Dissecting the role of RNA binding protein Vgl1 in genome stability"** under the Supervision of **Dr. Mohd Altaf Bhat, Assistant Professor, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research & Innovations (CIRI), University of Kashmir, Srinagar** is declared qualified for the award of Ph.D degree on 13-05-2025.

Sd/ Assistant Controller of Examinations
(Secrecy)

Sd/ Dr. Majid Zaman
Controller of Examinations

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

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

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (Short term)

eNIT NO 300F RnB/Pahalgam/2025-26DATED 23-06-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor. Union Territory of J&Ke-tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion (Days)	Class of Contractor
01.	Restoration of road from Mammal to Shikargah without GST= Rs 10.96	12.93	600	25860	30	B, C & D
	Gujarbasti (Pahalgam) by way of WBM	without GST= rs 1.97				

Project Authority: -PWD (R&B)

Authorization accorded :- Accorded.

Major head of account:-3054 (023 M&R)

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

S. No.	Particulars	Dated	
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	23-06-2025	
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 23-06-2025 To 28-06-2025	(10:00AM) (04:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 23-06-2025 To 28-06-2025	(10:00AM) (04:00PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 30-06-2025	(11:00 AM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)		
		In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Pahalgam.	

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH-0059 PWD in favor of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Pahalgam (Tender inviting Authority) (NIT No. and Name of Work/Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (For single No of work in NIT, Name of work/Item No is not mandatory) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and eMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Pahalgam (Tender receiving Authority). (The Date of EMD{CDR/FDR} should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date.
- All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
- The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pahalgam (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the LI as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.

51. All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

DIPK-2832/25
dated: 23-06-2025

SD/= Executive Engineer PWD (R & B) Division Pahalgam

Office of the Assistant Commissioner / Designated Officer, Food Safety

Food & Drugs Administration, Kulgam

Subject: Prohibition on Sale of Turmeric Powder (Goldie).

ORDER

Whereas, the Food Safety Officer, Kulgam has procured a sample of Turmeric Powder (Goldy), bearing Batch No. 831, packed by M/s. Shubham Goldie Masale Pvt Ltd, H.O: Goldie House, 194-B, Industrial Estate, Dada Nagar, Kanpur-208022 (UP) India. And whereas, the Food Analyst, National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad, vide report No. JK-124/JUN/25-JK/173, dated 06-06-2025, has declared the said sample to be unsafe, due to the presence of water-soluble synthetic colors Tartrazine and Sunset Yellow FCF. Whereas, consumption of such adulterated and non-conforming products may pose serious health risks to the public; And whereas, the manufacture, packaging, and sale of unsafe food products is prohibited under Section 3 (1) (zz) (v) (vii) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSSA, 2006); Now, therefore, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 36(3)(b) of the FSSA, 2006, and in the interest of public health, I, Syed Night Hassan, Designated Officer, Food Safety Kulgam, hereby prohibit the sale, distribution, and storage of the said food product in District Kulgam with immediate effect, until further order.

No:-ACF/KUL/2025-26/92-94
DIPK-2853/25
Dated: 23/06/2025.

Designated Officer
(Assistant Commissioner, Food Safety,
Kulgam

Email ID: rbddivisionawantipora@gmail.com

Ph.....

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

E-NIT No. Fresh-17/EEA/R&B of 2025-26/1659-69

Dated:21/06/2025

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K Expression of Interest (EOI) are invited from approved and eligible Bidders as per Instruction to Bidder (ITB) and Terms of Reference at Annexure-I. The Bidder (Firm/Consultant/Agency/Company) should have the eligibility as per Annexure-II under Eligibility Criteria for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Cost of the Project (Rs in Lacs) for which Consultancy cost	Estimated Cost for the Architectural Engg. & Consultancy (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Time of completion	Type of Consultancy
1.	Providing Consultancy and other allied services with all working drawings (Digital Layout Plan, BOQ, Structural, Architectural Design,) and Conducting of all required soil investigations for Construction of two numbers of entry points at Sampora Near EDI and near Central Silk Board Galander Pampore.	65.29	0.40	200/-	10 Days	Architectural/ Structural Consultancy with Soil Testing

Position of AAA = Accorded vide No: MCP/W/005 of 2025 Dated: 08.02.2025.

Position of Funds = Committed

Major Head = FC-Grants (MC, Pampore)

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

S. No.	Particulars	Dated	
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	21-06-2025	
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 21-06-2025 To 21-06-2025	
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 21-06-2025 To 03-07-2025	(04:00PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 04-07-2025	(12.00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid (online)		
		In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Awantipora	

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH-0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Awantipora [Tender Inviting Authority] (Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (Refer Govt. order No. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt 07-06-2018 (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and the bidders residing Outside UT of J&K can submit DD of any nationalized bank in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Awantipora the cost of tender document fee is non refundable.

If MSE firm is registered with NSIC (National Small Industries Corporation) agencies for tendered item then they are exempted for submission of EMD & Tender Cost.

If MSE's who are interested in availing these benefits will have to enclosed with their offer the proof of their beings MSE's registered with any of the above mentioned agencies.

2. All Bidders shall to quote the rates in BOQ including GST.

3. All the Bidders have to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the Circular of Finance Department (Bid security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below).

4. The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

All other terms and conditions shall be available in website www.jktenders.gov.in.

DIPK-2824/25
dated: 23-06-2025

SD/- Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Awantipora



Soura Resident Sentenced To Jail For Forgery & Cheating

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Nearly two decades after a fraudulent attempt to secure a government contract through deceit, the Court of City Judge (Judicial Magistrate 1st Class), Srinagar, has convicted a Soura resident for forgery, cheating, and criminal intent.

According to KNT, the court found Saqib Faheem Kachroo, son of Mohammad Ashraf Kachroo, a resident of Bohlochipora Soura, guilty in FIR No. 48/2004 registered by Crime Branch Kashmir under sections 511, 420, 468, 471, and 201 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC). The case stems from a complaint filed by the Directorate of School Education Kashmir, which had in November 2003 invited tenders for the supply of science materials for chemistry from ISO/ISI-certified manufacturers and dealers.

During the tender scrutiny process, a local SSI unit, M/s Marinex Chemie, based near Gole Masjid in Soura, submitted an ISO-9000 certificate allegedly issued from Rotherdam, the Netherlands. However, upon verification, the document was found to be fake—an intentional act



to mislead authorities and fraudulently win the government tender.

A preliminary enquiry launched by the Crime Branch confirmed the forgery, revealing that Saqib Faheem Kachroo had knowingly submitted the fake certificate in a deliberate attempt to cheat the department. Following this, FIR No. 48/2004 was registered, and after detailed investigation, a charge-sheet was presented before the court on July 22, 2008.

In its final judgment, the Hon'ble Court sentenced the accused to two years of simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5,000 each under Sections 420, 468, and 471 RPC, and one year of simple imprisonment with a fine of Rs 5,000 under Section 511 RPC. The court further ruled that all sentences shall run concurrently, and in the event of default in paying the fines, the convict shall face an additional six months of simple imprisonment.

Drain Completed 9 Months Ago, But Road Left in Shambles

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Despite the completion of a drainage project nine months ago, Lane 6 of Acha Bagh, Mala Bagh near Masjid Ibrahim in Srinagar continues to suffer due to the non-repair of the road, leaving residents frustrated and helpless.

According to KNT, the drain construction, part of a long-pending civic infrastructure upgrade, was reportedly completed in September 2024, but since then, the road surface has been left dug up and unattended. Residents say they are forced to navigate through uneven, muddy, and often waterlogged terrain on a daily basis.

"This is not just an inconvenience anymore, it's a hazard," said a local resident. "Children, the elderly, and even ambulances struggle to pass through this neglected lane. We have made repeated appeals to the authorities, but there has been no response so far."

The damaged road surface is not only affecting pedestrians but also making it nearly impossible for vehicles to pass without damage, especially during rains when the stretch becomes slippery and water-filled.

People in the locality are questioning the lack of coordination between departments, pointing out how development works are often left incomplete or poorly followed up in urban Srinagar. "Why complete a drain if you're going to leave the road worse than before?" another resident asked.

The situation near Masjid Ibrahim, a key landmark in the area, has also become a source of embarrassment for the people, especially during congregational prayers when footfall increases.

Locals have appealed to authorities to immediately intervene and complete the blacktopping and repair work without any further delay.

DC Reviews Progress On Implementation Of Mission Yuva



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In order to review the progress on the implementation of Mission Yuva, a meeting was held here under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, General Manager DIC, Hamida Akhtar, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Deputy Director Employment, Dr. Sheeba, DSEO, Shah Ismail Bangroo, Purnima Kakru from NABARD, LDM, Nilofar Jan and Officers from EDI, NABARD, NRLM, Agriculture and other concerned Departments.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed appraisal of the key activities in implementation of the Mission Yuva initiative in Srinagar District since its inception aimed at ensuring proper handholding and accessible support for aspiring youth to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment ecosystem in the District.

On the occasion, the DC stressed on conducting an impactful awareness campaign for one week in all Gram Pan-

chayats to identify and cover the eligible youth under the initiative. Similarly, the DC asked for launching a comprehensive IEC campaign in all Municipal Wards in the next 2 weeks under the scheme.

The DC underscored the importance of seamless coordination among various Departments for effective implementation of the scheme. He set a clear timeline for verification of the applications, DPR formulations and simultaneous uploading of the cases on the designated portal by the respective Department. The DC emphasized conducting DLIC meetings on a weekly basis for approval of the cases with timely disbursement by the Banks.

Stressing adherence to the scheme's guidelines in letter and spirit, the DC highlighted the importance of continuous monitoring to enhance the initiative's impact and foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Srinagar. He emphasized that the initiative represents a vital step towards boosting self-employment and entrepreneurship and highlighted the role of the line Departments in facilitating entrepreneurship, business development, and financial linkages.

Chief Secretary Stresses Timely Upgradation Of Services At SKIMS



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a high-level meeting convened on Monday Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo had a comprehensive review of the functioning of the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura.

Present in the meeting were Secretary, Health & Medical Education (H&ME); Secretary, Public Works Department (PWD); Director, SKIMS; Principal, SKIMS Medical College; Chief Engineer (Central), R&B and other key officers from the Health department.

The Chief Secretary articulated a clear vision for the future of SKIMS, stressing the imperative to exert every effort to expand the academic offerings as per the commitments made by SKIMS administration. He specifically called for rapid addition of seats to specialization courses, with a particular focus on the proposed 44 DM/ MCH courses and a substantial increase of 130 MD/MS/ PGD seats across 16 critical specialities. He asked to ensure these expanded opportunities are available to students as early as the next academic year.

Beyond academics, the Chief Secretary strongly urged the hospital administration to undertake a significant overhaul and upgrade of services in both the Emergency and Outpatient Department (OPD) sections. He asked for submission of high-impact proposals detailing plans for augmenting the infrastructure in these critical patient care areas, aimed at providing a much better experience and outcomes for the patients.

Dulloo asked the officers to ensure that the Liver Transplant Unit becomes fully functional by the end of this calendar year, a crucial step in advanced medical care for the region. He also advised the administration to develop and present

CS ATAL DULLOO URGED THE HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION to undertake a significant overhaul and upgrade of services in both the Emergency and Outpatient Department (OPD) sections.

proposals for establishment of other such specialized units, clearly outlining their anticipated outcomes and the tangible benefits they would bring to patient care at SKIMS.

Addressing the vital aspect of human resources, the Chief Secretary meticulously reviewed the current faculty and staff positions within the college, paying close attention to those vacancies that have been referred to various recruitment agencies for filling. He directed the Health department to take up the issue of filling these vacant posts on a priority basis with the respective recruiting agencies.

He emphasized the institute's core objective of carrying out quality medical research. In this context, he specifically highlighted the need for research into the reasons behind the observed high prevalence of cancer in the region compared to past trends.

Secretary, H&ME, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, presented a comprehensive update on the status of faculty recruitment and the current positions of paramedical staff. He informed the meeting that a significant step forward had been taken with the revival of 105 faculty positions at SKIMS, which have

subsequently been forwarded to the Public Service Commission for expediting recruitment against them.

The Secretary highlighted the achievement of finalization of recruitment rules for all non-gazetted posts across every medical college in the region, a crucial regulatory framework that had been pending for decades.

Director, SKIMS, Dr. Mohammed Ashraf Ganie, presented an overarching picture of the institution's functioning and the vast array of services it offers. He recounted SKIMS's impressive journey of growth and transformation since its establishment in 1982, when it began with a modest capacity of just 500 beds.

Dr. Ganie elucidated upon various measures taken by the institute in adherence to earlier directives issued by the Chief Secretary. He detailed the ambitious expansion plans of the institution aimed at achieving unparalleled excellence in advancing medical care throughout the region. He further informed the meeting about significant investments in medical technology, revealing that the institute had procured machines worth approximately Rs 94 crore in the past year alone, a substantial boost to its existing machinery to enhance patient care capabilities.

The Director SKIMS also provided insights into the institution's forward-looking proposals to substantially enhance the capacity of both the medical college and hospital. These included establishment of new Centres of Excellence in critical areas such as Cancer Care and organ transplant, alongside the development of futuristic departments dedicated to areas like Clinical Research, Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Medicine and Medical Health. He highlighted plans for developing an IT-based structured referral system to streamline patient flow and improve efficiency.

Status Of Rooftop Solar Installations Reviewed

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Monday chaired a meeting of Engineers of KPDC here at the Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex to review the status and progress of installation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojna (PMSCMBY).

Besides Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, the meeting was

attended by Executive Engineers, AEs & JEs of KPDC, Lead District Manager (Banks) and other Officers of Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDC).

At the outset, the DC took a first-hand appraisal of the progress made in installation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana in all 4 Electric Divisions of the District.

On the occasion, the DC emphasized the benefits of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli scheme and urged KPDC

functionaries to generate awareness among the people about the benefits of installing Rooftop Solar plants under PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojna.

The DC said that the scheme must be implemented in the district in such a way that we ensure scheme benefits percolate down to the common public throughout Srinagar.

The DC stressed on the coordinated efforts by the KPDC Engineers to accelerate the pace and progress in the scheme implementation.

