

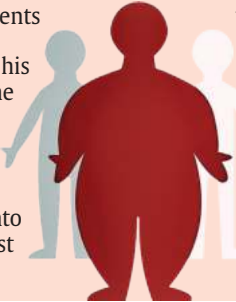
Kashmir Is Getting Heavier: What's Fuelling The Obesity Surge?

Seema Sangra

Srinagar: At first, they come in for something small. A bit of discomfort. A vague, nagging pain. But when Dr. Bharat Bhushan Gupta runs the tests, the answer is almost always the same. "Fatty liver," he says, shaking his head. "Most of my

Kashmiri patients have it now."

Sitting in his Jammu clinic, the senior gastroenterologist describes a condition that has slipped into the region almost



without warning. "It doesn't make noise in the beginning," he says. "But over time, it can silently destroy the liver. It can even lead to cancer."

For Dr. Gupta, fatty liver is just the

surface. Beneath it lies something bigger—the steady rise of obesity across Jammu and Kashmir.

What was once rare in the region is now becoming a serious public health crisis, reshaping the lives and bodies of people who never saw it coming.

The valley, long known for its active lifestyle and home-cooked meals, is seeing rapid changes in how people eat and live. Many have swapped home kitchens for restaurant tables. Food delivery apps are bringing fast food to every doorstep, and busy schedules leave little time for cooking.

At the same time, people are moving less. The long walks that once shaped daily life are disappearing.

The numbers show how quickly this shift is happening. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), obesity rates have climbed sharply across **| More on P10**

Kashmir's Mixed Bag

Rain Relief, But Record Heat Lingers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Parts of Kashmir received light to moderate rainfall on Wednesday, bringing much-needed relief from the sweltering heatwave that has gripped the region for weeks, officials said.

The rain lashed areas including Srinagar and Anantnag, offering welcome respite from unusually high temperatures. Residents in Srinagar expressed joy as cool winds swept the city following the downpour.

The relief, however, came after the Valley witnessed an all-time high night temperature for the month of June. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 25°C on Tuesday night



— the highest ever for June, and nearly 8°C above normal.

The popular tourist resort of Pahalgam also experienced its warmest June night on record, with a low of 18.8°C, officials from the Meteorological Department said.

The local Met office has forecast generally cloudy weather with intermittent rain and thundershowers at many places in the Valley till Friday. From Saturday to Monday, light rain is expected at scattered locations.

Independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif Keng also said there will be some relief from the heatwave starting tomorrow (Thursday), lasting for the next three to four days. "Monsoon showers expected in the coming **| More on P10**

Shubhanshu Shukla Becomes First To Reach ISS

Axiom Mission 4: India Back In Space After 41 Yrs

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla was on Wednesday headed to the International Space Station (ISS) on a historic odyssey marking India's return to human spaceflight after a gap of 41 years following a successful launch of the Axiom Space mission in the US with a four-member multi-country crew.

After multiple delays, Elon Musk's SpaceX launch vehicle with Crew Dragon spacecraft atop a Falcon-9 rocket blasted off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 12:01 pm (IST) carrying mission pilot Shukla, a Group Captain in the Indian Air Force (IAF), former NASA astronaut Commander Peggy Whitson and mission specialists Tibor Kapu of Hungary and Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland.



Family members, scores of well wishers and space enthusiasts gathered at watch parties across India, Poland, Hungary and the US burst into cheers as the rocket soared into the Florida sky from the same spot from where American astronaut Neil Armstrong, who was the first person to set foot on the moon, took off on the Apollo-11 mission in July 1969.

"Kamaal ki ride thi (It was an amazing ride)," Shukla said

10 minutes after the Dragon spacecraft was placed in orbit around the Earth at an altitude of 200 km as part of the Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4). The spacecraft is expected to dock at the ISS at 4:30 pm on Thursday, capping a 28-hour journey.

The footage beamed by cameras from inside the crew capsule showed the four astronauts strapped into their cabin, seated side-by-side in helmeted white-and-black

flight suits.

The 39-year-old, Lucknow-born Shukla became only the second Indian astronaut to undertake a space flight, 41 years after his icon Rakesh Sharma's eight-day space odyssey on board the then Soviet Union's Salyut-7 space station in 1984.

"We are orbiting the earth at a speed of 7.5 km per second... This is not just the beginning of my journey to the International Space Station, but the beginning of India's human space programme and it is my desire that all the countrymen become a part of this journey," Shukla said in Hindi.

Congratulations poured in from all quarters as the Ax-4 mission astronauts entered the earth's orbit. President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh and cricket **| More on P10**

Iranian Lawmakers Vote To Halt IAEA Inspections

Trans Asia News

Tehran: In a move that marks a sharp rupture with international nuclear oversight mechanisms, Iran's Parliament (Majlis) on Wednesday overwhelmingly approved a bill to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), effectively barring inspectors from accessing its nuclear facilities. The decision follows recent US-Israeli military strikes on Iranian nuclear and military infrastructure, and has sent shockwaves through diplomatic and security circles worldwide.

According to Mehr News Agency, the bill passed with 221 votes in favor, no votes against, and one abstention out of 223 lawmakers present, indicating near-unanimous domestic support for the escalation. The legislation requires that IAEA inspectors be denied access unless the security of Iran's nuclear sites is guaranteed, a condition subject to approval by Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

The parliamentary vote comes days after coordinated attacks by the United States and Israel, including the deployment of B-2 bombers, struck targets in Iran described as "nuclear and military installations." Iranian officials have characterized the attacks as acts of aggression, with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bager Qalibaf accusing the IAEA of political bias and silence in the face of what he called violations of Iranian sovereignty.

"The IAEA, which did not even formally condemn the attack on Iran's **| FULL STORY ON P4**

Heatwave Hits Kashmir's Rivers; Jhelum Shrinks

Amid an ongoing heatwave and prolonged dry spell, water levels in the River Jhelum and its tributaries have dropped significantly, raising concerns over water availability and irrigation needs across the Kashmir Valley. According to data, key gauging stations recorded alarming lows on Wednesday. At 9:00 am, Jhelum's depth stood at just 0.96 ft at Sangam, 2.79 ft at **| More on P10**

Parliamentary Panel To Visit Kashmir

Observer News Service

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel will visit the Kashmir Valley in the first week of July, marking the first such official tour since the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of 26 civilians, most of them tourists.

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel, chaired by BJP MP Anurag Thakur, is scheduled to tour Srinagar as part **| More on P10**

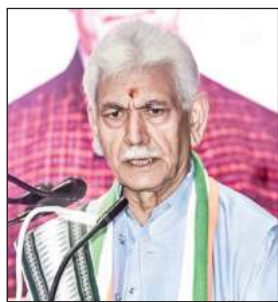
Emergency 'Darkest Period' In India's Democratic History: LG Sinha

■ 'New Generation Must Know How Democracy Was Held Captive for 21 Months'

■ Inaugurates 1975 Emergency Exhibition at Convention Centre, Jammu

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday described the imposition of Emergency in 1975 by the then Indira Gandhi-led Congress government as the "most inhuman act" in the history of independent India and a "murder of the Constitution." He urged the youth to understand how



the country's democratic foundations were shaken during those 21 months.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion of Samvidhan Hatya Diwas at the Convention Centre in Jammu, where he also inaugurated a 1975 Emergency Exhibition, Sinha paid homage to the countless individuals who resisted the authoritarian regime.

"Imposition of Emergency on 25th June 1975 was murder of the Constitution," Sinha wrote earlier in a **| More on P10**

AMARNATH YATRA Multi-Layered Security In Place: IGP

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra, scheduled to begin on July 3, Kashmir Police chief V.K. Birdi on Wednesday said comprehensive, multi-layered security arrangements have been put in place to ensure a safe and smooth pilgrimage.

"The Shri Amarnath Yatra this year is starting next week. Jammu and Kashmir Police, along with other security agencies, have made robust and in-depth security arrangements. Compared to last year, this year's plan is more layered to ensure the safety **| More on P10**

Mock Drills Held To Prep Ahead For Yatra

In a key preparatory move ahead of the annual Amarnath Yatra, coordinated mock drills were conducted at key locations across Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday to assess the **| More on P10**

Centre Plans Tourism Meet In Pahalgam

J&K Govt Likely To Build Memorial For Terror Attack Victims

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a significant move to bring the tourists back to Kashmir, the Centre is planning a high-level review meeting in Pahalgam on July 7 and 8, sources said on Wednesday.

Top sources said that the meeting is being organised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and will be attended by tourism secretaries from all the states.

They said the high-level meeting is being held in Pahalgam to give a clear message to the people and tourists that the destination is safe and they need not to worry.

They said that the Jammu and Kashmir government may also build a memorial for the victims of the Pahalgam attack within the next six months.

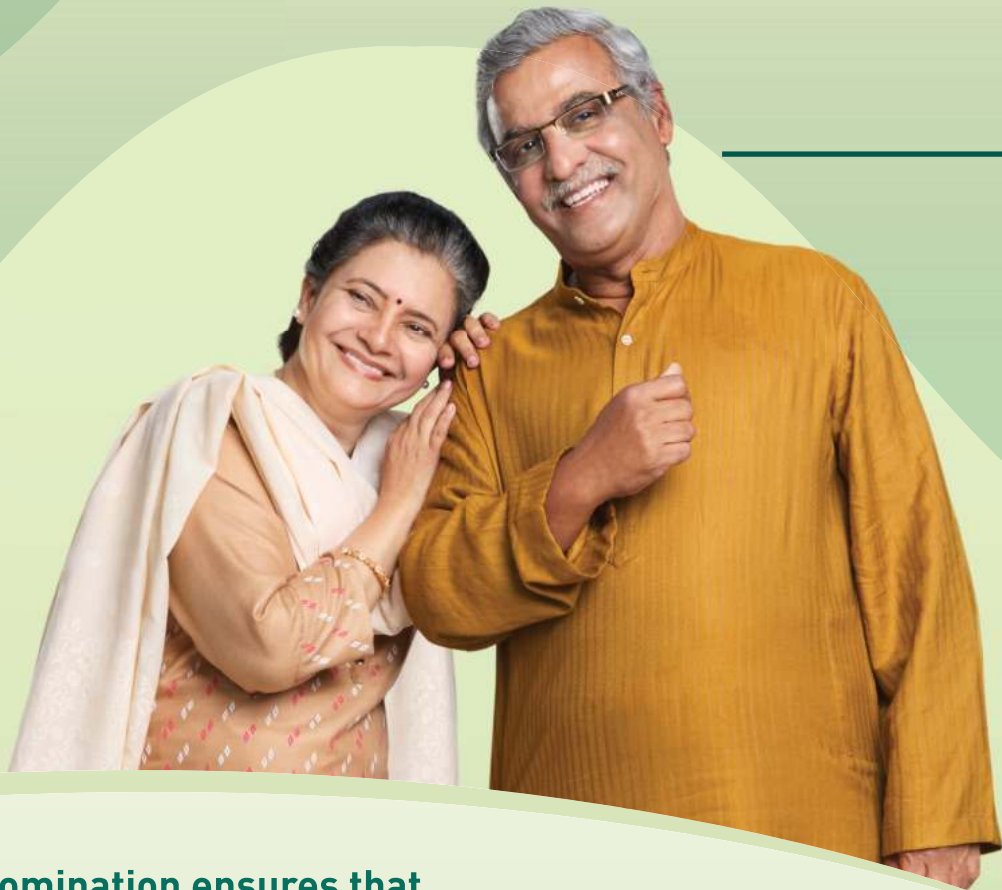
On April 22 this year terrorists killed 26 innocent civilians, mostly tourists, in the Baisaran Valley of Pahalgam, bringing the tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir to a grinding halt.

According to the officials, there has been a sharp decline in the number of tourists visiting Pahalgam — from 18,000 in April to just 3,000 in June.

Preparations are underway to revive the stalled tourism industry they said. Tourism in Pahalgam and **| More on P10**



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2

Study Looking At Teeth Provides Evidence Of Lasting Damage Due To Smoking

Press Trust of India

A study has revealed evidence of how smoking can permanently impact teeth, revealing tell-tale signs that remain despite quitting the habit. A tooth consists of three main hard tissues — enamel, dentine and cementum. Cementum, which covers the tooth root, develops characteristic “rings” — much like tree rings — that grow each year as we age, researchers from Northumbria University, UK, said. The study, published in the journal PLOS One, looked at 88 teeth, 70 of which were obtained from people taking a dental treatment involving tooth extraction, and others from archaeological remains. Signs of disruption to cementum rings were found in some teeth, but not in others. Further, evidence of damage due to smoking was found in teeth from 70 per cent of ex-smokers and 33 per cent of current smokers, compared to three per cent of non-smokers. This suggested “tell-tale signs of smoking habits” that remain even after a person has quit, the researchers said. “Our research shows that it's possible to tell if someone was a smoker just by examining their teeth,” author Edward Schwalbe, associate



professor in Northumbria University's department of applied sciences, said. “We found that the regular annual deposition of rings was disrupted for some individuals and realised that these disruptions were associated with current or ex-smokers, but were very rare in non-smokers,” Schwalbe said. The findings could help provide new insights during forensic and historical investigations, the team said. They also found that cementum is thicker in past smokers. This could be a result of cementum returning to normal levels when one stops smoking, leaving ‘stronger’ deposits on top of damaged rings and thereby thickening them — whereas current smokers continue to have disruption to their cementum levels, the researchers said. Further, the 18 teeth obtained from archaeological

remains dating from 1776-1890 bore “clear evidence of smoking activity, displaying staining and even notches from pipe smoking”. Analysis of cementum showed that the rings in teeth of smokers who died then displayed the same signs of disruption as those from living donors who were current or ex-smokers. The study could help learn about people's past lifestyles, including in archaeological studies where patterns of tobacco use can reveal important cultural insights and how these habits affected populations’ health through time, the researchers said. Schwalbe added, cementum rings in the teeth can also help estimate one's age when the tooth was removed or when they died, information from which could help identify unknown individuals — such as disaster victims or those buried in mass graves.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that my daughter's name in his Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No:- 9192 0808 5344 has been wrongly mentioned as Afran Mehraj instead of Afreena Mehraj .Now I am applying for its Correction as per School and J&K Board of School Education Srinagar record bearing Reg No :- 2328010000630030 . if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.