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



PRAYERS

FAJR	3:35
ZUHR	12:33
ASR	5:33
Magrib	7:49
ISHA	9:31

This Day In History

- 451 - 10th recorded perihelion passage of Halley's Comet
- 843 - Vikings destroy Nantes
- 972 - Battle of Cedynia, the first documented victory of Polish forces; Mieszko I of Poland decisively defeated Odo I of Lusatia
- 1128 - Afonso I of Portugal defeats army of his mother Theresa
- 1314 - Battle of Bannockburn; Scotland regains independence from England
- 1396 - Crusaders under Earl of Nevers reach Vienna
- 1397 - Sultan Bajezid I releases captured crusaders for ransom
- 1529 - Zürich and Catholic cantons sign Peace of Kappel
- 1658 - French fleet recaptures Duinkerke
- 1662 - Dutch invasion of Macau repulsed (Macau Day)
- 1795 - US & Great Britain sign Jay Treaty, 1st US extradition treaty
- 1812 - Napoleon Bonaparte & #39;s forces invade Russia crossing the Neman River
- 1866 - Second Battle at Custozza: the Austrian Imperial army, joined by the Venetian Army
- decisively defeated the Italian army, despite the Italians & #39; strong numerical advantage.
- 1898 - American troops drive Spanish forces from La Guasimas, Cuba
- 1917 - Russian Black Sea fleet mutinies at Sebastopol
- 1922 - Adolf Hitler begins a month long prison sentence for paramilitary operations; he rails
- against the & #39; Jewish sell-out & #39; of Germany to the Bolsheviks
- 1930 - 1st radar detection of planes, Anacostia DC
- 1931 - USSR & Afghanistan sign neutrality treaty
- 1932 - Coup ends absolute monarchy in Thailand
- 1940 - France signs an armistice with Italy during WW II
- 1942 - Africa Korps invades Egypt
- 1943 - Allies begin 10-day bombing on Hamburg
- 1961 - Iraq demands dominion over Kuwait
- 1966 - Period of relative peace following WW II exceeds that following WW I
- 1975 - Moon tremor perceived (hit by Taurid meteors)
- 1982 - Soyuz T-6 Launch (USSR)
- 1983 - 7th Space Shuttle Mission-Challenger 2 lands at Edwards AFB
- 1985-18th Space Shuttle Mission (51-G)-Discovery 5 returns to Earth
- 1997 - USAF reports Roswell & #39; space aliens & #39; were dummies
- 2012 - Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood becomes President of Egypt
- 2014 - Rebels in Ukraine have agreed to a ceasefire
- 2016 - British Prime Minister David Cameron resigns after the UK votes to leave the EU
- 2017 - UN states Yemen cholera epidemic reached 200,000 cases, with 1,300 deaths. Worst cholera outbreak anywhere in the world.
- 2017 - World record for highest altitude football match ever played at 18,799ft on Mount Kilimanjaro by women's international team
- 2018 - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wins second term with president's AK Party winning 42% parliamentary votes
- 2018 - Women drive for the first time in Saudi Arabia after ban is lifted
- 2019 - US President Donald Trump imposes sanctions on Iran, targeted at Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in response to the shooting down of a US drone
- 2020 - Russia celebrates its victory 75 years ago over Nazi Germany with huge military parade through Red Square in Moscow (delayed from May 9 due to pandemic)
- 2020 - World Monetary fund predicts a deeper global recession with contraction of 4.9% (down from 3%), noting 2/3 of all countries used 11 trillion to support their economies
- 2023 - Wagner Group mercenaries led by Yevgeny Prigozhin rebel against Vladimir Putin's government, march towards Moscow, only a last minute deal by Aleksander Lukashenko gets them to stand down and move to Belarus
- 2024 - Flooding across the US's Midwest affects 3 million people in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota and Nebraska, including completely cutting off Spencer, Iowa [1]

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

I did wash my hand ... but... did I clean it enough? ?Wash it again? Is it clean now?

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING

UNSEEN PAIN BUT distress myths and stigma associated with OCD

KASHMER /kashmir American Society of Healthcare, Medical Education & Research in collaboration with HPVT- Help Poor Voluntary Trust

is initiating a free 8 weeks group therapy for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of J&K

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial.

You do not have to fight your battles alone.

There is no need for referral , simply call us for registration.

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT Building (first floor), Daresht Kadul Chowk, Srinagar

9070806160

Tharoor Applauds Modi's Global Dynamism, India's Unity

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's energy, dynamism and willingness to engage remains a "prime asset" for India on the global stage but deserves greater backing, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said on Monday, in remarks that are likely to irk his party and widen the growing cracks in his ties with its leadership.

Tharoor's praise for the prime minister comes at a time when the Congress has been consistently attacking



the Modi government over its foreign policy, alleging that Indian diplomacy is being "shattered" and the country stands "isolated" globally.

In an article published in The Hindu, Tharoor said the diplomatic outreach following "Operation Sindoor" was a moment of national resolve and effective communication.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's energy, dynamism and willingness to engage remains a prime asset for India on the global stage but de-

serves greater backing.

Video Player is loading. This is a modal window. The media could not be loaded, either because the server or network failed or because the format is not supported.

"The diplomatic outreach following 'Operation Sindoor' was a moment of national resolve and effective communication. It affirmed that India, when united, can project its voice with clarity and conviction on international platforms," said the Congress leader, who led a multi-party delegation to the US and four other countries to convey India's stand following the Pahalgam terror attack and the military operation.

Tharoor said the lessons learned -- the power of unity, the efficacy of clear communication, the strategic value of soft power and the imperative of sustained public diplomacy -- will undoubtedly serve as guiding principles as India navigates an increasingly complex international landscape, leveraging its three Ts -- tech, trade and tradition -- and always striving for a more just, secure, and prosperous world.

In his article, Tharoor said the aftermath of the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack and India's resolute response through 'Operation Sindoor' presented a critical juncture for the nation's foreign policy.

Second batch of 443 Indians leave from Israel through Jordan, Egypt

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The second batch of evacuation of Indian nationals from Israel on Monday saw two groups of 175 and 268 people leave through Israel's border with Jordan and Egypt, taking the total number of Indians taken out of the war-torn country to 603 in two days.

The first batch of 160 people left for Jordan on Sunday from where they had boarded the flight today by 2:15 pm local time, an evacuee onboard the flight told PTI before departure.

The 443 people who crossed the Israeli border on Monday would be taking two separate flights from Jordan and Egypt arranged by the Ministry of External Affairs in coordination with the Indian missions in those countries.

The complex and tightly-coordinated effort between New Delhi and the three missions has brought a huge relief to Indians in Israel constantly grappling with sounds of sirens and frequently taking cover in bunkers and fortified safe rooms from incoming missiles and drones fired from Iran.

Sensing the urgency of the situation, the Embassy of

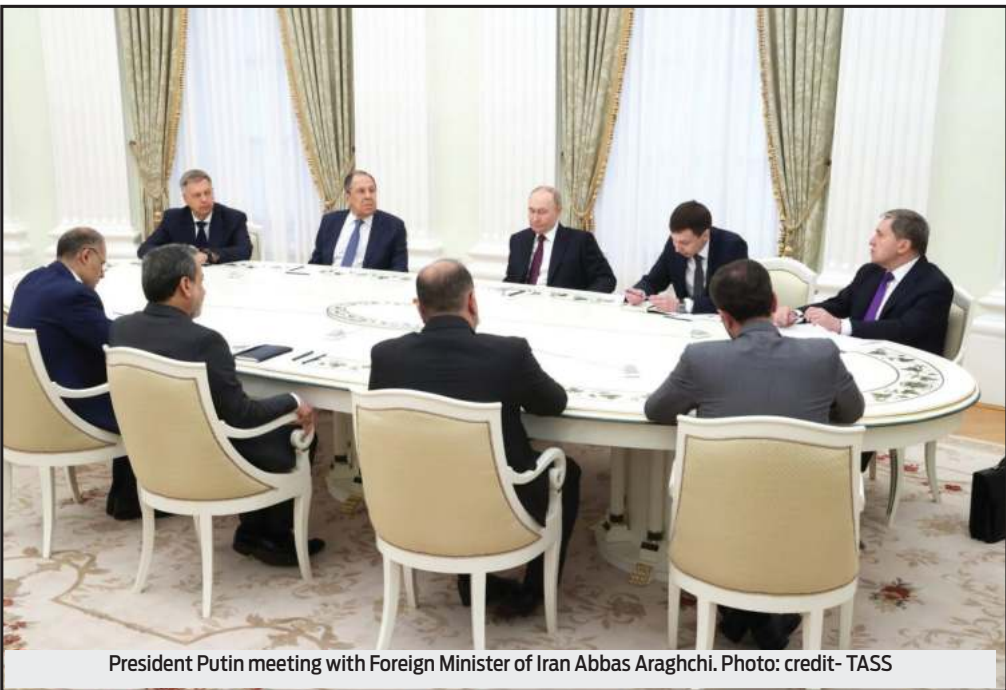
India in Tel Aviv had set up a 24x7 Control Room during the past week to oversee all facets of the evacuation effort.

The Control Room issued advisories as per the evolving situation, directed Indian nationals to register via an online portal, and managed thousands of phone calls and emails while compiling a detailed database of Indian citizens across Israel.

"Evacuation priorities were determined based on medical emergencies, the presence of young children, women, and students. Embassy officials proactively contacted registrants by phone and email to confirm travel details and allocate them to specific evacuation flights," embassy sources earlier told PTI.

The situation on the ground was also being closely monitored at the highest levels of the government, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who remained actively engaged receiving real-time updates on the safety and security of the Indian nationals, the sources said.

The Government of India announced Operation Sindhu to evacuate Indian nationals desiring to return home from war-torn Israel on June 19.



President Putin meeting with Foreign Minister of Iran Abbas Araghchi. Photo: credit- TASS

Putin Slams U.S. Attack, Backs Iran as Region Teeters on Edge

Trans Asia News

Moscow — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday condemned the recent U.S. airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities as "unjustified and without any basis," voicing Moscow's support for the Iranian people during a high-stakes meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Moscow.

The visit came just 48 hours after U.S. President Donald Trump authorized strikes on Iran's key nuclear sites — Natanz, Isfahan, and Fordow — in a dramatic escalation of tensions across the region. The bombings, which Iran called an act of unprovoked aggression, were also criticized by Russia during an emergency United Nations Security Council session late Sunday.

"This absolutely unprovoked aggression against Iran has no basis and no justification," Putin told Araghchi in a televised statement. "For our part, we are making efforts to assist the Iranian people. I am very glad that you are in Moscow today. This gives us the opportunity to discuss all these pressing issues and think together about how we could get out of today's situation."

Araghchi, who character-

ized the Moscow visit as taking place at a "critical and significant juncture," reiterated Tehran's position that its retaliatory actions are acts of "legitimate self-defense." He also expressed appreciation for Russia's swift condemnation of the strikes and said, "Russia is today on the right side of history and international law."

He delivered personal greetings from Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and President Masoud Pezeshkian, and emphasized the strategic nature of Iran-Russia ties — calling them "very close and historic," with co-operation deepening in recent years on both regional security and nuclear issues.

The meeting came as Iran launched the latest wave of its missile campaign — Operation True Promise III — reportedly using next-generation systems to target Israeli positions across occupied territories. Iran says the strikes are a direct response to what it calls a coordinated campaign of assassinations and provocations by Israel and the U.S. that began on June 13.

Diplomacy, But No Defense Pact

While Putin reiterated support for Iran's right to

self-defense and pledged diplomatic backing, questions remain over how far Russia is willing to go. A Strategic Cooperation Treaty signed by Tehran and Moscow in January includes broad security and economic collaboration but lacks a formal mutual defense clause.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov clarified on Monday that Moscow's assistance would depend on "what Iran needs," adding that Russia's ongoing diplomatic efforts and offer to mediate already represent a significant contribution. "A new spiral of escalation of tension in the region... of course, we condemn this and express deep regret," Peskov said, warning that more participants could soon be drawn into the conflict.

He also raised concerns over potential environmental consequences, saying, "It remains to be seen what happened to Iran's nuclear facilities, whether there is a radiation hazard."

On the question of whether Washington gave Moscow advance notice of the strikes, Peskov said there had been no detailed information shared. While Trump and Putin had discussed Iran in prior calls, "there was no direct detailed information about this," he added.

Palestinians waiting for humanitarian aid killed in airstrike

Arab News

TEL AVIV: At least four Palestinians were killed on Sunday in an Israeli airstrike and 22 were wounded while waiting for humanitarian aid, according to a local hospital.

The airstrike targeted the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, according to Al-Awda Hospital, where the bodies were brought.

It said another 22 people were wounded while waiting for aid trucks.

Palestinian witnesses and health officials say Israeli forces have repeatedly opened fire on crowds seeking desperately needed food, killing hundreds of people in

recent weeks.

The military says it has fired warning shots at people it said suspiciously approached its forces.

Separately, World Central Kitchen, the charity run by celebrity chef Jose Andres, said it had resumed the distribution of hot meals in Gaza for the first time in six weeks after shutting down because of Israel's blockade, which was loosened last month amid fears of famine.

Also on Sunday, the Israeli military said that it had recovered the remains of three hostages held in the Gaza Strip.

The military identified the remains as those of Yo-

natan Samerano, 21; Ofra Keidar, 70; and Shay Levinson, 19.

All three were killed during Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack into Israel that ignited the ongoing war.

Hamas is still holding 50 hostages, fewer than half of them believed to be alive.

The military did not provide any details about the recovery operation, and it was unclear if the airstrike was related to it.

"The campaign to return the hostages continues consistently and is happening alongside the campaign against Iran," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement.

Pakistani Experts Urge Rethink of Trump Nobel Nomination

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: Several Pakistani politicians and notable figures have asked the government to reconsider its decision to recommend President Donald Trump for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize after the US bombed three nuclear sites in Iran.

The Pakistan government, in a surprise move on Friday, announced that it would nominate Trump for the prestigious award due to his peacemaking efforts during the recent India-Pakistan conflict.

A letter of recommendation, signed by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, has already been sent to the Nobel Peace Prize Committee in Norway. But the decision came under scrutiny after the US bombed Iran's Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz nuclear sites, joining Israel to dent Tehran's nuclear programme. The Dawn newspaper reported that some leading politicians demanded the government review its decision in light of the latest development.

Veteran politician Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who heads the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F), demanded that the government rescind its decision. "President Trump's claim of peace has proven to be false; the proposal for the Nobel Prize should be withdrawn," Fazl told workers at a party meeting in Murree on Sunday. He said that Trump's recent meeting and lunch with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim

Munir "pleased Pakistani rulers so much" that they recommended nominating the US president for the Nobel Prize.

"Trump has supported the Israeli attacks on Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Iran. How can this be a sign of peace?" Fazl questioned. "With the blood of Afghans and Palestinians on America's hands, how can he claim to be a proponent of peace?"

Trump had campaigned for office as a "peacemaker" who would use his negotiating skills to quickly end wars in Ukraine and Gaza, but both conflicts are still raging five months into his presidency.

Former senator Mushahid Hussain wrote on X: "Since Trump is no longer a potential peacemaker, but a leader who has willfully unleashed an illegal war, Pakistan government must now review, rescind and revoke his Nobel nomination!"

He said Trump had been "trapped by (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu and the Israeli war lobby, committing (the) 'biggest blunder of his presidency'." "Trump will now end up presiding over the decline of America!"

Trump "engaged in deception and betrayed his own promise not to start new wars", Mushahid said in another post, strongly condemning the US attacks on Iran.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) lawmaker Ali Muhammad Khan wrote "reconsider" on his X account, highlighting the "US attack on Iran and continuous US support of Israeli killings in Gaza".

US Visa Applicants Must Make Social Media Accounts Public For Screening

ANI

Washington [US], June 23 (ANI): In a move aimed at strengthening visa screening procedures, the United States has announced that effective immediately, all individuals applying for an F, M, or J non-immigrant visa are required to adjust the privacy settings on all of their social media accounts to 'public' to facilitate vetting necessary to establish their identity and admissibility to the United States under U.S. law.

In a post on X, the official handle of the U.S. Embassy in India (@USAndIndia) shared the announcement stating, "Every visa adjudication is a national security decision. Effective immediately, all individuals applying for an F, M, or J non-immigrant visa are requested to adjust the privacy settings on all of their personal social media accounts to 'public' to facilitate vetting neces-

sary to establish their identity and admissibility to the United States."

It also reiterated that since 2019, the United States has required visa applicants to provide social media identifiers on immigrant and non-immigrant visa application forms.

The post added: "We use all available information in our visa screening and vetting to identify visa applicants who are inadmissible to the United States, including those who pose a threat to U.S. national security."

Meanwhile, the U.S. government has also unveiled a sweeping new 2025 travel ban, barring nationals from 12 countries entirely and partially limiting visa access from seven others. The move prioritizes national security and focuses on countries deemed high-risk for security loopholes and terrorism concerns. Most affected countries are reportedly in the Middle East and Africa.

NEWS MAKERS

Congressmen "So Disgusted With Sanjay Gandhi That...": Indira Gandhi Aide In Book

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: As principal secretary to Indira Gandhi in the run up to the Emergency and during her authoritarian regime of 21 months, PN Dhar had a rare insight into the goings-on of the period, and one central character who gets the most unflattering portrayal in his otherwise sober account of the era is the former prime minister's younger son Sanjay Gandhi.

In his book 'Indira Gandhi, the Emergency, and Indian Democracy', Mr Dhar says the PMH (Prime Minister's Home) became a hive of "extra-constitutional" activities as leaders junior in the Congress hierarchy but hav-



ing the ears of an increasingly distrustful prime minister and another set of functionaries loyal to her son undermined the PMS (Prime Minister's Secretariat).

Critical of the power centralised in the PMS, Morarji Desai reduced its strength and rechristened it as Prime Min-

ister's Office, a moniker which has continued, after replacing Indira Gandhi.

Sanjay Gandhi and his loyalists like Haryana leader Bansi Lal gained ascendancy in the Congress during the era. Even the prime minister was left alarmed by their move to

have state assemblies pass resolutions in support of forming a constituent assembly for sweeping changes in the Constitution.

Aware of her obsessive love for Sanjay Gandhi, Mr Dhar said in the book published in 2000 that he would normally have attributed all this to temporary annoyance.

"But it was more than a passing mood this time. I knew how carefully she had kept Sanjay out of all discussions on constitutional reforms. I also knew how much she had resented the passage of the constituent assembly resolutions by the three assemblies without her knowledge, but with Sanjay's approval. Was Sanjay proving too wild even for her?" he wondered.

Robotics Engineer Sends 21 Bomb Threats To Gujarat To Frame Man She Loved

Press Trust Of India

Ahmedabad: A probe into e-mails threatening blasts at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad and different places in 12 states has unravelled a tale of unrequited love and vengeance allegedly unleashed by a woman executive of an MNC in Chennai to defame a man, leading to her arrest.

After the man who she dreamt would be her husband, married another woman, the accused, identified as Rene Joshilda, decided to avenge the 'rejection' and used deception to wreak havoc in his life.

According to police, she used fake email IDs, virtual

private networks (VPNs), and the dark web to hide her identity and location.

She was arrested by the Ahmedabad cyber crime team from her residence in Chennai on Saturday following an extended technical surveillance, which involved picking the digital trail, an official said on Monday.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sharad Singhal on Monday said Joshilda created different email IDs, some of which were in the name of Divij Prabhakar, who she wanted to marry.

An engineer trained in Robotics, Joshilda has been working as a senior consultant at a multinational firm in Chennai since 2022.

"She has done her engi-

neering from Chennai and a course in Robotics. Currently, she is a senior consultant at Deloitte. She loved Divij Prabhakar and wanted to marry him but it remained one-sided," Singhal told reporters.

Her dreams crashed when Prabhakar married another girl in February, filling her with revulsion and revenge.

"In a bid to frame him, she created different email IDs, some of which were in the name of Prabhakar," the police officer added.

Blinded by love, Joshilda used her technical knowledge to spread panic, blissfully unaware of the impact of her action on innocent people who became unintentional targets due to hoax emails.

Weekend Rush In Pahalgam
Signals Hope For Tourism Revival

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a welcome turn of events, the renowned tourist destination, Pahalgam in south Kashmir, witnessed a good rush over the weekend—the first such revival since the terror attack in April that had cast a shadow over the region's tourism prospects.

Tourists from various parts of the valley made their way to the picturesque valley on Saturday and Sunday.

Officials and tourism stakeholders, speaking to KNO said the area saw significant footfall, leading to traffic jams in several stretches and a notable uptick in hotel occupancy.

Sunday, in particular, saw the tourist hotspot abuzz with life. Families, picnickers and adventure lovers thronged the Lidder banks, markets and parks, enjoying the cool climate and intermittent drizzle.

"The atmosphere was dull and uncertain over the last few weeks, but this weekend brought a wave of positivity," said Fayaz Ahmad, a hotelier in Pahalgam. "We had close to 70% occupancy by Sunday evening. With schools on summer break and weather favouring travel, we expect more such weekends ahead."

Local vendors, too, expressed cautious optimism. "After the attack, people were scared, and

the business was hit badly. This weekend felt like a new beginning," said Asma Jan, who runs a handicraft stall near the park.

The renewed activity even prompted a reaction from political quarters. J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took to the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on Sunday to share his observations:

"The last time I was in Pahalgam I cycled through a market that was all but deserted. Today I came back to a Pahalgam that was bustling with activity. Tourists from various parts of the country competed for space with local picnickers who were enjoying the cool climate & rainy weather. It's very satisfying to see the efforts my colleagues & I have been putting in slowly bearing fruit," he wrote.

Tourism department officials say they have been working to instil confidence among visitors and promote Kashmir as a safe and vibrant destination.

"Security has been beefed up, and all departments are working in coordination to ensure a smooth tourist experience," said an official. "This weekend was a good sign, and we expect more such a rush in the coming weeks."

The Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA) and traffic police were seen actively managing the growing rush, ensuring order despite the sudden spike in visitors.

Scorching Heat Drives
Kashmiris to Natural Springs



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With temperatures soaring to unprecedented levels, Kashmiris — long accustomed to mild and temperate summers — are now flocking to natural springs, streams, and waterfalls in search of relief.

The Kashmir valley, known for its pleasant climate, is reeling under an unusual and prolonged heatwave that has disrupted daily life and left locals stunned.

Residents are heading to popular spots where they can be seen bathing, playing, or simply sitting in the cold waters for hours.

"We don't have air conditioning in our homes. This is our only option. Even fans are useless during the peak afternoon heat. I don't remember it ever being this hot in June," Shahid Lone, a 22-year-old student, told KNO.

Bashir Ahmad Wani, a 65-year-old resident of Anantnag, sat by a spring in Achabal with his feet in the water. "We used to see this kind of heat only in parts of Jammu. Now, even here in the mountains, it is unbearable. The only way to

cool down is to come to these natural springs," he said.

Abdul Salam Wani, a local Aqaf head, was at the bank of the famous Panzath Spring — known for its 500 bubbling springs and located just a kilometre from the Qazigund highway. He described the current heatwave as "unbearable".

"Every day, hundreds of youth come here to bathe and seek relief. The water here is colder than any other spring in Anantnag. We have been urging authorities for years to put Panzath on the tourism map like Verinag and Kokernag, but our appeals have fallen on deaf ears," he said.

Lateef Ahmad Shah, a resident of Qazigund, said, "Our town, which is the gateway to Kashmir, has recorded extreme weather this year. Each year we see fluctuations, but this time it feels like Qazigund is on fire."

Shah added that to escape the heatwave, youth are bathing in waterfalls, streams, and springs. "In our village (Panzath), hundreds of youngsters travel several kilometres every day just to bathe and take photographs," he said.

Soaring Temperatures Trigger Surge
In Water Demand Across Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As Kashmir reels under a rising heatwave, the demand for water supply has surged sharply across the valley.

Officials from the Jal Shakti Department on Monday said the overall water supply remains normal, despite increased consumption and misuse in many areas.

Speaking to KNO, Er Taj Mohammad Chowdhary, Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Kashmir, said the water supply is operating normally. He said the department is witnessing a significant rise in demand due to ongoing hot and dry weather conditions.

"The supply is as usual, but the demand has increased drastically. People are misusing water—using it in lawns, fields, and for non-essential purposes," he said, adding that the department has pressed additional tankers into service wherever required.

Chowdhary said over a dozen water tankers are operational within Srinagar city alone, while every district across Kashmir is equipped with tank-

ers that can be increased if the need arises. "We have directed field officials to act strictly against misuse. Surveillance teams have also been formed," he said.

The CE also said water supply to essential services like hospitals remains a top priority and that all filtration plants are functioning at full capacity.

Meanwhile, the Kashmir Weather Forecast has predicted dry and hot conditions for the next two days, with temperatures likely to touch 35–36°C in the plains. A fresh weather system bringing possible relief is expected to arrive around June 25.

Moreover, amid the heatwave, MLAs are also calling for action and checking preparedness in their respective areas.

With the growing water crisis in rural areas, MLA Bandipora earlier on June 21 chaired a review meeting to assess the functioning of the Jal Shakti Department and the Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) sector. Similarly, a key focus of the meeting was the desilting of agricultural canals to restore irrigation in farmlands.

Sakina Itoo Reaffirms
Govt's Resolve For Fair
Reservation Policy

Observer News Service

TANGMARG: Reiterating the government's resolve to uphold equity and social justice, Cabinet Minister for Higher Education Sakina Itoo on Monday affirmed that the reservation policy is being implemented fairly and with sincere intent.

Speaking to reporters during her visit to Tangmarg, the Minister dismissed speculation that the recently formed subcommittee on reservations was a reaction to public pressure or social media campaigns. "The reservation policy is meant for the welfare of the people, and that's precisely why the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah constituted a subcommittee with a clear six-month mandate. It wasn't formed because of some tweet or outside pressure," she asserted, addressing criticism from the opposition.

She informed that the committee had submitted its report ahead of the deadline, which has now been referred to the Law Department for legal scrutiny. "The Chief Minister is deeply invested in ensuring justice in this matter. We are absolutely serious about it," she said.



Touching upon reforms in the education sector, Itoo said that rationalisation of teaching staff is underway to ensure equitable distribution. "Teachers working in overcrowded schools will be posted to far-flung areas. Those who haven't served in such regions so far will now be required to do so. It's going to be mandatory," she stated.

She blamed earlier governments for failing to implement a proper transfer and promotion mechanism. "Promotions were stalled for years, and there was no structured transfer policy. We've changed that now. I commend the officers who have worked diligently to fix this system," she said.

Acknowledging staff shortages in the Education Department, Itoo noted that efforts were being made to streamline administrative responsibilities. "Many officers were burdened with additional charges due to vacant posts. But after the local government took charge, most vacancies — including those of CEOs, ZEOs, and headmasters — have been filled, and the rest will be addressed soon," she assured.

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"Pahalgam Bustling With Activity":
Omar Abdullah On Tourism Revival

Tourism in Pahalgam was badly hit after the April 22 terror attack at the Baisaran meadow, which killed 25 tourists and a local pony ride operator.

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the efforts put in by him and his colleagues for the revival of tourism in Kashmir are bearing fruit, as tourists are returning to the Valley.

"The last time I was in Pahalgam, I cycled through a market that was all but deserted. Today, I came back to a Pahalgam that was bustling with activity.

"Tourists from various parts of the country competed for space with local picnickers who were enjoying the cool climate and rainy weather," Mr Abdullah said in a post on X, expressing



ing satisfaction over the revival of tourism in Pahalgam.

Tourism in Pahalgam was badly hit after the April 22 terror attack at the Baisaran meadow, which killed 25 tourists and

a local pony ride operator.

"It's very satisfying to see the efforts my colleagues and I have been putting in slowly bearing fruit," Mr Abdullah said.

J&K Bank Donates Five Buses To Rural
Colleges Under CSR Initiative

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a significant boost to rural education infrastructure, J&K Bank on Sunday donated five buses to Government Degree Colleges in Kashmir under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The buses were flagged off by Minister of Higher Education Sakeena Itoo at Abdul Ahad Azad Memorial (AAAM) Degree College, Srinagar.

The event witnessed the presence of several prominent dignitaries including Advisor to CM Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Tangmarg Farooq Ahmad Shah, MLA Sopore Irshad Ahmad Kar, Additional Secretary (Higher Education Department) Afaq Ahmad, Director State Motor Garages Malik Tahir Gani, InCharge Director Colleges Dr. Firdous Giri, Director Finance (HED) Abdul Majid Butt, and Principal AAAM Degree College Prof. (Dr.) Mudasar Afshan.

Top officials from J&K Bank including GM & Divisional Head (Kashmir) Shabir Ahmad, DGM (CSR) Anup Bhat, and Zonal Heads Fayaz Ahmad, Khurshid Muzaffar, Raja Zaffar Khan, and Irfan Anjum were also present, alongside senior officials from the finance and education departments.

Minister Sakeena Itoo handed over the symbolic keys of the buses to the principals of Government Degree Colleges in Tulail, Damhal Hanji Pora, Tangmarg, and the Women's Degree



Colleges of Sopore and Kupwara.

Appreciating the initiative, Itoo said, "On behalf of the government, I am very thankful to the bank for this thoughtful CSR initiative that directly supports the academic aspirations of our youth. Since inclusive access to education has been a key focus of the Government, J&K Bank's contribution today is another meaningful step in that direction."

She emphasized the practical benefits of the initiative, noting, "These buses will go a long way in easing the daily commute for hundreds of students belonging to rural and far flung areas and help colleges implement the National Education Policy in its true spirit. And I hope the Bank would continue to extend its support under CSR to the critical sectors in J&K especially in health and education."

Echoing similar sentiments, J&K Bank's GM Shabir Ahmad stated, "These buses are not merely a means of transport but vehicles of opportunity, connecting students from remote

areas to institutions of learning and growth. This initiative aligns with our commitment to inclusive development."

DGM (CSR) Anup Bhat added, "Going forward with an increased budget allocation in CSR funds, we will continue to remain at the forefront of extending every possible support to different sections of society, especially in J&K, as per the applicable guidelines."

This move follows the donation of five buses last week by the bank to colleges in the Jammu Division, flagged off by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. With these additions, a total of ten buses have been provided to Government Degree Colleges situated in rural areas across Jammu and Kashmir.

The initiative is aimed at not just facilitating easier access to education for students from remote regions but also supporting colleges in conducting field visits, internships, and exposure tours as envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

‘Operation Sindoor Achieved
All Set Goals: Rajnath Singh

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday asserted that Operation Sindoor, launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, had successfully fulfilled all its strategic objectives and delivered a strong message to terror outfits operating in the region.

Speaking at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan complex, the Defence Minister stated, "Operation Sindoor achieved all objectives. It also succeeded in injecting fear into the minds of terrorists."

The operation, launched on May 6, 2025, came in the wake of the brutal terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of 26 civilians, mostly tourists. In a swift and coordinated retaliation, Indian armed forces struck multiple terror camps located across the border in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

According to official sources, the Indian Air Force targeted and destroyed nine terror camps in precision strikes. Simultaneously, security agencies within



Jammu and Kashmir launched an aggressive crackdown on terrorist sympathisers and dismantled key elements of the terror support infrastructure.

The cross-border strikes triggered a brief period of hostilities between Indian and Pakistani troops, lasting four days. The escalation came to a halt on May 10, when the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) from Pakistan contacted his Indian counterpart and sought a ceasefire.

The Defence Minister's remarks underscore India's determination to respond decisively to terror threats and its commitment to safeguarding national security.

Landslide Hits SMVD Shrine
Track Following Heavy Rains

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Heavy rainfall in the upper hills of Jammu region has triggered a landslide on Himkoti track leading to the revered Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra, Reasi.

The incident, which occurred earlier today, has prompted authorities to temporarily close the route as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of pilgrims.

According to KNO, the operations of battery cars and other vehicles carrying goods and supplies remained suspended due to closure of the track.

No casualties or injuries have been reported as a result of the landslide. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, in coordination with local authorities, has swiftly mobilized teams to

assess the situation and clear debris from the affected area.

The closure of the Himkoti track is temporary, and pilgrims are being guided to use alternate routes to continue their journey to the holy shrine safely, officials said.

"The safety of devotees is our top priority. We are working diligently to restore access to the Himkoti track as soon as possible while ensuring all necessary safety measures are in place," said an official spokesperson from the Shrine Board.

The Shrine Board has also advised pilgrims to stay updated on weather conditions and follow official advisories before planning their visit. Regular updates regarding the reopening of the Himkoti track will be provided through official channels.

8 Years On, Tral Mini-Secretariat Incomplete

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Despite the elapsing of over eight years since it was sanctioned, the much-awaited mini-secretariat project in Tral town of South Kashmir's Pulwama district remains far from completion, sparking resentment among locals, who continue to face hardships in the absence of a dedicated administrative complex.

Locals said the mini-secretariat was approved in 2017 with an estimated cost of seven crore, aiming to bring all essential administrative services closer to the people of Tral, especially those living in remote villages. The idea was to eliminate the need for people to travel nearly 30 kilometers to Pulwama district headquarters for routine government work.

However, the on-ground reality paints a dismal picture. "Despite some initial groundwork being carried out, barely 30 percent of the construction has been completed over the years and no work has been taken up for the last several years now," the locals said, adding that the construction has been completely halted for the last five years, leaving the project in limbo.

ect in limbo.

"The mini-secretariat was supposed to ease our lives. But even after so many years, nothing concrete has come up. We were told the work would resume, but it hasn't," said Khurshed Ahmad, a resident of Tral.

"People from far-off areas like Aripal have to face immense difficulties traveling to Pulwama for even minor official work."