Mehraj Ud Din Mir
F/O. Afreena Mehraj
R/O :- Khourwara Ranan .
Tehsil :- Qaziabad Distt : Kupwara .Pin Cod.193302

fko

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER REW DIVISION PULWAMA

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

e- NIT No. 11/2025-26 Dated 25-06-2025

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Of Union Territory Of J&K , e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on **Percentage basis** from approved and eligible Contractors registered with UT of J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

Call 1st

S. No.	Name of the Work	Block	Estim ated /Adv. Cost(In lacs)	Cost of tender documents (In Rupees)	EMD (in %)	Class of Contractor	Time of completion	Major head
1.	C/O 1 No Soakage Pit at Noor Masjid Tantrapora	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
2.	C/O Soakage pit at NHO Ajaz Hamd , Nisar Ahmad ,Showkat Ahmad at Tumlahal	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
3.	C/O Soakage pit near L/O Shahzad Ahamd Dar at Zasow	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
4.	C/O 1 No soakage pits at Nowpora	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
5.	C/O 1 No Soakage Pit at Arihal A	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
6.	C/O 2 no soakage pit at HD Pora	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
7.	C/O 1 no Soakge Pits at Litter	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
8.	C/O of soakage pit at Middle School Arihal A	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
9.	C/O Soakage Pit at Masjid Sharief Pattan Bagh at Arihal A	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
10.	C/O Soakage Pit at Arihal A near H/O Bashor ahmad Raina and Others and 1 No at Near H/O Shabir Ahmad Ganie Arampora near new hospital .	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
11.	C/O Soakage Pit at Bandina	Litter	0.8116	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
12.	Constt of Community Soakage Pit near Masjid	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
Shuhadha at Batpora Ladhoo A								
13.	Constt. Of community soakage pit at Ladhoo B	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
14.	Constt of CSP near Masjid Ibrahim Dar Mohalla	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
15.	Constt of Community Soakage Pit at Meej near ziyarat lasbab.	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
16.	Constt of Community Soakage Pit at Wuyan Payeen at govt primary school.	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
17.	Constt of community soakage pit at green colony.	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
18.	Constt of Community Soakage Pit at masjid Sharief Kharpath Chandhara ii) Green colony	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
19.	Constt of CSP at Middle School Bajibagh Samboora A	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
20.	Constt at Masjid Sharief Ganie Mohalla at Samboora B	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
21.	Constt of CSP at naim sahab shrine at Mandakpal	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
22.	Constt of CSP at Dandruth Patalbagh	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II
23.	Constt of CSP at safron enclave colony zabdaji krenchoo near H/O Mehrajudin shah and others	Pampore	0.83	200/=	2%	DEE	30 Days	SBM II

Position of A/A: - Accorded

Position of T/S: - Accorded

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25-06-2025
2.	Online Bid submission Start Date	25-06-2025 from 06:55 PM
3.	Online Bid Submission End Date	07-07-2025 up to 06:55 PM
4.	Date & time of opening of Online Bids	08-07-2025 at 10:00 AM or any convenient day
5.	Note: - Fee Receipt and EMD shall be deposited after the financial bids opened. In case The original Tender Document Fee Receipt and EMD is not Deposited within 5 days after the Financial Bids Opened for all responsive bidders Who have participated online, the Department shall take action as per Rules.	

Special Condition 01:

Only the eligible contractors of respective Panchayat Halqa shall take part in the tendering process for works under District Capex with Advertised Cost 3.0 Lacs or below for District Capex works only. Bidders must upload any document viz residential certificate/ Adhar Card/ Ration Card/Electricity Bill showing panchayat name, as residence proof that he/she is residing the respective Panchayat Halqa (Applicable for DEE Class contractors in call list only).

SC02: - Contractors Strictly not eligible

The Bidders who had participated in 2023-24 and has not completed the works within stipulated time frame/who had left the work midway/ who had not started/taken up the works are strictly not eligible. Any such participation may lead to cancellation of their bid and No claim shall be entertained in this regard.

Xen/REW/PuL/796-802
DIPK-2930/25 Dated:-25/06/2025

Sd/= Executive Engineer
REW Division Pulwama

The Jammu and Kashmir State Board Of School Education New Campus Bemina Srinagar Notice for General Public

The applicant/ candidate whose photograph is published in this notice and claiming to have lost her qualification certificate/s issued under as per below mentioned details:-

Roll No: 139054085
Class 10th
Year & Session : 2023
Registration: 2139001001450091
Name : Mueed Masood Shah
Father's Name: Masood Hussain Shah
Mother's Name : Rayeesa Masood
Date of Birth:- 04-01-2005
Residenc:- Shalla Bagh Khanyar Srinagar J&K



According to the candidate concerned has approach to this office for issuance of Duplicate Qualification /Marks Certificate/s, so before the same is processed and provided to the candidate, under rules, anybody having any objection in this regard, shall bring into the notice of Assistant Secretary of Certificate as well as Assistant Secretary Examination Unit I & III KD within the period of 10 & 7 days respectively, from the date of publication of this notice. (Besides the above referred "Qualification / Marks Certificate/s" bearing No: 5200 be treated as "CANCELLED")
No: F(Cer is-I-DQC)/B/KD/22
Dated 09-11-2022

Assistant Secretary
Certificates, KD.

Notice

I, Mohammad Syed Bandy, resident of Kagazgari Mohalla, Nowshera, Srinagar, hereby inform that I have sold my house to my brother and shifted to my new house at Ellahi Bagh, Buchpora on 03-06-2025. Therefore, I request the Assistant Executive Engineer, Baghi Ali Mardaan Khan, Srinagar, Kashmir, to discontinue the domestic electricity connection (Consumer ID: 0204040006892) with immediate effect and issue the necessary NOC for future records. If anybody has any objection may file the same to the concerned Department within a week's time. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Date: 23-06-2025
Contact: 9596382727
Mohammad Syed Bandy

Media Line Ads

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is information for the general public that in Adhar card bearing No 598476916355 of my daughter the name is entered as ZOHREEN ZAINAB while her actual name is MAHNOOR FATIMA. Now i want its correction, in this regard if anybody having any objection may contact Concern department with in a period of seven days. No objection shall be entertained after that.
MONEER AHMAD ALAI
F/o MAHNOOR FATIMA
R/o SUNDIPORA BUDGAM
CELL. 9858813926

mcb

Office of the Naib Tehsildar Pattan

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

The registrar birth EO MC pattan has submitted a case file pertaining to birth of Mohammad Arhan Mir s/o Javid Ahmad Mir R/o Darveshbagh Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan with verified date of birth 14/01/2024 occurred at SDH pattan in this connection if any body having objection for issuance of said certificate he may contact to this office within 04 days after that no objection shall be entertained.

SD /-
Naib Tehsildar Pattan

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer ID No. 0213040010657, from Abdul Rahman Ganie S/o Mohd Ramzan Ganie to Mohd Maqbool Ganie S/o Abdul Rahman Ganie. If anyone has any objection to this change, they may contact the AEE PDD department pattan within seven (07) days from the date of this notice. After that, no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Maqbool Ganie,
S/o Abdul Rahman Ganie,
R/o Gashroo Mohalla, Palhallan

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my passport bearing no : M489183 Beehama to Duderhama Ganderbal. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in office of the Regional Passport Office Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Saira Bashir
D/o Bashir Ahmad Tantry
R/o Beehama

inf

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that my name and Date of Birth (DOB) in my Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No:- 3588 2252 4322 has been wrongly mentioned as Ferheena Fayaz .DOB. 06.11.2006 instead of Farhana Jan DOB is 30.08.2006 .Now I am applying for its Correction as per School and J&K Board of School Education record bearing Reg No:- 2028010000480023 . if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may contact the same in the office of the General Manager Ranbir Govt Press Jammu within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after expiry of stipulated period.



Farhana Jan D/O. Fayaz Ahmad Malik
R/O :- Pandithpora .Tehsil :- Qaziabad .
Distt : Kupwara .Pin Cod.193302

fko



‘Harmukh’ Celebrates Kashmiri-Kannada Cultural Bond

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Marking a historic moment in regional cinema, Harmukh — the first-ever Kashmiri-Kannada feature film — premiered to an emotional and packed audience at INOX Multiplex in Srinagar on Wednesday. The film, rooted in cultural unity, was hailed as a powerful tribute to the spirit of togetherness and shared identity between Kashmir and Karnataka.

The event was graced by several dignitaries, including former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who attended as the chief guest.

Jointly produced by Ayash Arif, Mushtaq Wani, and Masarat Kanji, Harmukh brings together an ensemble of creative forces. Ayash Arif not only produced the film but also played the lead role. Direction is helmed by renowned filmmaker Ashok Kumar K, with dialogues penned by Rekha Rani.

Titled after the revered Harmukh mountain in Kashmir’s Ganderbal district, the film is a symbolic homage to the enduring values of friendship, empathy, and unity that transcend linguistic and geographic barriers.

Speaking at the premiere, Ayash Arif described the film as “a dream, a bridge, and a bond” between two vibrant regions of India. “At its heart, the film is a tribute to unity, empathy, and the power of human connection,” he said.

The story, written by national award-winning

filmmaker Ashok Kumar K, follows the emotional journey of two culturally distinct families who, through shared experiences, come to understand and care for each other. Veteran Kannada actor and filmmaker T.S. Nagabharana, a recipient of 16 national and state awards, also features in the film, adding further depth and dimension to its message.

Adding soul to the narrative is the music composed by celebrated Kashmiri singer Wahid Jeelani, whose haunting melodies left many in the audience visibly moved. One audience member recalled a particularly poignant scene at Srinagar’s iconic Zero Bridge, where two friends from different states silently embraced and wept. “No words, just understanding,” he whispered, his eyes welling up.

The premiere turned into more than just a film screening—it became a celebration of shared heritage and emotional resonance. People from various backgrounds filled the theatre, united in their applause and introspection.

“It felt like we were watching our own stories reflected through another culture’s lens,” said a local from downtown Srinagar. “This film reminded us that love, empathy, and understanding have no regional boundaries.”

Harmukh not only marks a cinematic first but also signals a broader cultural conversation—one that urges unity over division, and storytelling as a tool of healing and connection.

Teenager Dies, Another Injured In Scooty Crash

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A 14-year-old boy lost his life while another teenager sustained injuries after the scooty they were riding crashed into a wall near Solina bund in Srinagar’s Rajbagh area late last night, officials said on Tuesday.

According to an official, the duo—both residents of Rambagh in Srinagar—were riding a scooty when the rider reportedly lost control, resulting in a collision with a wall.

“Both boys were immediately rushed to a nearby hospital, but one of them was declared dead by the doctors,” the official said.

The deceased has been identified as Muneef Ahmad, son of Imtiyaz Ahmad Malik, a resident of Rambagh. He was 14 years old. The injured has been identified as Muntazir Ahmad Wani, also from Rambagh, who is currently undergoing treatment.

Police have taken cognizance of the incident and initiated necessary proceedings.

DC & Commissioner SMC Review Progress Under PMAY-Urban 2.0



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In order to review the progress on implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY-U 2.0) in the District, the Deputy Commissioner(DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo and Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation(SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb held a joint meeting of Revenue and SMC Officers here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting was among others attended by Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, all Tehsildars, SMC Ward Offi-

cers, and Officers from J&K Housing Board.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner & SMC Commissioner took a detailed appraisal about the implementation of the PMAY-Urban scheme in the District and assessed the status of registration of beneficiaries made under the scheme in Srinagar till date. Stakeholder Departments were directed to expedite the process of verification of the cases to ensure that not a single genuine beneficiary is left out from the scheme. Stress was also laid on maintaining utmost transparency and accountability ensuring timely disposal of the cases.

Police Attach Property Belonging To Drug Peddler In Karnabal



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police attached a residential property, comprising a two-storeyed house and adjoining land valued at approximately Rs 1 crore, belonging to a notorious drug peddler from Takanwari, Karnabal area of the city.

The property belonged to Pervaiz Ahmad Bhat, who is currently under preventive detention under the PIT-NDPS Act. He is also facing prosecution in Case FIR No. 02/2024 registered at Police Station Sangam under Sections 8, 20, and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Officials said that the seized property was proven to have been acquired through the proceeds of illicit drug trafficking. Acting under Sections 68-E and 68-F of the NDPS Act, and following due confirmation

PERVAIZ AHMAD BHAT HAS A HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG PEDDLING and was part of a wider network supplying narcotics in the region, particularly targeting the local youth. His activities, police said, posed a direct threat to public health and social stability.

by the competent authority under the SAFEMA (Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act), New Delhi, the immovable asset has been formally attached.