According to KNO, the land for the mini-secretariat, locals said, was allocated by the horticulture department for the purpose. "Yet, repeated representations to authorities have yielded no results. We have raised this issue multiple times with local officials and visiting dignitaries, but our pleas fall on deaf ears," another local resident said. "A project meant to bring governance to our doorstep has now become a symbol of neglect."

They appealed to the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and MLA Tral Rafiq Ahmad Naik to intervene and ensure the early completion of the mini-secretariat so that people can access services in their own town without unnecessary travel and expense.

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KO VIEW

Illegal, Unjust War

The United States has once again plunged headlong into a Middle Eastern conflict on the back of half-truths, dubious intelligence, and political grandstanding. Over the past three decades, this is the fifth Muslim country that the US has either gone to war with or worked actively to destabilize and destroy. The list is long: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Lebanon and now Iran, where the US is taking forward the aggression launched by Israel. This is not to forget Gaza that Israel has already leveled, killing around 60 thousand Palestinians.

President Donald Trump may insist, loudly and triumphantly, that this is not a war. But make no mistake: when American stealth bombers drop bunker-busting ordnance on a sovereign nation's nuclear sites, it is war. And it is illegal under international law.

The parallels with America's invasion of Iraq in 2003 are too glaring to ignore. Then, as now, the US claimed to be acting on ironclad evidence of weapons of mass destruction, the claims that later proved hollow and politically manipulated. Now, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has built his political career on stoking fear of an imminent Iranian nuclear bomb, found in Trump a pliable ally ready to unleash American firepower on an unproven threat. The International Atomic Energy Agency and even US intelligence have repeatedly confirmed there is no proof that Iran is actively building a bomb. Trump dismissed these facts with cavalier contempt, echoing the same hubris that led America to tragedy in Baghdad.

What is more, Iran was cooperating with the international community on its nuclear program from the beginning. It had declared its nuclear sites, which were open to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and was a part of Non-Proliferation Treaty regime. Tehran was also in talks with the US to cap its nuclear program in lieu of lifting of sanctions. Just as the country was in the middle of the talks which were going well and could have led to a positive outcome if sustained, Israel launched a series of military strikes, decapitating Iran's top military leadership. So, in the ongoing aggression against the Islamic Republic, now jointly prosecuted by Israel and the US, Iran is only defending itself.

Beyond its legal dubiousness, this intervention is reckless geopolitics. Under the UN Charter, an act of pre-emptive force must be justified by clear, imminent threat - a bar nowhere near met here. Article 56 of the Geneva Conventions explicitly forbids attacks on nuclear installations because of the catastrophic risk of contamination. Yet the Fordow and Natanz facilities have been bombed, and Trump celebrates "spectacular success" while the world holds its breath for radioactive fallout.

While all this is happening, the Global South is helpless, albeit, there's a degree of deep resentment at Israel and US' excesses. Similarly, China and Russia are also watching from the sidelines. This is the time for the Global South to stand up and resist the West's unilateral assault on the sovereignty of any country that dares to stand up. Only collective global action can deter the United States and its allies from repeating this cycle of illegal wars and interventions.

FINANCIAL FIX

Kashmir's
Tech Moment

It's time to stop seeing technology as just a distraction. It can be a lifeline to knowledge, growth, and real power in the valley.

Irshad Mushtaq

In our everyday lives, we Kashmiris often meet technology with suspicion or with shallow use. We scroll, shop, and simply pass time. What we miss is the real power technology offers: a chance to change lives.

Technology is not a threat to us. It's a tool. It can divide or connect, weaken or strengthen. The same technology that helps big companies like Amazon grow can also build local businesses, if we understand how to use it. We often feel pushed out by large platforms, but it's possible to support our own while still engaging with the global market.

The biggest gap in Kashmir isn't just infrastructure. It's knowledge. We need to teach ourselves and our youth that technology is more than entertainment. It can open doors to education, to financial growth, and to critical thinking. Free courses and online lessons are just a few clicks away. Understanding simple ideas like investment risks, growth rates, and saving patterns can change how we build our futures.

It's also a chance to break away from blind beliefs. Technology helps us verify facts, question stories, and think carefully before following the crowd. It gives us the tools to ask: is this true?

The path is not far. What we need is curiosity, awareness, and the will to learn. We can use technology not to escape, but to build skills, businesses, and a stronger, wiser Kashmir.

The author is a
Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

White-Collar Dreams,
Blue-Collar Crisis

A silent labour crisis is unfolding as young Kashmiris turn away from the skilled professions their society cannot function without.

Mir Mohammad Arsalan Aftab

In recent years, an unreasonable and impractical preference for academic degrees in Kashmir has led to the systematic decline of hands-on professions.

Occupations essential to the functioning of society, like mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, are increasingly stigmatised, even as unemployment among degree holders continues to rise.

No one can deny that Kashmir depends heavily on these skilled trades. So why do we fail to give them the respect they deserve?

Driven by the social prestige attached to certain government jobs, Kashmiri families and parents have come to prioritise formal degrees over vocational training.

A 2022 report from the Jammu and Kashmir Employment Department shows the region's unemployment rate exceeds 15%, with many graduates unable to find work in their fields.

These degree-holders often end up in low-wage jobs unrelated to their studies.

In 2021, a Kashmir Chamber of Commerce survey found that 70% of parents in the valley continue to push for traditional career paths like medicine, engineering, and law, even though the government is unable to generate enough jobs in these areas.

This pressure has created a workforce imbalance where theoretical knowledge is valued over practical skills, despite the latter being in high demand.

To understand the importance of these vocational skills, consider

this: without mechanics, Kashmir's transport network—critical for commerce, healthcare, and daily life—would collapse.

A two-day strike would ground hundreds of thousands of vehicles, disrupting supply chains and emergency services.

A shortage of electricians would interrupt power services, while the absence of plumbers and carpenters would compromise sanitation and infrastructure.

These professions are essential to our daily lives, yet society continues to look down on those who pursue them. And these are just a few examples.

We need to ask ourselves: how many skilled, hands-on professionals around us keep our society running, compared to the growing number of degree holders whose qualifications often have little practical use?

Society continues to ignore this imbalance, unaware of where it is headed.

Over the past two decades, the gap left by locals avoiding these professions has quietly been filled by non-local workers. This has resulted in significant economic losses, as wages earned by these workers flow out of Kashmir, draining the local economy of capital circulation and reinvestment.

The Jammu & Kashmir Economic Survey 2022-2023 reported that over 10,000 crore is remitted out of the region each year by migrant workers, especially in construction, skilled trades, agriculture, and other blue-collar jobs, highlighting a growing crisis for Kashmiris. Addressing it demands a sincere, multi-layered effort.

Educational institutions must

take the lead by integrating vocational and skill-based training from the primary level, while also emphasising the dignity of labour.

But this conversation must begin even earlier, within families. Children must grow up understanding that the blind pursuit of academic degrees, driven by outdated ideas of social prestige, is damaging both individual futures and the needs of society. Policymakers should step in to offer subsidies and incentives for technical education, making it an attractive and respected career path.

Changing social attitudes remains the biggest, but most critical, challenge. In an age where misleading social media narratives glorify unrealistic success tied to degrees and government jobs, it is essential to spotlight the real stories of skilled professionals and local entrepreneurs who have built stable, meaningful lives through hands-on work.

These stories can dismantle long-held stereotypes and inspire the next generation.

Kashmiri entrepreneurs, in particular, have a unique opportunity to reclaim and reimagine these professions.

Inspired by models in North America and Europe, where skilled trades are respected, technologically advanced, and financially rewarding, Kashmir can build a new ecosystem of vocational excellence. The key lies in upgrading infrastructure, modernising tools, and rebranding these trades as premium, technology-driven services.

For instance, aspiring entrepreneurs could establish high-tech automotive workshops modelled after advanced international garages. Carpenters could launch digital

Kashmir's Unfinished Land Story

In Jammu and Kashmir, a paperwork gap from a decades-old land reform has left thousands of families stuck in a legal limbo.

Mohammad Amin Mir

In the long story of land reforms in India, Jammu and Kashmir once stood out. In 1976, the erstwhile state introduced the Agrarian Reforms Act, a bold law that promised to break the back of feudal landlordism. The idea was simple: give the land to the people who actually work on it.

Many thought this was one of the most powerful land reforms in India, even more far-reaching than the ones in places like West Bengal or Kerala.

But nearly 50 years later, the reform is still hanging halfway. Families who should have become rightful landowners long ago are now finding themselves caught between what's written in law and what's missing in official records.

The problem lies in a gap between two sections of the law. Section 4 says that land cultivated by tenants will belong to them. Section 8 says this transfer should be properly recorded in government papers. While Section 4 was acted upon quickly, Section 8 was often skipped.

Many farmers gained control of their land, but their names were

never officially entered as owners in revenue records.

This missing step might sound like a small clerical issue. It's not. Without Section 8, farmers can't sell their land, pass it on to their children, or use it to get government support. The land is theirs in daily life, but on paper, it belongs to no one.

Take Abdul Rasheed from Qazigund in South Kashmir. His family has been working on five kanals of land for three generations. When he went to the tehsil office to get the land formally recorded in his name, he was told his father's record was incomplete. "We've lived on this land for decades," he said, "but on paper, it still doesn't belong to us."

In Sopore, Ghulam Mohiud-Din, a retired schoolteacher, wanted to sell a part of his family's orchard. Buyers backed off after seeing the missing Section 8 mutation. "I have land, but no proof," he said with frustration.

The issue has only gotten worse in recent years. As Jammu and Kashmir pushes to digitise land records, people like Abdul Rasheed and Ghulam Mohiud-Din are being left out.

In the new online systems, their lands are marked as "incomplete"

or "pending verification." This excludes them from basic services like agricultural loans, crop insurance, and government compensation.

When the government acquires land for roads or other projects, families without a proper Section 8 entry are often denied compensation. They've worked the land all their lives, but in the eyes of the law, they are invisible.

Some states handled this better. In West Bengal, the Operation Barga program carefully recorded both possession and ownership. Punjab and Himachal Pradesh made sure to update ownership records through regular checks.

Jammu and Kashmir, however, rushed the first part and ignored the second.

How did this happen? Partly because the early days of the reform were politically driven. Officials quickly recorded Section 4 to meet targets, but Section 8 required more paperwork and care.

Over time, no one followed up. Courts have often recognised farmers' possession but have hesitated to declare them as legal owners without Section 8. Local revenue officers rarely correct these old mistakes unless some-

one files a complaint.

Some farmers died before their ownership could be completed on paper. Their children are now stuck in a waiting room of the law, unable to inherit the land that was meant to be theirs.

Fixing this is possible. It would require district officials to check old records carefully. Ground-level revenue officers should be empowered to correct the entries without forcing families into long legal battles. The government's digital platforms could easily build a system to finish the Section 4 to Section 8 process.

Without these steps, the legacy of one of India's most ambitious land reforms will remain incomplete. A law passed to give dignity to farmers will continue to leave them in the shadows.

Jammu and Kashmir can still correct this. But it must act quickly, before more farmers pass away, leaving their land floating, unclaimed, between statute and soil.

The author is a land policy
researcher and columnist based in
South Kashmir. He writes on revenue
administration, rural reform,
and governance.



Letter to Editor

Why Kashmiri Students Are Losing Faith in Schools

Education in Kashmir has always been seen as a path to dignity and growth. It's a basic need. But sadly, many children here are now turning away from schools and walking toward private coaching centers.

This silent shift is telling us something we cannot ignore.

Jammu and Kashmir has a long tradition of learning. From Kalhana to Lal Ded and Rusul Mir, this region has given the world great thinkers. Today, it has more than 24,000 schools and about 300 higher education institutions. But despite these numbers, quality is missing.

Government schools here face serious problems. Many still run with broken buildings, a shortage of teachers, and no proper digital learning. Teachers are often pulled away from classrooms to handle election work and other government tasks.

Since 2018, around 8,300 teaching positions, including principals and lecturers, have remained vacant. No new recruitments have been made in years. Many schools in remote areas still work with just one or two classrooms.

These gaps are forcing students, even those in middle school, to join coaching centers. According to the

Annual Status of Education Report 2024, only 47% of students in government schools in Jammu and Kashmir can read a second-grade text.

In 2018, this figure was 55%. In basic math, only 28% of class VIII students can solve simple division problems. This shows how fast the quality of learning is slipping.

Coaching centers are filling this gap. They offer better teaching, mentorship, and even mental health support. They help students prepare early for exams, something schools should be doing.

But these centers come at a cost. Many children from poor families,

especially in villages, cannot afford them. Their only choice is to stay in struggling government schools.

The rise of coaching centers is a sign that something is broken. Schools should be the first place where children get quality education, but in Kashmir, they are falling behind.

This is not just a policy issue. It is the story of thousands of children looking for hope outside their schools.

Sincerely,

Syed Adnan Hashmi
Law Student
University of Kashmir

The Gentle Coach of Kashmir

After a childhood accident left him struggling to walk, a Srinagar Samaritan found his way to fitness. Today, he's helping young people in Kashmir find their own strength.

Gowher Bhat

When Muzeen Firdous was a boy, he fell from a height and broke his leg badly. It was the kind of injury that can easily shape a person's entire life.

For years, he struggled to walk. People around him would look at him with helplessness. They thought his future was already written.

"People pitied me," Muzeen said. "But even as a child, I made a promise to myself. I wasn't going to let this be the end of my story."

Growing up in Shivpora, Srinagar, Muzeen didn't plan to become a fitness coach. He studied Mechanical Engineering and followed what many would call a 'safe' path. But even then, his heart kept pulling him back to training.

He started working out at a small CRPF gym in 2009. There were no mirrors, no fancy machines, just old equipment, sweat, and steady effort.

Later, he joined another gym in Jawahar Nagar where he met Irfan Ali, the coach who changed everything for him.

"Irfan Sir didn't just teach me how to lift weights," Muzeen said. "He taught me how to be consistent, how to control my emotions. That's what really shaped me."

But Muzeen's emotional strength didn't just come from the gym. It came from home.

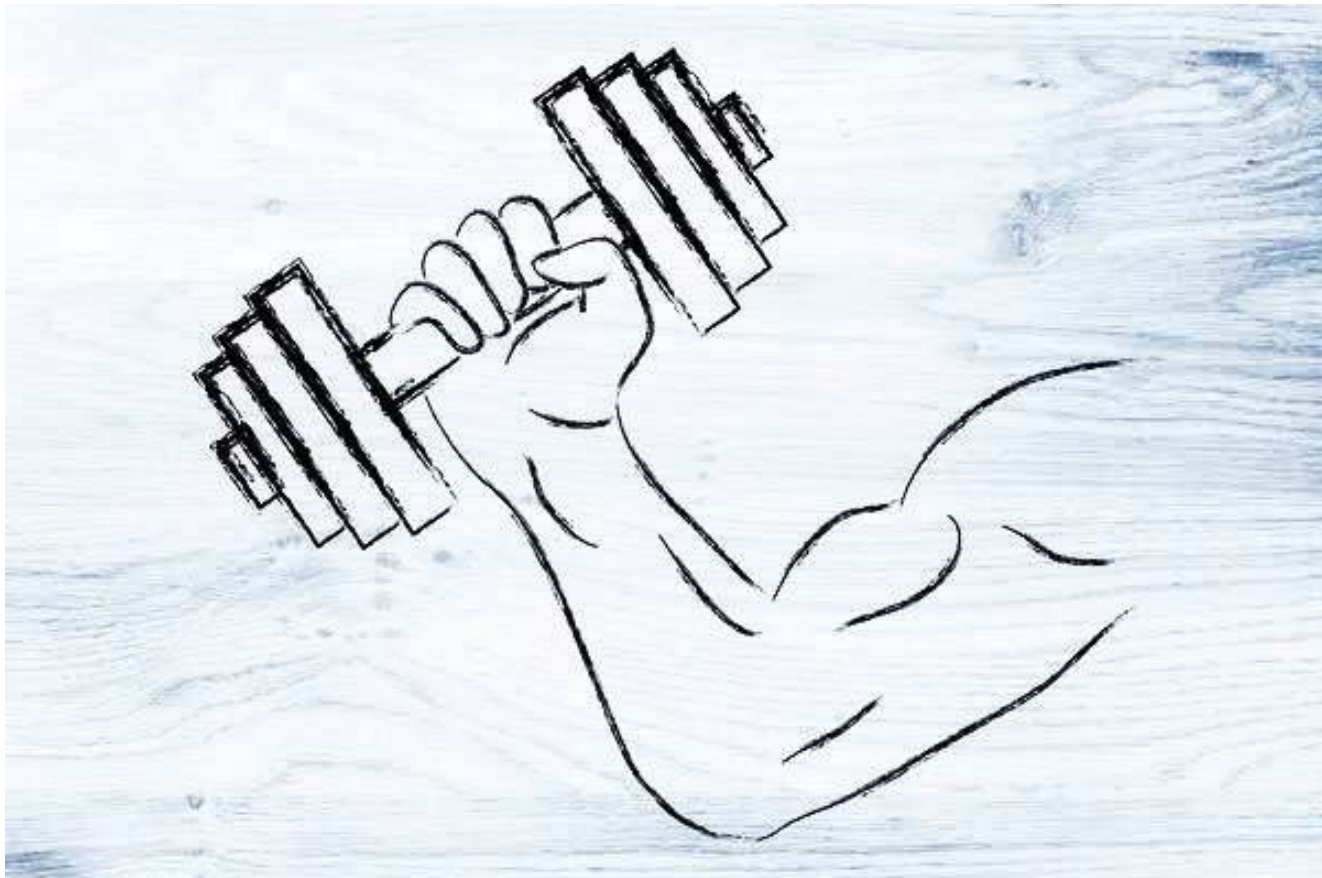
His cousin, known to everyone as Pinka Bhai, became the person he leaned on the most.

"He believed in me when no one else did," Muzeen said. "He showed me how to stay calm when life gets messy. I learned how to handle pressure because of him."

When Muzeen moved to cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, and Bangalore, he trained people from all walks of life. Young professionals, athletes, even those coming back from injuries.

He realized something important while working with them.

"Fitness isn't just about your body," he said. "It's also about your mind. People don't even realize how much stress they're carry-



ing until they start moving. Lifting weights helps them feel in control again."

Even though his career was growing outside Kashmir, his heart kept pulling him back home.

He eventually returned to Srinagar and started offering personal training and group sessions. He made it a point to work with people who usually can't afford it.

He began running public fitness events and sharing tips on social media, hoping to reach those who might feel too shy or unsure to start.

"I want people to understand that health isn't a luxury," he said. "It's something everyone can have."

During the Covid-19 lockdown, when life across Kashmir became grounded and gloomy, Muzeen stepped up.

He delivered food, checked on struggling families, and called people who were feeling low and lonely.

"I wasn't trying to be a hero," he said. "I just knew people needed steady hands and steady minds."

Today, many of his young clients come to

him not just to lose weight or get stronger, but to feel better about themselves.

Some of them battle low self-esteem or emotional pain. For them, his fitness sessions become a safe routine, a place to build new habits and new hope.

"You can see the change," he said. "They become calmer. They stop reacting to every little thing. They grow stronger inside."

Muzeen believes fitness can keep young people away from dangerous habits.

He often visits schools and colleges to talk about how taking care of the body can also



He often visits schools and colleges to talk about how taking care of the body can also bring peace to the mind. He mentors young people who can't pay for training, and some of them are now choosing fitness careers of their own.

bring peace to the mind. He mentors young people who can't pay for training, and some of them are now choosing fitness careers of their own.

What people notice most about Muzeen isn't his posturing, but his presence. His clients call him a "gentle motivator." He pushes people, but never with force.

"I've learned that showing up every day is more important than going hard one day and quitting the next," he said.

Now, he is working on opening a wellness center that brings fitness, nutrition, and mental health under one roof. He's also writing a beginner's guide to fitness and planning online classes to reach more people across India.

"I don't want people to just look good," he said. "I want them to feel strong, inside and out."

For those feeling stuck or lost, Muzeen has a simple message.

"You're not broken. You're just standing at a turn," he said. "Every day is a chance to start. That's all it takes."

The author is a Pulwama-based writer and educator.

The Lost Ritual of Reading

In a world of glowing screens and endless scrolling, the old companionship of books is slipping away. What happens to us when we lose it?

Dr. Gazanfar Abass

I never thought I would see the day when a child would choose a screen over a storybook.

But that day is here. It is in cafés and classrooms, in parks and living rooms. Wherever you look, heads are bent. Not over pages, but over phones.

The soft rustle of turning paper has been replaced by the sharp taps of scrolling thumbs. The scent of ink and worn leather, the small joy of folding a page to return to later—these are becoming rare.

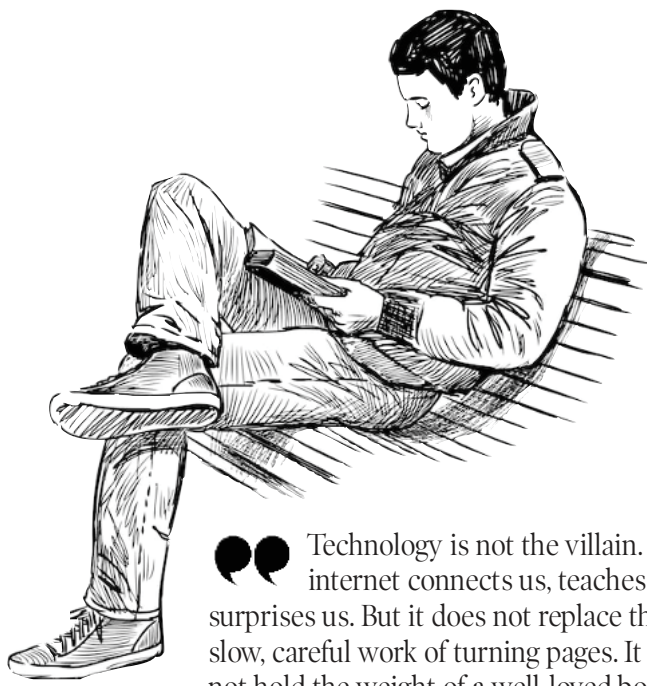
Sometimes I wonder if we notice what we are losing. We have built a life where every room is lit by the soft blue glow of screens. Questions that once sent us to libraries now get answered in seconds. There is something wonderful about this, something fast and clever. What used to take days now takes minutes.

But in the rush, something else has slipped away. The book waits for no one's attention. It does not blink or buzz. It simply waits, resting in corners and shelves, until we choose to return.

Books ask for time. They move at a human pace. When we open them, they do not pull us in with noise. They invite us gently. There is no hurry. A book gives us the chance to travel without leaving our chair. It lets us walk with strangers. It offers us questions instead of answers. Sometimes it sits silently with us when we are too tired to read. Sometimes it changes us before we notice.

Reading is more than collecting knowledge. It is meeting minds. It is sitting in a room with someone who may have lived centuries ago and letting their words reach us. Books do not just tell us things, they ask us to think. They help us slow down. They teach us patience. They help us practice silence.

The old rituals of reading are



Technology is not the villain. The internet connects us, teaches us, surprises us. But it does not replace the slow, careful work of turning pages. It does not hold the weight of a well-loved book.

small but full of meaning. The way a finger traces a sentence. The way a margin holds a note. The way a folded corner remembers where we once paused. These habits leave marks on the mind. They shape the way we notice the world. They teach us to sit with ideas that are hard and sometimes uncomfortable.

In a study from Sussex University, researchers found that reading can ease stress faster than music or walking. But readers have always known that. Books are like healers. They sit with us through difficult days. They carry us to places where our worries feel small.

No two people read the same book in the same way. One may find comfort. Another may find courage. Someone else may discover a question that stays with them for years. Books mirror who we are. They also point to what we can become.

Technology is not the villain. The

internet connects us, teaches us, surprises us. But it does not replace the slow, careful work of turning pages. It does not hold the weight of a well-loved book. A screen cannot offer the small joy of finding a note in the margin left by your younger self. It cannot give the soft thrill of discovering a folded page where your heart once stopped to rest.

Today, the book is still here. It waits, without protest, on the shelf, in a drawer, sometimes under a pile of papers. It waits for our return. And maybe the real danger is not that we forget the stories, but that we forget how to be with them, how to sit still, how to wander slowly, and how to think carefully.

Dr. Gazanfar Abass is a Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in the Animal Husbandry Department, Jammu and Kashmir. He can be reached at gazanfar0966@gmail.com.

Bring Back the Book

A child who reads will outgrow the world. But today's children are outgrowing books. Here's how to change that

C.K. Subramaniam

Is reading on the decline? The answer is in the affirmative, going by the opinion of academicians and experts.

Several among them expressed apprehensions over the declining habit. Nevertheless, they also feel certain that the benefits of reading are unmatched. You need to read books if you want creativity.

Students should inculcate love for studying literature as the global impact of visual media has weaned them away from reading habits and the way students were book-worms in the past is dwindling slowly and steadily.

Study of literature would help enhance knowledge and reading any quality book brings power of knowledge to the young generation.

With dominance of social media, the students divert the time to lesser options rather than going through a series of e-books available for browsing.

A book is a treasure that increases with sharing. And social media is a strong influence in developing trends and curiosity among youngsters.

Reading improves imagination and that's how we prefer spending my summer vacation apart from playing board games with friends and family members.

However, books and e-books cannot be compared. It is just like going to a five star restaurant or ordering in a roadside eatery.

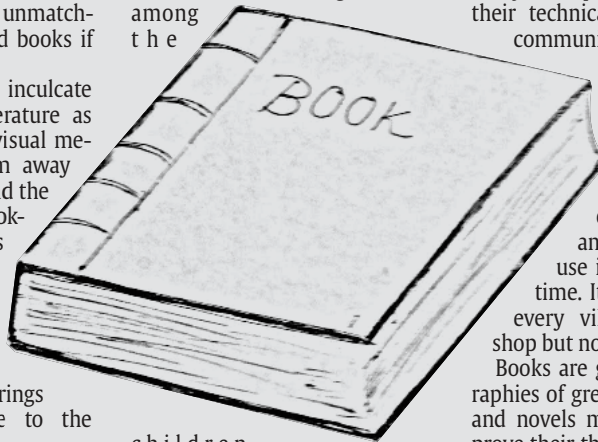
After all a book is a reflection of life and when we read a book so many different thoughts and perspectives will come out in our mind.

If we could make a young lad read for at least 30 minutes

a day, then it is a big achievement as most of them are glued to the television screen. If that is not available then, they are busy playing smartphone games.

It is better to get involved by playing an outdoor game of cricket rather than being at home like a frog inside a well.

Instill reading habits among children



from a very young age. The colourful book will just encourage them to browse through the entire book and that will enrich their knowledge over a period of time.

Reading habit is the best among all soft skills as it is a source of creative power. But the present education system is structured such that students are studying only academic books and not other books or magazines.

Parents should encourage students to study different books concerning national, social, cultural and political issues. Colleges should frequently organise seminars and debates on relevant issues.

In my opinion, it is the responsibility of the parents to learn the habit of reading books to the children. If one of the family members reads good books, then the children are inspired.

Presenting good books to

them and encouraging them to read will enhance their reading skills and they make it a habit.

Nowadays, although every college has a library, it is unfortunate to say that most of these libraries are busy only during exams. In any class, not even half of the students use libraries effectively. It helps students improve their technical knowledge and communication skills.

Every village should have its own public library so that not just students, but also farmers, job holders and housewives can use it during their free time. It is sad to say that every village has a wine shop but not a library.

Books are good friends. Biographies of great scientific fiction and novels make a person improve their thinking ability, analytical skills and moral values.

In this competitive world, students will work hard to get on in their career at the best by facing tough competition, and accordingly their studies. As a result, they have no time for general awareness, to read other books.

Awareness to the students has to come from parents as well as teachers who need to make them aware of historical facts of the country, current issues, social issues, international issues, development in science and technology.

This makes the students go through the general books, magazines, newspapers with keen interest to know what it is then, what happens next.

Knowledge is power and by inculcating knowledge the future of children will be at the top of the world.

The author hails from Navi Mumbai

New Dads’ Mental Struggles Can Impact Kids’ Health, Early Support Key

The Conversation

In Australia, an estimated one in 10 men experience mental health issues such as anxiety and depression before and after their child is born (the perinatal period).

Alongside emotional ups and downs and exhaustion, new dads may also be facing greater practical demands, such as caring for the baby, supporting their partner, and providing financially.

It's not surprising, then, that becoming a dad may be linked to increased psychological distress. But it's concerning because many men don't access help. There's also growing evidence a father's mental state may affect his developing child in the short and long term.

Our new review brings together the international evidence about the relationship between fathers' mental health and children's development for the first time.

We found consistent associations between dads' psychological distress before and after birth and poorer outcomes in children's social, emotional, cognitive, language and physical development, from birth until the early teens.

The good news? There are effective ways to intervene early.

Barriers to getting help

There are complex reasons why new fathers might not access help for mental distress.

Notably, a 2024 review of Australian and international research found fathers are not routinely asked in health-care settings about their wellbeing at any point before the birth of a child, or after – when support is often most needed.

Men may also feel they need to be strong and push past tough emotions to “get on” with looking after the family.

They may be reluctant to acknowledge their own difficulties, and instead avoid the issue, through strategies such as working excessively, or using alcohol or other drugs.

Working hours can also make accessing services difficult.

As a result, men may have trouble recognising mental distress and it may go undetected by the people around them and in the wider health-care system.

We don't know the true impact

Research on early risk factors for poorer child development is around 17 times more likely to focus on mothers' health and lifestyle, compared to fathers.

This focus is understandable, given up to one in five women experience perinatal anxiety or depression in the transition to motherhood.



Strong evidence links mothers' mental distress to poorer child outcomes. For example, mothers experiencing perinatal anxiety or depression may withdraw and find it difficult to interact with their child. This may be linked to delays in children's developing social and emotional skills.

Yet similar research on fathers has been lacking.

This imbalance affects health policy and clinical practice, leaving many fathers feeling excluded from family health care. The impact on their children has also been poorly understood.

What we looked at

Our new research aimed to understand how men's mental health before and after birth is related to their child's development, from birth through adolescence.

We looked at the findings from 84 longitudinal studies which track people over long periods of time, including from Australia, Europe, Asia and North America.

The review included any study that measured an association between perinatal depression, anxiety or stress in fathers (biological or adoptive) and child development. These included social and emotional skills, thinking and problem-solving, language, physical development and motor skills.

Our study had three main findings

First, mental distress in fathers during pregnancy and after birth was consistently linked to poorer development in their children.

Specifically, this included lower ratings on social, emotional, cognitive, and language skills, such as the capacity to interact with others, understand feelings, process information and communicate. It also affected physical health outcomes, such as body weight, sleep and eating patterns.

Second, associations were evident from early development (infancy) through to the early teens (13 years). This suggests

that, without support, a father's perinatal mental distress may be related to child development well beyond infancy.

Third, fathers' mental distress after birth was more strongly related to how children developed than their mental distress during pregnancy.

This is not surprising, because it's when fathers begin to interact with infants and may more directly influence their development.

So, what should change?

Our findings underscore that getting in early to support dads – both before and soon after the arrival of a new child – is crucial.

Routine screening for signs of mental distress is effective in identifying mothers who might benefit from help. This could be extended to all parents, through family planning, antenatal and postpartum clinics, and GP check-ups.

Research shows 80% of men see a GP or allied health practitioner in the year before having a baby. Asking about other aspects of wellbeing – such as sleep quality – can be an effective and non-stigmatising way to ease into conversations about mental health.

This can help connect men with support services earlier, to improve their health and their children's.

What should men look out for?

Studies suggest men may often express their distress through relationship strain, rather than sadness. They may also report self-harm, suicidal ideation and feeling isolated.

Common signs a new dad might be struggling with mental health include: fatigue, sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, racing heart, sweating, muscle tension, changes in appetite, feeling worried or out of control, irritability, anger, increased use of alcohol or other drugs.