Authorities have made it clear that the property cannot be sold, transferred, or otherwise dealt with in any manner without prior approval from the competent authority.

Police sources confirmed that Pervaiz Ahmad Bhat has a history of involvement in drug peddling and was

part of a wider network supplying narcotics in the region, particularly targeting the local youth. His activities, police said, posed a direct threat to public health and social stability.

“This action is part of Jammu and Kashmir Police’s sustained campaign to dismantle drug trafficking networks by choking their financial lifelines,” a senior police official said. “We are committed to eliminating the drug menace by not only arresting offenders but also by targeting the assets they have illegally acquired.”

Sgr Man Held for Using Forged CIK Document To Dupe Public

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Counter Intelligence Kashmir on Wednesday said it apprehended and handed over a fraudster to police in Srinagar for using a forged document of the agency to cheat the public and grab money from them.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, the CIK said it arrested one Bilal Ahmad Rather son of Abdul Samad Rather, originally from Allochi Bagh and presently residing in Zakura, Srinagar was apprehended following reliable information.

The statement reads that Bilal had collected a huge amount of money



from the public by adopting dishonest and fraudulent means.

“The victims repeatedly approached Bilal for return of their money taken by committing fraud and cheating on them but he refused to return the money. He in order to

mislead these people forged a letter shown to have been issued by the office of SSP CIK,” it reads.

It added that Bilal was questioned and on preliminary examination and analysis of his mobile, the forged letter (enquiry notice) in question was found and the same was retrieved.

“Bilal confessed that he had forged the enquiry notice to grab the money from different individuals. Accordingly, he was handed over to police in Zakoora for necessary legal action. A case FIR No 39/2025 U/S 318(4), 336(3), 336(4), 340(1) BNS, has been filed against him and investigation is in progress,” the statement reads.

DLSA Holds Training On Legal Aid For Women, Children’s Rights

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of the J&K Legal Services Authority, organized a specialized training programme at District Court Complex, Srinagar.

The programme was intended for Panel Lawyers, Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADCS), and Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs), with a focused agenda on strengthening legal aid mechanisms concerning the rights of women and children.

Training was held under the chairmanship of Tasleem Arief, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar, and under the close supervision of Sajad Ur Rehman, Sub-Judge/Secretary, DLSA Srinagar. This initiative aligns with the recommendations made in Paras 3.48 and 3.49, Chapter III, of the 147th Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The Committee advocates for improved accessibility to the e-Lok Adalat platform, particularly for individuals in rural areas and those with limited digital resources. It further encourages collaboration with local organizations to establish digital legal access points and the training of PLVs to assist citizens in navigating online justice platforms.

The observations also emphasize the creation of specialized legal aid units focused on women’s and children’s rights, supported by trained legal professionals and partnerships with NGOs and child welfare agencies.



Advocate Naveed Gul served as the resource person and delivered an insightful training session aimed at enhancing the competence and sensitivity of legal aid providers in handling cases involving women and children. The session also addressed the integration of digital tools into legal aid delivery to ensure timely and equitable access to justice for marginalized sections of society.

Following the training, a review meeting of Panel Lawyers LADCS and

PLVs was convened by Sajad Ur Rehman, Secretary, DLSA Srinagar. The meeting provided a platform to assess ongoing legal aid activities, address field-level challenges, and reinforce professional accountability.

Sajad Ur Rehman urged all stakeholders to remain committed to their responsibilities and to adopt a people-centric and technology enabled approach in advancing legal aid services, particularly for vulnerable and digitally excluded groups.

- 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
- BIJBERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
29 Zil-Hajj
1446

PRAYERS

FAJR	3:36
ZUHR	12: 33
ASR	5:33
Magrib	7:50
ISHA	9:31

This Day In History

- 363 - Roman Emperor Julian is killed during retreat from the Sassanid Empire. General Jovian is proclaimed Emperor by troops on the battlefield.
- 684 - St Benedict II begins his reign as Catholic Pope
- 1409 - Council of Pisa selects Petros Philargi as 3rd Pope: Alexander V
- 1483 - Duke of Gloucester succeeds as King Richard III of England after Parliament declared Edward V illegitimate
- 1498 - Toothbrush invented in China using boar bristles
- 1630 - Swedish troops under Gustaf II Adolf lands at Peenemunde
- 1714- Spain & Netherlands sign peace/trade agreement
- 1794- Battle of Fleurus: major victory by forces of the First French Republic under General Jean-Baptiste Jourdan over the Coalition Army (Great Britain, Hanover, Dutch Republic, and Habsburgs) first use of reconnaissance balloon
- 1843- Hong Kong proclaimed a British Crown Colony.
- 1879- Ismael Pasha resigns as khedive of Egypt
- 1894- Karl Benz of Germany receives US patent for gasoline-driven auto
- 1900- Japan mobilizes 20,000 troops to help put down the Boxer uprising - but also advance long-term interest in gaining land and power in mainland Asia
- 1900- The Russian Tsar orders that Russian must be the official language of Finland, despite growing unrest within Finland and increasing international concern over Russia's behavior there
- 1902- Aga Khan III is appointed Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire
- 1911- Nieuport sets an aircraft speed record of 83 mph (133 kph)
- 1914-The Indian Relief Act, passes after a protracted period of Passive Resistance led by Gandhi; it abolishes a £3 tax imposed on Indians who had not renewed their indentures and recognizes "the validity of Indian customary marriages"
- 1917- 1st US Expeditionary Force arrive in France during WW I
- 1924- After 8 years of occupation, US troops leave Dominican Republic
- 1927- Comet 7P/Pons-Winnecke approaches within 0.0394 AUs of Earth
- 1934- Germany & Poland sign non-aggression treaty
- 1941- Finland enters WW II against Russia
- 1945- United Nations Charter signed by 50 nations in San Francisco

From KO Archives

‘Malnutrition In J&K Lowest In Country’

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development Mrs. Renuka Choudhary Monday lauded the state government for achieving distinction in the country in bringing down malnutrition level among children in the state.

“In the entire country we are struggling to lower the level of malnutrition which is telling upon the health and lives of children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers, however, it is heartening that in Jammu and Kashmir the level of malnutrition is on a considerable decline”, she added.

Addressing media persons here this afternoon Mrs. Choudhary said that Union Women and Child Development Ministry has approved additional 1500 anganwari centres for Jammu and Kashmir. She said over 13500 anganwari centres have already been approved for the slate under first two phases.