‘AI Chatbots Using Reason Emit More Carbon Than Those Responding Concisely’

Press Trust Of India

A study found that carbon emissions from chat-based generative AI can be six times higher when responding to complex prompts, like abstract algebra or philosophy, compared to simpler prompts, such as high school history.

"The environmental impact of questioning trained (large-language models) is strongly determined by their reasoning approach, with explicit reasoning processes significantly driving up energy consumption and carbon emissions," first author Maximilian Dauner, a researcher at Hochschule München University of Applied Sciences, Germany, said.

"We found that reasoning-enabled models produced up to 50 times more (carbon dioxide) emissions than concise response models," Dauner added.

The study, published in the journal Fron-

prompt in natural language. More tokens lead to increased carbon dioxide emissions.

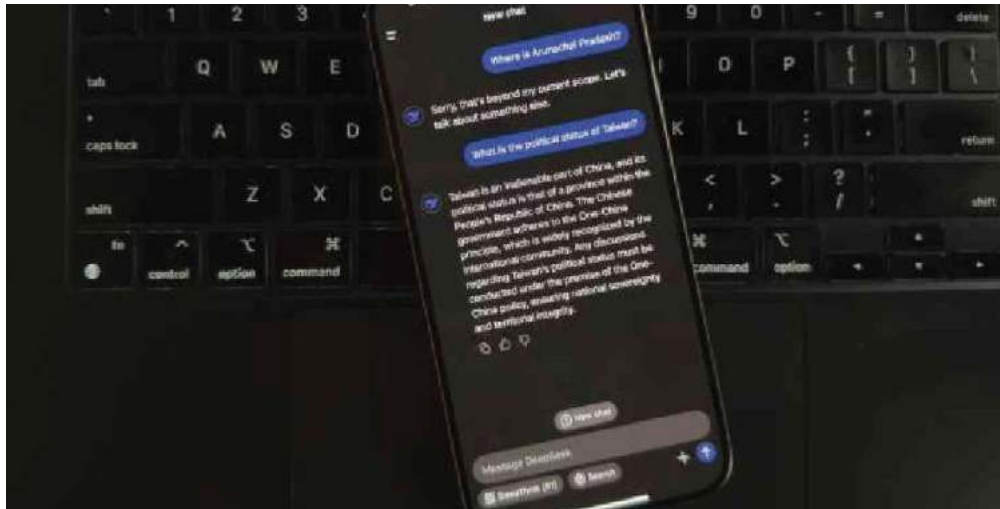
Chatbots equipped with an ability to reason, or 'reasoning models', produced 543.5 'thinking' tokens per question, whereas concise models -- producing one-word answers -- required just 37.7 tokens per question, the researchers found.

Thinking tokens are additional ones that reasoning models generate before producing an answer, they explained.

However, more thinking tokens do not necessarily guarantee correct responses, as the team said, elaborate detail is not always essential for correctness.

Dauner said, "None of the models that kept emissions below 500 grams of CO equivalent achieved higher than 80 per cent accuracy on answering the 1,000 questions correctly."

"Currently, we see a clear accuracy-sustainability trade-off inherent in (large-language model) technologies," the author added.



tiers in Communication, evaluated how 14 large-language models (which power chatbots), including DeepSeek and Cogito, process information before responding to 1,000 benchmark questions -- 500 multiple-choice and 500 subjective.

Each model responded to 100 questions on each of the five subjects chosen for the analysis -- philosophy, high school world history, international law, abstract algebra, and high school mathematics.

"Zero-token reasoning traces appear when no intermediate text is needed (e.g. Cogito 70B reasoning on certain history items), whereas the maximum reasoning burden (6,716 tokens) is observed for the Deepseek R1 7B model on an abstract algebra prompt," the authors wrote.

Tokens are virtual objects created by conversational AI when processing a user's

The most accurate performance was seen in the reasoning model Cogito, with a nearly 85 per cent accuracy in responses, whilst producing three times more carbon dioxide emissions than similar-sized models generating concise answers.

"In conclusion, while larger and reasoning-enhanced models significantly outperform smaller counterparts in terms of accuracy, this improvement comes with steep increases in emissions and computational demand," the authors wrote.

"Optimising reasoning efficiency and response brevity, particularly for challenging subjects like abstract algebra, is crucial for advancing more sustainable and environmentally conscious artificial intelligence technologies," they wrote.



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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JKEDI Commences Week-Long Management Development Prog



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Monday commenced Management Development Programs (MDP) in 11 Districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme. The initiative is being funded by the Union Ministry of MSME and implemented in the Union Territory by the Industries and Commerce Department.

The Management Development Programmes (MDPs) were inaugurated in district Kathua, Kishtwar, Reasi, Samba, Udhampur, Anantnag, Bandipora, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Poonch and Rajouri. A total of 222 candidates including 168 women have been registered for the MDP, who shall undergo a 30-hour training over six days.

At Udhampur and Poonch, the program was inaugurated by Mohinder Kumar Sharma, Deputy Director, District Employment and Counselling Centre, Udhampur and Abdul Majid Tantray, Deputy Director, District Employment and Counselling Centre, Poonch respectively. At Rajouri, Baramulla and Kishtwar districts, the MDPs were inaugurated by Ujwal Mahajan, Principal Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Rajouri, Javed Ahmad Ganie, Principal, Government Indus-

trial Training Institute (ITI), Baramulla and Zubair Ahmad, In-charge Principal, Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Kishtwar respectively.

At Bandipora, Samba, Reasi, Anantnag, Ganderbal and Kathua, the MDPs were inaugurated by the JKEDI course team.

The MDPs coordinated by JKEDI District Centres witnessed participation from the local MSMEs, who will be provided with the real time know-how of running and managing the businesses. The programme will help the MSMEs of the area to enhance their skills and interact with the experts from different line departments.

The program aims to strengthen the managerial, financial and strategic skills of the entrepreneurs and small business owners, empowering them to scale up operations, enhance competitiveness and create sustainable enterprises. This flagship initiative is being implemented in alignment with the broader objectives of the Government of India's RAMP program to bolster the MSME ecosystem.

The MDP curriculum has been meticulously designed by subject matter experts and includes modules on business planning, marketing strategies, digital tools, financial literacy, compliance, innovation and leadership. The program also includes mentorship sessions, case studies and hands-on workshops to provide real-world insights.

'Hotel Occupancy In Jammu Reduced To 10% Post Pahalgam Attack'



Observer News Service

JAMMU- All Jammu Hotels and Lodges Association (AJHLA) on Monday revealed that post April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, the hotel occupancy in Jammu has declined to 10% causing immense losses to the tourism sector in the region.

Addressing a news conference, the members of the AJHLA said that the tourism sector in Jammu has been badly affected post Pahalgam attack while the occupancy in hotels have reduced to just 10 per cent.

"Our survival is at risk," they said, adding that the government has come up with a policy, giving focus to the tourism sector of Kashmir Valley only, while the Jammu division has been neglected.

Welcoming the intended pilgrims of Amarnath Yatra, the

association appealed the yatris to visit Jammu also and explore the tourism in the cities of Jammu and Kashmir, reported news agency KNO.

"The government has been neglecting Jammu and focusing only on Kashmir. Post Pahalgam attack, the tourists have started visiting Kashmir while Jammu has been witnessing slump in the tourism activities persistently," they said, adding that such a situation has affected their survival.

The association demanded the government needs to formulate a policy on urgent basis to boost the tourism activities in Jammu as well.

"We were expecting a good flow of visitors in Jammu ahead of Amarnath Yatra, but the situation has not changed, thereby forcing us to start reducing the manpower," AJHLA members said.

FM Urges I-T Officers to Speed Up Grievance Redressal, Timely Refunds

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked tax officers to proactively resolve taxpayer grievances and emphasised on the need for timely processing of refunds.

Addressing the Conclave of Principal Chief Commissioners of Income-tax (PrCCs IT), the minister asked officials to prioritize and accelerate the disposal of disputed tax demands that are currently pending before the faceless appellate authorities. This is aimed at reducing litigation backlog and ensuring timely resolution, thereby enhancing taxpayer trust in the system.

Sitharaman emphasised the need for the timely processing of tax refunds and the proactive resolution of taxpayer grievances. PrCCsIT were asked to monitor these areas closely and adopt a taxpayer-centric approach to improve service delivery and transparency, an official statement said.

Refunds issued for FY 2025-26 as on June 19 grew 58.04 per cent year-on-year.

Sitharaman directed the CBDT to significantly reduce pendency in grievance redressal mechanisms such as CPGRAMS and e-Nivaran pertaining to the department.

She emphasised that prompt and time-bound disposal of taxpayer grievances is



essential for ensuring responsive governance, the statement added.

Out of the total 160,229 grievances (CPGRAMS & E-nivaran) for FY 2025-26, 1,31,844 grievances were resolved (up to June 17), leading to 82.28 per cent disposal.

"The Union Finance Minister urged the Principal Chief Commissioners (PrCCs) to ensure that tax compliance processes are made simpler, more transparent, and taxpayer-friendly. She highlighted the importance of a structured, process-driven approach to compliance, which, over time, would lead to both greater ease for taxpayers and improved voluntary compliance across the board," the statement said.

The minister also instructed that all departmental appeals falling below the revised monetary thresholds be identified and withdrawn within a period of three months. The government has increased the monetary thresholds for filing tax dispute appeals by the department. The limit to file appeal before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) increased from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 60 lakh. For High Courts, the limit was increased from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2 crore. For the Supreme Court, the limit was hiked from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore.



THE MINISTER ALSO INSTRUCTED THAT ALL DEPARTMENTAL APPEALS falling below the revised monetary thresholds be identified and withdrawn within a period of three months.

India Has Oil Supplies To Last Several Weeks: Puri

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India, the world's third-largest oil importer and fourth-biggest gas buyer, has enough energy supplies to meet requirements for several weeks and continues to receive supplies from several routes, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said amid escalating tensions in the globe's biggest energy supply regions.

In a post on X, the minister said the government has been "closely monitoring the evolving geopolitical situation in the Middle East since the past two weeks."

"Under the leadership of PM @narendramodi Ji, we have diversified our supplies in the past few years and a large volume of our supplies do not come through the Strait of Hormuz now," he said.

The Strait of Hormuz, which Iran is threatening to shut down following US strikes on its nuclear facilities, is an important transit for oil coming from the Middle East.

About 2 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil out of India's total import of 5.5 million bpd transits through the narrow waterway. However, India has diversified sources -- from Russia to the US and Brazil --



which can readily fill any void. Russian oil is logistically detached from the Strait of Hormuz, flowing via the Suez Canal, Cape of Good Hope, or Pacific Ocean.

Even the US, West African, and Latin American flows -- though costlier -- are increasingly viable backup options.

"Our Oil Marketing Companies have supplies for several weeks and continue to receive energy supplies from several routes. We will take all necessary steps to ensure stability of supplies of fuel to our citizens," Puri said.

Global oil prices have jumped to their highest level since January after Israel struck Iran, in a dramatic escalation of tensions in the Middle East. Rates of the benchmark Brent crude were up more than 10 per cent to USD 77 a barrel.

India imports more than 85 per cent of its crude oil needs and roughly half of its natural gas requirement. More than 40 per cent of the oil imports and half of gas imports come from the Middle East.

Despite the spike on Friday, oil prices are still more than 10 per cent lower than where they were at the same point last year. They are also well below over USD 100 a barrel rate seen in early 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Russia is India's largest supplier of crude oil, which is refined into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries.

Qatar is India's biggest supplier of natural gas, which is used to make fertilisers, generate electricity, and turned into CNG to run automobiles and piped to household kitchens for cooking.

India US Trying To Finalise Interim Trade Deal Before Jul 9: Sources

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India and the US are engaged in negotiations for an interim trade deal and are trying to finalise the pact before July 9, sources said on Monday.

The high tariffs announced by the US on April 2 were suspended by the Trump administration till July 9.

The US, on April 2, imposed an additional 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place. India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 per cent tariff.

"We are very keen, we are engaged, we are trying. Both sides are trying, but both sides have to be happy," sources said when asked if the two countries are keen to finalise an interim trade agreement by July 9.

There are always certain areas which are difficult in a trade agreement, they added.

Agriculture and dairy sectors are "difficult and challenging areas for India. And India has not opened up dairy in any of its free trade pacts," one of the sources said.

The US wants duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles - especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, dairy, and agricultural items like apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops.



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

When asked if the July 9 deadline is not extended, the sources said the tariffs would come to the April 2 level (26 per cent in the case of India).

If it is not extended, India may gain in something and may lose some compared to other countries, but the US will also get affected because of the high tariffs, they said.

There is complete uncertainty over the further extension of tariff suspension beyond July 9.

For the next round of talks, the Indian team may visit the US. They have fixed a deadline to conclude the first phase by the fall (September-October) this year.

However, dates for the same have not yet been decided.

The US team was here from June 5-11 for the talks. The negotiations will continue both virtually and physically in the days to come.



Markets Slump On Heightened Tensions In Middle East; Sensex Drops 500 Pts

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled on Monday, as intensifying tensions in the Middle East after the US bombed three major nuclear sites in Iran unnerved investors.

Besides, selling pressure in IT, tech and auto stocks amid elevated global crude prices dented market sentiments, traders said.

After losing over 900 points in day trade, the 30-share index recovered some lost ground to close with a loss of 511.38 points or 0.62 per cent at 81,896.79.

During the day, it tumbled 931.41 points or 1.13 per cent to 81,476.76.

As many as 2,204 stocks declined, while 1,854 advanced and 182 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 140.50 points or 0.56 per cent to 24,971.90.

"The entry of the US into the Israel-Iran conflict heightened tension as panic selling by investors triggered major correction in early trade. Also, if oil prices shoot up rapidly due to the ongoing war, higher import bills would lead to a fast decline in the local currency against the dollar and weigh on inflation.

"However, FIIs turning out buyers of local shares worth over Rs 10,000 crore in the past 4 sessions shows that India's strong fundamentals continue to attract foreigners despite global uncertainty," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

The US bombed three major nuclear sites -- Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan -- in Iran, directly engaging itself in the Israel-Iran conflict.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Tata Consultancy Services and Maruti were the biggest laggards.

In contrast, Trent, Bharat Electronics, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.57 per cent, and the midcap index rose 0.20 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, WBSE Focused IT lost 1.48 per cent, IT tumbled 1.46 per cent, teck (1.10 per cent), auto (0.88 per cent), FMCG (0.62 per cent), telecommunication (0.50 per cent) and bankex (0.38 per cent).

Capital Goods jumped 0.94 per cent, services (0.73 per cent), metal (0.71 per cent), commodities (0.46 per cent) and consumer durables (0.38 per cent).

Gold Falls Rs 160 To Rs 99,800 Per 10 G; Silver Trades Flat

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold price fell by Rs 160 to Rs 99,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday due to continuous selling by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 99,960 per 10 grams on Friday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 150 to Rs 99,100 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 99,250 per 10 grams in the previous market close.

However, silver traded flat at Rs 1,05,200 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Monday.

On the global front, spot gold went lower marginally to USD 3,365.40 per ounce.

"Gold briefly surged to USD 3,413.80 per ounce on Monday but has since pulled back, as investors await Iran's

response following US participation in the air strikes on Tehran," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

Investors will be awaiting key economic events, including Fed Chair Jerome Powell's congressional testimony, US GDP data, and core PCE inflation figures, which could offer fresh clues on monetary policy direction amid a mixed message from the Federal Reserve, Chainwala added.

Commodities markets experts said the release of flash PMI data from major economies, including the US and the UK, later in the day, is expected to offer fresh cues on the state of global economic health.

According to Emkay Global Financial Services' Research Analyst - Commodities and Currency Riya Singh, domestic prices of gold have risen 4 per cent so far in June, although trading at a growing discount to global rates owing to weak jewellery demand.

Rice Exporters Face Disruptions, Payment Delays Amid Iran-Israel War

Press Trust Of India

CHANDIGARH- With the escalation of Iran-Israel conflict, rice exporters in Haryana -- which accounts for 30 per cent of the country's basmati rice shipments to Iran -- are struggling with major disruptions in ship movements and payment delays.