She announced two projects of aromatic herbs production and mushroom cultivation for the state, saying it would benefit over 8000 women and give host to the efforts of government for empowerment of women. Five hostels for working women have also been approved by the Union Ministry for Jammu and

Kashmir, she said and added that two out of these have already been completed while other three are under execution.

(Kashmir Observer, 26 June, 2007)

Zohran Mamdani: Indian Origin Shocks New York

Press Trust of India

New York: In a stunning victory, Indian-American lawmaker Zohran Kwame Mamdani defeated former governor Andrew Cuomo in the Democratic primary race for New York City mayor.

Mamdani, son of renowned Indian filmmaker Mira Nair and Mahmood Mamdani, a Ugandan author of Indian ancestry, was declared victorious in the Democratic mayoral primary Tues-



US Senator Bernie Sanders congratulated Mamdani and his thousands of grassroots supporters for their "extraordinary campaign".

"You took on the political, economic and media Establishment - and you beat them. Now it's on to victory in the general election." "My friends, we have done it. I will be your Democratic nominee for mayor of New York City. We have won from Harlem to Bay Ridge," a report in the New York Times quoted Mamdani as saying at a victory party in Queens.

As Cuomo conceded the race, he said: "Tonight was not our night. Tonight is his night. He deserved it. He won." His website says he fought for the working class in and outside the legislature and his efforts include hunger striking alongside taxi drivers to achieve more than USD 450 million in transformative debt relief, winning over USD 100 million in the state budget for increased subway service and a successful fare-free bus pilot, and organising New Yorkers to defeat a proposed dirty power plant.

"The cost of living is crushing working people, but Zohran believes that government can lower costs and make life easier in our city — he'll use every tool available to bring down the rent, create world-class public transit, and make it easier to raise a family," his website said.

Mamdani has vowed that as Mayor, he will immediately freeze the rent for all stabilised tenants, and use every available resource to build the housing New Yorkers need and bring down the rent. Promising fast, fare-free buses, his campaign said that as Mayor, he'll permanently eliminate the fare on every city bus — and make them faster by rapidly building priority lanes, expanding bus queue jump signals, and dedicated loading zones to keep double parkers out of the way.

day night.

"In the words of Nelson Mandela: it always seems impossible until it's done. My friends, it is done. And you are the ones who did it. I am honoured to be your Democratic nominee for the Mayor of New York City," Mamdani said in a post on X.

Mamdani was born in Kampala, Uganda, on October 18, 1991, and raised in New York City. He moved to New York with his parents when he was seven. His mother Mira Nair has won applause for films like 'Monsoon Wedding' and 'Salaam Bombay!'. Mamdani, a state assemblyman from Queens and a democratic socialist running for Mayor, is married to Brooklyn-based Syrian-born artist Rama Duwaji.

Union Cabinet Resolves To Honour Sacrifices Of Emergency Victims

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday observed brief silence as a mark of tribute to the victims of the Emergency and resolved to commemorate and honour their sacrifices.

At a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Cabinet observed a two-minute silence as a tribute to those whose constitutionally guaranteed democratic rights were taken away and who were then subjected to unimaginable horrors.

The Union Cabinet resolved to commemorate and honour the sacrifices of countless individuals who valiantly resisted the Emergency and its attempt at subversion of

the spirit of the Indian Constitution which began in 1974 with a heavy-handed attempt at crushing the Navnirman Andolan and Sampoorna Kranti Abhiyan, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

"The Union Cabinet paid tributes to their exemplary courage and valiant resistance to the Emergency's excesses," Vaishnaw said.

He said the year 2025 marks 50 years of the Samvidhan Hatya Diwas - an unforgettable chapter in the history of India where the Constitution was subverted, the Republic and democratic spirit of India was attacked, federalism was undermined, and fundamental rights, human liberty and dignity were suspended.



Iranian Lawmakers Vote to Halt IAEA Inspections

Trans Asia News

Tehran— In a move that marks a sharp rupture with international nuclear oversight mechanisms, Iran's Parliament (Majlis) on Wednesday overwhelmingly approved a bill to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), effectively barring inspectors from accessing its nuclear facilities. The decision follows recent US-Israeli military strikes on Iranian nuclear and military infrastructure, and has sent shockwaves through diplomatic and security circles worldwide.

According to Mehr News Agency, the bill passed with 221 votes in favor, no votes against, and one abstention out of 223 lawmakers present, indicating near-unanimous domestic support for the escalation. The legislation requires that IAEA inspectors be denied access unless the security of Iran's nuclear sites is guaranteed, a condition subject to approval by Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

The parliamentary vote comes days after coordinated attacks by the United States and Israel, including the deployment of B-2 bombers, struck targets in Iran described as "nuclear and military installations." Iranian officials have characterized the attacks as acts of aggression, with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf accusing the IAEA of political bias and silence in the face of what he called violations of Iranian sovereignty.

"The IAEA, which did not even formally condemn the attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, has put its international credibility up for sale," Qalibaf said during the session. "Iran's peaceful nuclear program will proceed at an even faster pace."

End of Transparency?

The vote effectively dismantles one of the last remaining oversight elements of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a landmark nuclear accord that has been unraveling since the US withdrawal in 2018. While Iran has repeatedly insisted its nuclear program is solely for civilian purposes, the suspension of IAEA inspections eliminates a crucial trust-building mechanism.

Without independent verification, the international community will be left in the dark regarding the scope and intent of Iran's nuclear activities. Analysts warn that this may prompt regional rivals like Saudi Arabia and Turkey to follow suit.

What's at Stake

Experts say the implications of this development are

profound and far-reaching:

- The collapse of verification could allow Iran to expand its enrichment activities without oversight.
- The NPT regime risks serious erosion, as other countries may question the value of compliance.
- A regional security spiral could draw in major powers and further destabilize West Asia.

A Broader Confrontation Looms

In his address, Speaker Qalibaf struck a defiant tone, claiming that Israel had "failed to halt Iran's enrichment or missile program" and had instead suffered "unprecedented damage" to its own infrastructure. He also stated that US bases in the region, including one in Qatar, had been targeted with advanced Iranian missiles, forcing Washington to seek a ceasefire.

"With our finger on the trigger, we will respond forcefully to any aggressor," he warned, adding that Iran's influence over global energy markets remains an untapped strategic asset.

Diplomatic sources have indicated that talks are underway behind closed doors to prevent the situation from escalating further, but with hardliners firmly in control in Tehran and rising nationalist sentiments, prospects for de-escalation remain uncertain.

Explosive Kills 7 Israeli Soldiers In Gaza Inside An Armored Vehicle

AP

Jerusalem: Seven Israeli soldiers were killed on Tuesday in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis when their armored vehicle was struck by an explosive, an Israeli military official said on Wednesday.

The official said six of the soldiers' names had been cleared for publication, while one was still being kept confidential. Also in the area of Khan Younis area, one soldier was seriously wounded on Tuesday by weapons fire, the military said.