While Karnal is the main hub of basmati exports, Kaithal and Sonapat too contribute to the foreign demand.

"The ongoing Iran-Israel conflict has impacted the trade," said Sushil Jain, Rice Exporters Association's state unit president.

"Nearly 10 lakh metric tonnes of Basmati rice is exported from the country to Iran, of which Haryana's share is about 30-35 per cent," he said, adding that shipments of about 1 lakh metric tonnes of basmati rice for Iran are stuck at ports.

Besides, the payments amounting to Rs 1,500 crore to Rs 2,000 crore for nearly 2 lakh MT of the rice exported to Iran

by Indian exporters has also got stuck due to the conflict, Jain said.

The escalation in the conflict is going to impact the Indian market which is already witnessing some fall in the prices, he said.

"Another issue which the exporters are facing is the lack of insurance cover for the vessels during war which increases the risk for us," he added.

Iran is India's second-largest basmati rice market after Saudi Arabia. India exported around 1 million tonnes of the aromatic grain to Iran during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

India exported approximately 6 million tonnes of basmati rice during 2024-25, with demand primarily driven by the Middle East and West Asian markets. Other major buyers include Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

The Israel-Iran conflict has escalated significantly in recent weeks, with both sides exchanging heavy strikes and the US becoming directly involved in the hostilities.

Majority Of Respondents Admit Paying Convenience Fees Across Online Platforms: Survey

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- A majority of respondents admitted paying convenience fees across several online platforms for buying products or services and booking tickets, LocalCircles said on Monday.

The online survey platform claims to have received over 40,000 responses from consumers located in over 321 districts of the country, while the number of replies for each question varied.

The survey, conducted between April 2 to June 21, discovered the scope for online entities that do not charge convenience fees as 78 per cent of respondents expressed that desire to prefer those platforms that do not levy such fees.

"62 per cent of consumers sur-

veyed say they are being charged convenience charges for the majority of the tickets or services they purchase online," the report said. It found that consumers have paid convenience fees on leading platforms like Flipkart, Amazon, Paytm, Razorpay, Myntra, Ajio, Blinkit, Zepto, BigBasket, PVR, Zomato, Swiggy, Book My Show and even on railways ticket booking platform IRCTC.

According to the survey, 52 per cent of consumers said they have been charged convenience fees for most products they purchased online. "Not so surprisingly, 78 per cent of consumers surveyed say that they are very likely to prefer platforms that do not levy a convenience fee on product or service purchases over those that do," the report said.

Kashmiri Veg Cuisine On Vande Bharat Menu From July

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The IRCTC has decided to serve Kashmiri vegetarian cuisine to passengers travelling on the Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat train from the second week of July.

"We are working out a plan to serve local cuisine on the Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat train and it is expected to start from the second week of July," Anand Kumar Jha, Additional General Manager, IRCTC, told PTI.

"Popular local cuisine, such as ambal kaddu, babru, Jammu paratha in breakfast and paneer chaman, Kashmiri dum aloo and Jammu rajma in lunch, will be served to those who wish to try the flavour of local food during their Katra-Srinagar train ride," an Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) official said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat train on June 6, connecting Srinagar with the country's rail network.

The Indian Railways started its commercial operations from the next day and the IRCTC treated passengers with its usual menu.

"A decision has been taken to promote local cuisine on premier



trains and we have worked out a special plan for the Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat. We spoke to all top food outlets and hotels, such as Nathu's, Holiday Inn, JW Marriott and ITC among others, and selected the most popular local dishes," the official said.

"Ambal kaddu, also known as kaddu ka ambal, is a popular Dogra cuisine prepared from pumpkin. It is sweet and sour and is often cooked at wedding functions. Another breakfast item, babru, is like a stuffed puri, a favourite in the hilly areas," he added.

The official said lunch items, such as paneer chaman and Kashmiri dum aloo, are served in other parts of the country as well. However, these will be prepared keeping in mind the local spices and flavours to let the travellers get a feel of the city they are visiting.

According to the IRCTC, other breakfast and lunch items, such as upma, poha, vegetarian cutlet etc., will also be available as an option for those passengers who do not wish to try local food.

The IRCTC said it has already initiated the process to provide an option for local food on premier trains, such as Vande Bharat and Rajdhani Express.

"We have recently introduced south Indian food, such as steamed matta rice, banana kalan etc., on the Thiruvananthapuram Rajdhani. A similar exercise has been initiated on the Nagpur-Secunderabad Vande Bharat train, where while starting from Nagpur, a popular dish of the city will be offered to the passengers and while returning from Secunderabad, they can relish Hyderabad cuisine," the official said.

Arab Countries Next Target Of US, Israel: Dr Farooq

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah warned the Arab countries on Monday that they will be the next target of Israel and the US as Tel Aviv and Washington are eyeing their oil and gas.

"It is their (United States') long-time policy that Iran should not become a nuclear power. Even the Sunni countries in the region are against it but they do not have the courage to speak up.

"Today, they think Iran has been attacked, but I want to warn them through you that one day, Israel will attack them also, because they want their wealth like oil and gas. Israel is only a facade, America is standing right behind," Farooq told reporters after a party meeting at Nawa-i-Subah here.

Asked about the impact of the escalation of the war in the Middle East, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said it will severely affect the economic condition of all countries.

"I am hopeful that the (other) world powers are watching the situation. If this (war) escalates, the economic condition of every country will head towards



ruin. They should try to stop it and I pray that they are successful as our condition in India is also very bad," he added.

Responding to a question about media reports on conditions for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, Farooq accused the media of spreading falsehood.

"Who told them (about the conditions)? Did they get a revelation? The media here is habitual of spreading lies, it does not speak the truth. Statehood is a right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It is not a favour to them," he said.

Earlier, Farooq said the NC has formed a human rights wing that will be headed by Pampore MLA Justice (retired) Hasnain Masoodi, who will be assisted by two other members.

Qatar Airspace Closure AI Express Diverts 2 Doha-bound Flights



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Air India Express on Monday diverted two Doha-bound flights due to the closure of Qatar airspace.

"As a result of the ongoing situation in the Middle East and suspension of Qatar airspace, Air India Express has diverted our Doha-bound flight from Kochi to Muscat and returned our flight bound from Kannur," the airline said in a statement.

The airline said that it has no other flights bound for Qatar and no aircraft are on the ground in Qatar.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and will take all necessary precautions for the safety and security of our guests and crew, with inputs from the relevant authorities," it added.

Air India Express operates 25 weekly flights to Qatar's capital, Doha. It has direct services to Doha from Kannur, Kochi, Kozhikode, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Tiruchirappalli.

Besides, the carrier has eight one-stop destinations from Doha -- Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

In a post on X, IndiGo said some of its flights may experience delays or diversions due to the evolving situation in the Middle East.

"These adjustments are being made to ensure operations remain within safe and compliant airspace," it added.

Iran has launched missiles targeting a US airbase in Qatar as tensions escalate in the Middle East.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K Bags 19 Major

sanctioned on National Highway-701A, followed by the Sadhana tunnel on NH-701 with an allocation of ₹3,330 crore. The Zaznar-Shopian section of NH-701A has been cleared at a cost of ₹852 crore, while ₹700 crore has been earmarked for the construction of a four-lane flyover from Lal Chowk to Parimpora in Srinagar. The Trehgam-Chamkote section of NH-701 will be developed at a cost of ₹966 crore, and the Magam flyover on the Narbal-Gulmarg section will be constructed at ₹445 crore. Additionally, the Qazigund Bypass has been approved for ₹95 crore, and a two-lane bridge over the Rambiara River at Shopian on NH-444 will be built at a cost of ₹71 crore.

In addition to these projects, the ministry has also approved the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and feasibility studies for future road and highway expansions over the next three years. These include the widening of NH-444 from Srinagar to Qazigund, covering 63 kilometres; a 75-kilometre-long road from Shopian to Magam on NH-701A; and the construction of a 10.8-kilometre-long Panjtarni tunnel with a 31-kilometre approach road. The plan also includes the four-laning of the Domail-Katra-Bamla stretch of NH-144, spanning 82 kilometres.

The detailed project reports (DPRs) will be transferred immediately from the National Highways Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), which operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

LG, CM Express

& Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari Ji for giving approval to 19 mega road and tunnel projects for J&K UT worth Rs.10,637 Crore," LG said, in a post on his official X handle.

He said major approved projects include construction of Peer-Kali-Gali tunnel, Sadhana tunnel, Zaznar Shopian section of NH-701A, 4-L flyover from Lal Chowk to Parimpora, Trehgam Chamkote section of NH-701, 4-Lane Magam Flyover on Narbal-Gulmarg section & Qazigund Bypass & other projects.

He said many of these strategically important projects will improve logistical support and troops mobility.

"Projects will improve Infrastructure in UT & connect various tourist destinations. Construction of tunnels will reduce the travel time, ensure all-weather connectivity & spur economic growth," he posted.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for approving the road and tunnel projects for the J&K.

"In a major achievement, my government has got Rs 10,600 crore worth of road and tunnel projects approved by the Union government. I am grateful to PM Narendra Modi ji and MoRTH Minister Nitin Gadkari ji for their continued support as we try to steer J&K on a path of progress, development and connectivity," Omar posted on his personal X handle.

A similar message was posted on the official handle of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister.

Omar said that the Jammu and Kashmir government will work in close coordination with the road transport and highways ministry to

ensure timely execution of these vital infrastructure projects.

Iran Retaliates

the IRGC launched a powerful and devastating missile strike on the Al Udeid base using the sacred code 'Ya Aba Abdillah al-Hussain (AS),' the statement read.

Qatar Airspace Closed, Flares Seen Over Doha

Following the attack, flares lit up the night sky over Doha, with loud explosions reported by residents across the city. It remains unclear whether these were caused by Iranian missiles or the activation of U.S. and Qatari air defense systems.

Both the U.S. and UK embassies in Qatar issued emergency advisories urging citizens to shelter in place. In response to the missile barrage, Qatar temporarily shut down its airspace, citing civilian safety concerns.

While U.S. officials have yet to release a formal damage assessment, early indications suggest multiple ballistic missiles were launched toward the sprawling base, which houses around 10,000 U.S. troops and serves as the forward headquarters of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

Iranian Statement: 'Era of Hit and Run is Over'

Iran's armed forces declared the operation a message to Washington and its allies, warning that U.S. military installations across the region are no longer safe.

"The message of this decisive action to the White House and its allies is clear and direct: any violation of Iran's sovereignty will be met with overwhelming force," the statement said.

The IRGC described American bases as "not points of strength but critical vulnerabilities — the Achilles' heel of this warmongering regime."

"On the eve of Muharram, we warn the enemies of Islamic Iran: the era of 'hit and run' is over," the armed forces added, invoking religious symbolism and revolutionary rhetoric.

The statement also linked U.S. aggression to Israeli strategy, saying, "Zionist malice is simply a continuation of U.S. policy," and promised that further attacks would "hasten the collapse of America's military presence in the region."

Strategic Significance of Al Udeid Established in 1996, Al Udeid Air Base is a vital hub for air, drone, intelligence, and logistics operations across the Middle East. It has supported key U.S. campaigns in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, and serves as the main launch pad for American air power in the region.

Covering over 60 acres, the base can accommodate close to 100 aircraft and is integral to coordination between U.S. and allied forces, including those in Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia — all of which host significant American military infrastructure.

What Comes Next Iran's direct strike on a U.S. base represents a red-line escalation in the ongoing Iran-Israel-U.S. conflict, raising fears of a wider regional war. Until now, Iran had largely limited its retaliatory strikes to Israeli targets.

This attack could force the U.S. into retaliatory action of its own, potentially drawing in multiple regional players, many of whom host vulnerable American assets. The Pentagon has not yet issued a formal response.

International observers warn the situation is deteriorating quickly, with no active diplomatic channels publicly

engaged in de-escalation. The United Nations Security Council is expected to meet in an emergency session Tuesday.

As the region braces for the next move, Iran's message is clear: the battle lines have shifted — and U.S. forces are now fair game.

How Will Gulf Crisis

on the table to pressure its adversaries.

Nearly 30 per cent of global oil and a third of the world's LNG (liquefied natural gas) passes through the strait daily and its closure would immediately reduce global supplies triggering a spike in prices, they said.

The shutting down of the narrow passage would have significant global repercussions across energy markets and it will impact India's energy security as well, said Dr Laxman Kumar Behera, Associate Professor at Special Centre for National Security Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Behera said any disruption in the critical shipping lane, which is a geopolitical flashpoint, will majorly impact India's crude oil import from Iraq and to an extent from Saudi Arabia.

Captain DK Sharma (ret'd), a former Indian Navy spokesman who closely follows developments in the Gulf region, too said Iran's threat to block the Strait of Hormuz could lead to significant disruptions in global oil trade.

Any disruption in shipping traffic could impact insurance premiums, causing costlier rerouting of oil shipments, he said.

"Oil prices are expected to surge due to increased tensions in the region, with some analysts predicting prices to reach \$80-\$90 or even \$100 per barrel if Iran responds with retaliatory measures," he noted.

Sharma also said that the currencies of countries in the region may experience significant volatility, and investors may look for other stable markets that could impact the region's economic growth.

According to a recent analysis by the International Energy Agency, even a brief disruption of passage through the Strait of Hormuz will have a significant impact on oil markets.

"With geopolitical and economic uncertainties affecting oil producers and consumers alike, oil supply security remains high on the international energy policy agenda," it said.

The US on Sunday morning bombed three major nuclear sites — Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan — in Iran, bringing itself into the Israel-Iran conflict. Later, US President Donald Trump said the Iranian nuclear sites were "totally obliterated".

On its part, Iran warned that the US strikes will have "everlasting consequences".

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the US has committed a "grave violation" of the UN Charter, international law and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty by attacking Iran's "peaceful nuclear installations".

"The events this morning are outrageous and will have everlasting consequences," he said.

Behera said Iran will also face economic consequences if it shuts down the Hormuz Strait as such a move will severely cripple Tehran's exports.

Since the start of Iran's hostilities with Israel, Iranian officials have spoken about the possibility of shutting the Strait.

Mohammad Javad Hosseini, the deputy chief of mission at the Iranian

embassy, on Friday said closing the Strait of Hormuz is an option.

"We have many things on the table, but it doesn't mean that we are going to do it now. It depends on the situation and how the other players want to go. If they want to solve the problem, definitely some of these things will be put aside," he said. (PTI)

Skylock: Iran-Israel

-Dubai service following a security review. American and United Airlines halted flights to Qatar and Dubai respectively.

Gulf carriers — including Emirates, Qatar Airways, FlyDubai, and Etihad — have also scaled back services. Emirates suspended all flights to Tehran, Baghdad, and Basra through June 30, while Qatar Airways temporarily canceled flights to Iran, Iraq, and Syria, citing crew and passenger safety.

Etihad suspended its Abu Dhabi-Tel Aviv route until at least July 15 and warned of further possible disruptions. Oman's SalamAir halted services to Iran, Iraq, and Azerbaijan, and Air India has rerouted or canceled flights to avoid Iranian airspace.

Safety Fears Drive Decisions The widespread shutdown comes amid intensified missile and drone exchanges between Israel and Iran, drawing parallels to past aviation tragedies. The region's volatile history includes the 1988 downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by a US warship and the accidental Iranian missile strike on a Ukrainian jet in 2020.

Aviation safety watchdog Safe Airspace has issued alerts over heightened risks for commercial aircraft, especially those from the US and allied nations.

A Critical Global Air Corridor The disruption has far-reaching consequences. The Middle East is a central air corridor connecting Europe and Asia — a role made even more crucial after Russian and Ukrainian airspaces became no-go zones for international flights following the 2022 Ukraine war.

"When access to this corridor is disrupted, there is an immediate global ripple effect: aircraft are pushed further south, flight times stretch, and costs surge," Al-Jazeera quoted aviation analyst Alex Macheras as saying. Rerouted flights mean longer journeys, higher fuel costs, and increased crew expenses — at a time when oil prices are already climbing due to military escalations.