Al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, said on its Telegram channel it had ambushed Israeli soldiers taking cover inside a residential building in southern Gaza Strip. Some of the soldiers were killed and other injured after they were targeted by a Yassin 105 missile and another missile south of Khan Younis, Hamas said.

Al-Qassam fighters then targeted the building with machine guns. It was not immediately clear whether the two incidents were the same.

Gaza's Health Ministry said that Israel's 21-month military operation in Gaza has killed 56,077 people. The war was sparked by Hamas' surprise attack on southern Israel on Oct 7, 2023, that killed around 1,200 people dead, mostly civilians, and took 251 others hostage.

DGCA Uncovers Multiple Lapses In Airlines, Airports

Press Trust Of India

Aviation watchdog DGCA has detected multiple violations related to airlines, airports, aircraft maintenance works and repeated defects in multiple cases during its surveillance at major airports, an exercise carried out in less than two weeks after the Air India plane crash.

Without disclosing names of the airlines, airports and other entities in relation to the defects, the regulator on Tuesday said surveillance covered multiple critical areas such as flight operations, airworthiness, ramp safety, Air Traffic Control (ATC), communica-

marking of a runway at an airport to non-updation of obstruction limitation data for three years to a scheduled carrier's domestic flight being held up due to worn tyres, the watchdog came across multiple defects in the aviation ecosystem.

Noting that the comprehensive surveillance will continue in future to detect hazards in the aviation ecosystem, the DGCA said the findings had been communicated to the entities concerned for taking corrective actions within seven days.

Two teams led by the Joint Director General carried out



tion, navigation and surveillance (CNS) systems and pre-flight medical evaluations.

The surveillance was done last week and DGCA is stepping up efforts to strengthen the overall safety oversight of the aviation ecosystem.

From a faded centre line

the surveillance during night and early morning hours at major airports, including Delhi and Mumbai airports.

The DGCA listed multiple cases wherein the reported defects reappeared many times on the aircraft indicating ineffective monitoring.

CBSE Class X Exams Twice a Year to Ease Stress: Minister

Prees Trust Of India

New Delhi: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday lauded the CBSE's decision to conduct Class X exams twice a year as a "much-needed step" and said it would reduce stress, provide more flexibility and foster a joyful learning environment.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced that from 2026, Class X students will be able to take board exams twice in an academic session, but it will be mandatory for them to appear for the first phase in February.

The second phase, scheduled in May, will be optional for students who wish to improve their performance. In case a student appears for both phases, the better score of the two will be retained.

The CBSE has approved the norms for conducting board exams twice a year for Class X, a move recommended in the new National Education Policy (NEP).

"Laudable and a much-needed step. This will reduce exam stress, provide more flexibility and foster a joyful learning environment. A key recommendation of NEP

Laudable and a much-needed step. This will reduce exam stress, provide more flexibility and foster a joyful learning environment. A key recommendation of NEP 2020, twice-a-year exams is a student-centric approach and also aligns with global education practices

2020, twice-a-year exams is a student-centric approach and also aligns with global education practices," Pradhan wrote on X.

According to Ministry of Education officials, it is a landmark shift towards competency-based assessments that value understanding over rote learning.

"A major reform under NEP empowers students with choice, confidence and second chances, reflecting NEP 2020's vision of a more inclusive, learner-centric education system based on joyful curiosity," a senior ministry official said.

NEWS MAKERS

Pakistan Army officer, Who Captured Abhinandan Varthaman In 2019, Killed

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: An officer of the Pakistan Army's Special Services Group, who had claimed to have captured Indian Air Force pilot Abhinandan Varthaman after his jet was shot down in a dogfight in 2019, was killed in a clash with the Taliban militants, according to the army. Major Syed Moiz Abbas Shah, 37, was killed on Tuesday in a clash with the Taliban militants in the Sararogha area of South Waziristan near the Afghan border, according to a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army.



Lance Naik Jibran Ullah, 27, was also killed in the same battle, it said.

The army troops killed 11 terrorists belonging to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and wounded seven others in the same operation, the state-

ment said.

Moiz's funeral prayer was offered at Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi, and army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir attended it.

"Major Syed Moiz Abbas fought bravely in the face of resistance

and ultimately laid down his life in the line of duty, upholding the highest traditions of bravery, sacrifice and patriotism," the ISPR statement quoted Munir as saying.

His body was flown to his native home town of Chakwal in Punjab where he was laid to rest with full military honours.

He was commissioned into the Pakistani Army in 2011. However, he later became part of the Special Services Group (SSG) and was currently serving in the volatile Waziristan region.

After his death, it turned out that he was the same officer who had captured Abhinandan and saved him from mob violence, local media reported.

Vice President Dhankhar Faints At Kumaon University Programme

PTI

Nainital: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar fainted on Wednesday while attending the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Kumaon University here.

As the Vice President stepped down from the dais after delivering his speech, he approached his former parliamentary colleague, Mahendra Singh Pal, who was seated in the audience.

Pal, an advocate in the High Court of Uttarakhand, served as a Lok Sabha MP in 1989 when Dhankhar was also an MP from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.



Both men appeared to become emotional on seeing each other.

After they talked for a while, Dhankhar embraced Pal and appeared to pass out on his shoulders.

Noticing something was wrong, the medical team accompanying the

Vice President quickly responded and brought him back to consciousness.

Dhankhar soon recovered and proceeded to the Raj Bhawan, where he would spend the night.

The Vice President began his three-day visit to Nainital on Wednesday.

HEATWAVE: Kids In Crèches Face Wrath Of Heat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With the scorching temperatures, the students of schools and colleges are observing early summer vacations, however, private preparatory schools—Kindergartens in Kashmir division on the contrary are functioning in the ongoing severe heatwave—thus putting the lives of kids enrolled at high risk.

Parents of the kids informed KNO that the management of the kindergartens are Uptominting money only. “They are hardly bothered about the wellbeing of the innocent kids.”

Some of the parents of those wards studying in private crèches said that the lackadaisical approach of the government is giving a freehand to the owners of these preparatory schools to mint hefty amounts from the parents.

One of the parent’s said that, “My son is studying in one of the leading crèches of Srinagar and I have requested the management of the school to an-

nounce summer break for them but they never pay heed to it.”

“There is no cooling system or fans available for the kids and it seems that the management of the kindergarten is bothered about their money only, they are hardly bothered about the wellbeing of the kids,” he said.

Another parent said, “While the kindergartens are ungoverned, there is no accountability to the actions of kindergartens.”

“The government must regulate and devise a mechanism for the kindergartens so that the lives and health of the innocent kids is protected,” he said.

Previously, the School Education Department had said that they were in the process of monitoring the crèches in Kashmir.