Saudi Arabia and Alternative Routes Step In

With Iran and Iraq off-limits, Saudi airspace has become the new aerial lifeline. According to FlightRadar24, daily overflights of Saudi Arabia have doubled from 700 to 1,400 since June 13. Traffic over Afghanistan has also surged, rising from 50 to 280 flights daily.

Several Europe-Asia flights are now detouring north via Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan or south through the Red Sea and Saudi Arabia. Some airlines have made these changes quietly, avoiding public disclosures.

Despite the turbulence in the skies, airlines and governments are working to shield passengers from the unfolding chaos. But with tensions unlikely to ease soon, the aviation world is bracing for a prolonged period of disruption over one of its most crucial transit zones.

Employment,

Entrepreneurship

projects are set to begin operations this year, the LG said.

"Nearly 60,000 crore worth of proposals are pending and I hope decisions will be taken soon," he added.

The LG said the operationalisation of new industries is offering youth exposure to diverse roles aligned with their skills and experience. "The overwhelming response from the private sector to recruit local youth is a positive indicator for our economy," he stated.

He also credited schemes like PMEGP, REGP, Hausla, Tejaswini, Mumkin, and Mission Youth for contributing to entrepreneurship and employment growth in the region.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted how the new Industrial Policy prioritises hiring of local youth and cited the example of Atomic North Private Limited, which has set up a BPO in a Kathua village employing 375 youth with potential to scale up to 1,000. He urged the company to open another BPO in Udhampur. The JSW Group is also planning to establish a BPO in Jammu, he noted.

LG Sinha distributed job offer letters to selected candidates at the event and handed over AICTE approval letters to Cluster University for new BBA and BCA courses.

The job fair witnessed participation from 57 reputed companies and saw 3,759 youth registered. The event was attended by university officials, company representatives, and job seekers from across the Union Territory.

Court Sends

affiliation with Lashkar-e-Taiba.

On Monday, the duo was produced before the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge, Jammu, Ritesh Kumar Dubey, who granted the NIA five days of custodial interrogation till June 27.

Officials said the agency is likely to probe further links, possible handlers, and the wider support network that enabled the militants to carry out what has been termed one of the most gruesome attacks in the region in recent years. The attackers had selectively targeted tourists based on their religious identity, the NIA said.

The investigation is ongoing.

NIA Flags 'Speculative'

reports and social media posts that are speculative and potentially misleading in nature.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the NIA said that the reports in question pertain to the sketches and identities of the terrorists involved in the deadly attack that claimed 26 lives, mostly tourists, and left 16 others injured.

"It is reiterated that, as stated in the official press release dated 22 June 2025, two accused persons have been arrested in connection with the attack. During their interrogation, they have disclosed details about the identities of the three armed terrorists involved," the spokesperson said.

The NIA clarified that while a significant amount of evidence has been collected regarding the identity of the attackers—including eyewitness accounts, video footage, technical evidence, and sketches released by the Jammu and Kashmir Police—the investigation is still ongoing and no final conclusions have been drawn yet.

"All this evidence is being carefully

analysed and the NIA has not reached any conclusions at this stage," the spokesperson said, adding, "The NIA assures that the investigation is being carried out with the highest standards of professionalism, and all aspects of the terror attack are being thoroughly examined. The identities and further details of the terrorists will be made public at an appropriate time."

JKTDC Board

Chief Minister, and the Administrative Secretaries of the Finance, Tourism, Industries & Commerce, and Planning Development & Monitoring Departments as Directors. The Director Tourism (Kashmir), Managing Director J&K Tourism Development Corporation, and Director Tourism (Jammu) have also been appointed as Directors. (JKNS)

Air India Express

flying over certain sensitive regions," the spokesperson added.

Heatwave Alert:

to continue from July 1 to 2 as well. In light of this, the MeT has issued an advisory warning of moderate to heavy rainfall, intense showers in some areas of Jammu, and a heightened risk of flash floods at vulnerable spots. The advisory also cautions about potential landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones. Waterlogging in low-lying areas of the Jammu plains is also expected, along with a rise in the water levels of rivers and local streams. Farmers have been advised to suspend irrigation, spraying, and fertiliser application between June 25 and 27.

Meanwhile, temperatures on Monday remained above normal in most parts of Kashmir, with Srinagar recording 34.6°C. Qazigund recorded 33.4°C, Pahalgam 28.8°C, Kupwara 33.5°C, Kokernag 32.6°C, and Gulmarg 25.2°C. In Jammu division, Jammu recorded 36.6°C, Banihal 30.5°C, Katra 32.5°C, Batote 29.1°C, and Bhaderwah 32.0°C. While Kashmir continues to reel under intense heat, parts of the Jammu region witnessed slightly below-normal temperatures.

Relief from the scorching heat is expected midweek, offering much-needed respite to people across the region..

10-day Summer

a partial modification of an earlier order issued on May 30, 2025.

Asia Is Warming

unacceptably high toll," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo.

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) Director General Pema Gyamtsho said, "Given Asia's population and economic exposure to the impacts of temperature rise, it is an injustice that the devastating consequences of inaction on climate goals are hitting some of the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems on Earth."

He said this is the last decade of action on preserving essential planetary resources, including our glaciers.

Pak Extends

as part of Operation Sindoor triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with the cessation of on-ground hostilities after an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10. However, the bilateral ties have not yet improved even when the ceasefire has been holding on.

1ST TEST
DAY 4:

India Set England
371-Run Target

Press Trust of India

LEEDS: Generational talent Rishabh Pant indulged in self-reproach before becoming only the second wicketkeeper in the game's history to score hundreds in both innings of a Test, helping India set England a tricky 371-run target in the series opener here on Monday.

Pant, the team's unflappable maverick with innate confidence in his ability to dominate bowling attacks anywhere in the world, struck 118 off 140 balls and added 195 runs for the fourth wicket with the elegant KL Rahul, who constructed a hundred of his own on the fourth and penultimate day of the first Test.

However, India's batting crumbled spectacularly for a second time in three days after the dismissal of the two second-innings centurions, as they were all out for 364 on a riveting day.

Ben Duckett (9 batting) and Zak Crawley (12 batting) reduced the target to 350 after England reached 21 for no loss at stumps.

India lost most of their wickets in the final session.

This was after the iconic 'Hey Jude' by The Beatles played softly in the background as Pant closed in on his eighth Test ton, eventually getting there with a single off 130 balls to join Zimbabwe legend Andy Flower as the only stumpers to achieve a remarkable feat.

Having curbed his natural instinct after attempting a flashy shot in the first session, Pant bid his time and switched gears post lunch to reach his second century in the match, following his magnificent 134 in the first innings.



Pant was finally dismissed when he found Zak Crawley at long-on off Shoaib Bashir, who was taken to the cleaners by the swashbuckling keeper-batter, who also became the first Indian to register two hundreds in a Test match in England.

Earlier in the day, Rahul, who was rewarded for his indefatigable resistance, produced a masterclass in timing and temperament, and played some sublime strokes that would have delighted the purists.

Ahead by 96 runs in the beginning, India were off to a disastrous start as they lost skipper Shubman Gill seven balls into the day's play, but the English bowlers did not taste further success in the first session, though they kept testing the two batters with their probing line and length.

On a windy and cloudy morning at Headingley, Gill chopped Brydon Carse's good-length delivery on to the stumps.

England were delighted to see the back of the India captain, which paved the way for the arrival of Pant, and he was his usual maverick self while attempting the audacious shots that define his batting.

Rahul looked calm, composed and self-assured at the other end, helping India swell the lead brick by brick, even as Pant mixed caution with aggression.

Luck too smiled on Rahul as Harry Brook dropped him at gully after the batter tried to steer a quick Josh Tongue delivery.

Canoe Marathon Held To
Mark 78th International
Olympic Day



On the 78th International Olympic Day on Monday, J&K Water Sports Kayaking and Canoeing Association organized a Canoe Marathon race and a "Run for Peace" at the Pokhribal Water Sports Club. The event celebrated the spirit of Olympism, bringing together athletes and water sports enthusiasts to promote teamwork, endurance and sportsmanship, while showcasing the incredible potential of water sports in the region.

The water sports players delivered a thrilling, high-energy contest demonstrating skill, speed and true sporting spirit while captivating spectators with their talent and determination.

For her incessant support and invaluable guidance to budding athletes, the Water Sports Association expressed heartfelt gratitude to renowned water sports player Bilquis Mir, who recently earned the historic distinction of becoming the first Indian woman to serve as a jury member at the Olympics.

"Water sports is the most medal-winning discipline in J&K so far. Besides providing a strong national and international platform for deserving athletes, we also focus on guiding the youth of J&K away from the menace of drugs by engaging them in water sports activities," the association said in press release.

Vimal Jit Wins Gold At South
Asian Bodybuilding C'ship

In a landmark achievement, Vimal Jit from J&K clinched a gold medal for India in the 55 kg category at the 15th Men's South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championship, held in Thimphu, Bhutan. This victory makes him the first athlete from J&K to win a gold medal at an international bodybuilding event.

Vimal's remarkable performance stood out among participants from eight South Asian countries, underlining the rising standard of athletes emerging from the region.

Congratulating the young athlete, Sarmad Hafeez (IAS), Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, J&K, said:

"Vimal Jit's achievement is a matter of immense pride not just for Jammu & Kashmir but for the entire country. His gold medal proves the talent and determination that our youth possess."

Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, also praised the champion.

"This is a historic day for sports in J&K," she said. "Vimal's gold medal on an international stage reflects years of dedication and also the growing culture of fitness and competitive excellence in J&K."

Prithvi Shaw Leaves Mumbai
For Cricketing 'Growth & Dev

Embattled India batter Prithvi Shaw on Monday ended his ties with home team Mumbai after being granted a No Objection Certificate by the MCA to sign up with a new domestic side for his "growth and development as a cricketer".

Shaw has been out of reckoning from the red ball set-up for some time but has played white ball cricket. However, his off-field disciplinary issues have grabbed more air time than his on-field performances.

The Mumbai Cricket Association confirmed receiving Shaw's request and has given its approval to it.

In the letter that Shaw sent to the MCA, the 25-year-old said he was grateful for the time he spent in the Mumbai team, for which he made his debut in 2017, but desires to move on now.

However, the identity of the team that he intends to join next is not yet known. Shaw said his decision has been made after "careful consideration, and with utmost respect for the MCA."

"I remain ever grateful to the association for the guidance and platform provide

Bellingham To Undergo
Shoulder Surgery After CWC

Réal Madrid and England midfielder Jude Bellingham confirmed on Sunday that he will undergo surgery to address a long-standing shoulder issue after the conclusion of the Club World Cup in the United States.

The 21-year-old, who has been managing the injury since 2023, has played through discomfort for both club and country. Real Madrid have scheduled the operation to follow the tournament, which concludes later this month.

Bellingham, who joined Real Madrid from Borussia Dortmund earlier this year, has frequently been seen wearing strapping on his shoulder during matches.

Speaking after Real Madrid's 3-1 victory over Mexico's Pachuca in the Club World Cup, Bellingham explained his decision to proceed with surgery. "I've reached the point where the pain isn't so bad, but I was sick of playing with the sling," he told reporters.

"I'm losing a lot of weight from sweating so much, and I've decided that I'll have surgery after the tournament. I've been waiting for a long time, and my patience is running out, but the physios and doctors have been incredible. I just want to feel free," he added.

Records Galore As Rahul & Pant
Smash Tons Against England

Agencies

LEEDS: The flamboyant Rishabh Pant on Monday became only the second wicketkeeper in the game's history to score two hundreds in each innings of a Test match during the series opener against England here.

Before Pant, Zimbabwe's former stumper Andy Flower made 142 and 199 not out against South Africa in Harare in 2001.

While making 118 off 140 balls on the fourth and penultimate day, he also became the first Indian to score hundreds in both innings of a Test in England.

Pant is now the seventh Indian to score centuries in both innings of a Test.

He has made a magnificent 134 in the first innings.

Pant is also the seventh Indian batter to score hundreds in both Test innings.

Before him, Sunil Gavaskar achieved this feat thrice, Rahul Dravid twice, and Vijay Hazare, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Ajinkya Rahane have done this once in their career.

Meanwhile, Indian opener KL Rahul re-wrote record books with yet another classy



Should Have Scored My Centuries:
Ganguly's Biggest Regret

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: He is the owner of 38 fantastic centuries in international cricket, but that number is not pleasing to former India skipper Sourav Ganguly, who regrets missing many hundreds during his cricketing journey.

The elegant left-hander G a n -

T e s t

But regrets missing many centuries in his career in which he competed in 311 ODIs and 113 Tests.

Ganguly's remorse came to fore when he was asked what advice he would give to his old self.

"I missed a lot of hundreds, I should have scored more. Too many 90s and 80s," Ganguly told PTI in an interaction.

A look at his statistics showed that Ganguly got out in the 80s and 90s a number of times. Exact 30 times.

If he could convert those innings into centuries he would have easily scored 50-plus centuries in his already glorious career.

He loves watching his old innings, his stroke-play whenever he is alone and it further reminds him how close he was to getting more hundreds.

"I see my (batting) videos when I am alone. When my wife is away because Sana lives in London, I go to Youtube, and watch old matches and say 'arre phir 70 pe out ho gaya' (Gosh, I got out in 70s in this also), should have scored a hundred. But you can't change it."

In ODIs, Ganguly had 72 half centuries and in Test the number stands at 35.

DROPPING KUMBLE A FEW TIMES IS ALSO A
REGRET

As a skipper, sometimes a tough call becomes imperative. You have to drop a player to accommodate someone who you think is more suited for conditions or requirement.

Ganguly regretted dropping Anil Kumble, one of the greatest leg spinners in the world, a number of times during his captaincy.

"Anil Kumble, a few times, because he was so good," he said.



Only 6? City Boss Guardiola Wanted Another Goal v Al-Ain

Agencies

ATLANTA: Manager Pep Guardiola was a little disappointed that Manchester City were unable to get a seventh goal in their rout of Al-Ain on Sunday despite the English club securing passage to the knockout stages of the Club World Cup.

German Ilkay Gundogan scored two goals as City comfortably dispatched the Emiratis 6-0 at Mercedes-Benz stadium to draw level with Juventus on points and goal difference at the top of Group G.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

City play Juventus in their final opening-round match on Thursday to decide who tops the group and who finishes second.

Juventus go into the clash with a slight edge as goals scored is the second tiebreaker after goal difference for teams level on points. Juve have scored nine goals to City's eight.

In the round of 16, the top team in Group G will play the second-placed team in Group H, currently Red Bull Salzburg, while the runners-up will face the top team, currently 15-times European champions Real Madrid.

KEY QUOTES

Guardiola: "We pushed and pushed to score another goal to try to finish first, but we missed by one goal. But yeah, we know what we need to do against the Italian team to finish as number one."

Guardiola on substitute Rodri's gradual return from an ACL injury: "Step-by-step. He cannot play more than 30 minutes. He still struggles a bit in the duels, still needs to be a little bit stronger, but it's normal."

"It's important he played much, much better than the previous game. We miss him a lot.

Any team would miss the best player in the world."

Guardiola on goalscorer Claudio Echeverri: "It's a pity for the twisted (ankle), which is a little bit sore. It was a problem, that's why he could not continue after halftime. He's an incredible player, a big, big talent in small spaces. I'm happy for him, because it was a great goal."

YILDIZ DOUBLE POWERS JUVENTUS AT CWC

Kenan Yildiz struck twice and played a key role in an own goal as Juventus secured a 4-1 win over Morocco's Wydad Casa-

blanca in the Club World Cup on Sunday to move to qualify for the last 16.

Juventus made the breakthrough in the sixth minute with a well-worked team move that ended with Wydad defender Abdelmounaim Boutouil scoring an own goal.

The 20-year-old Turkish forward doubled Juventus's lead in the 16th minute with a sublime strike from the edge of the box. Receiving the ball in space, Yildiz unleashed a ferocious effort into the top-right corner, leaving Benabid rooted to the spot.

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