Pertinently, as already reported, the private preparatory schools—Kindergartens in Kashmir division are functioning without any regulatory authority and mechanism and continue to go un-governed—thus raising a question on the functioning of the authorities.

DC Budgam Takes Review Of Self-Employment Schemes



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat chaired a comprehensive review meeting of various self-employment and livelihood generation schemes being implemented across multiple departments.

The meeting, held at the DC office complex, covered flagship schemes including PMEGP, MUMKIN, TEJASWINI, HADP, SMAM, MIDH, NRLM, NULM, and various credit-linked subsidy programs under Handicrafts, Handloom, Animal Husbandry, and Horticulture sectors.

During the meeting, scheme-wise performance from April 1, 2024 to June 24, 2025 was reviewed in detail.

It was apprised that out of 23,969 applications received under various schemes, 12,793 cases have been approved while 16,574 cases were sponsored, besides 9,245 units stand established, with 4,529 cases sanctioned by banks.

Speaking on the occasion, DC emphasised the need for enhanced convergence, timely sponsorships, and effective implementation on the ground. He directed concerned officers to identify bottlenecks and ensure that genuine and eligible cases are not left out due to procedural

delays or portal issues.

To further streamline the process and extend benefits to genuine aspirants, DC directed for the constitution of a special committee that will conduct door-to-door verification of self-employment aspirants to ensure that those in real need of support are identified and linked to the most suitable schemes.

He said, “Our aim is to maximize livelihood generation at the grassroots and reach every deserving individual of the district.”

Dr Bilal underscored the importance of follow-up inspections and post-establishment monitoring to ensure that beneficiaries are utilizing funds appropriately and that the units established are sustainable.

He further instructed all sectoral officers to submit updated lists of pending and sanctioned cases, along with a plan of action for resolution within a stipulated time frame.

He directed LDM Budgam to furnish a list of banks where the cases are pending for the lack of financial support or other formalities.

DC called for synergy between banks, sponsoring agencies, and implementing departments to fast-track employment generation efforts across the district.

DC Bla Reviews Status Of Ongoing Land Acquisition Proceedings



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa chaired a review meeting to assess the current status of ongoing land acquisition proceedings for major National Highway projects, including the Srinagar-Baramulla-Uri (SBU) and Rafiabad-Kupwara-Chowkibal-Tangdar-Chamkote (RKCTC) highways.

The meeting focused on the progress of acquisition related to missing, left out, and additional land requirement for the smooth execution of works.

DC directed the concerned Tehsildars to expedite the submission of complete and updated revenue papers, particularly for areas such as the Pattan Bypass and Baramulla stretch, and to ensure close coordination with the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for timely award issuance.

Roads & Buildings and Horticulture departments were instructed to complete assessments of affected structures

and trees without delay, so that compensation cases can be processed promptly.

While reviewing the Khasra Paimaish of pending land measurements, DC asked officers to ensure accuracy and completeness in the documentation. He also emphasized the need to submit all pending title certificates and account details for early processing of compensation payments.

DC directed concerned revenue officials to complete the mutation of acquired land in revenue records on priority, to avoid legal and administrative delays.

Other key issues, including the illegal sale of soil by contractors and delays in the handover/takeover of acquired land, were also reviewed. DC directed strict monitoring and enforcement action wherever irregularities are reported.

The meeting was attended by ACR Baramulla, SDM Uri, SDM Pattan, SE R&B, OC Beacon, concerned Tehsildars, and officers from the Horticulture and other line departments.

Raj Kumar Santoshi, LG Discuss Promotion Of Film-Related Activities



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Bollywood director Raj Kumar Santoshi called on Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here on Wednesday and dis-

cussed promotion of film-related activities in the Kashmir Valley.

Santoshi was accompanied by Citara Group founder Pradeep Sharma and its founder and managing director Ra-

hul Nehra, an official spokesperson said.

The Citara Group representatives outlined their plans to set up a film city in Srinagar and open a cinema hall and film museum in Pahalgam, he said.

DSEK Orders Continuation Of Remedial Coaching

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: School Education Department Wednesday ordered the education institutions to continue remedial teaching during summer vacations for schools with poor results in JKBOSE Class 10th & 12th Examinations.

According to KNO, Joint Director elementary education at Directorate of School Education Kashmir in a communique said, “Remedial teaching was initiated for schools that recorded unsatisfactory performance in the recently declared JKBOSE Class 10th and 12th examinations.”

It also said that DSEK has reviewed that sustained academic support is crucial to bridge learning gaps and ensure that students are well-prepared for the forthcoming biannual examinations.

DSEK said that in view of the matter, and keeping in mind the best interests of students, it is ordered that throughout the summer vacations, it shall continue without any interruption as envisaged in the already issued order for the schools identified with poor results.

“Classes shall be organized during early morning hours from 8:00 am to facilitate a conducive learning environ-

ment and to safeguard students from extreme heat during the day,” the directorate ordered.

DSEK said that the objective of remedial teaching is to strengthen the fundamental concepts of students, provide them individual attention, clarify their doubts, and equip them with exam-oriented preparation so that they can improve their performance in the upcoming biannual exams.

“The subject-wise remedial plan with timelines prepared by the concerned teachers should be strictly adhered to and followed in letter and spirit,” it said.

DSEK further said that the Heads of Institutions shall ensure that remedial teaching focuses intensively on sub-jects and topics identified and monitor it on a daily basis with written records.

“Detailed remedial schedules shall be displayed on the school notice boards for information of students, parents and monitoring institutions and teachers engaged for remedial classes shall adopt interactive and student-friendly teaching methods, assess the progress of students regularly, and maintain comprehensive records of attendance, lesson dairies with topics covered,

and student assessment and improvement,” it reads.

DSEK further said that the parents shall be sensitized and motivated to ensure that their wards attend the remedial classes regularly and make full use of this additional academic support.

“Cluster Heads shall personally monitor the conduct and quality of remedial classes by visiting schools periodically. Daily monitoring reports, along with photographs and performance reviews, shall be submitted to Cluster Heads and respective DIETs without fail,” DSEK said.

The directorate further ordered that the DIETs shall closely monitor the process and submit reports to SCERT on a weekly basis.

“Non-compliance of the instructions or any laxity in the conduct of remedial teaching shall be viewed seriously and strict disciplinary action shall be initiated against the erring officials and teachers.”

DSEK accordingly directed Chief Education Officers to implement the order in letter and spirit so that the students are fully supported academically and are better equipped to succeed in the upcoming supplementary JKBOSE examinations

SANJY-2025

DC Ganderbal Inspects Facilities At Baltal & Manigam

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: In view of the upcoming Amarnath Yatra (SANJY)-2025, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatinder Kishore, today conducted an extensive visit to Baltal Base Camp and Manigam Transit Camp to take stock of the ongoing arrangements being put in place for the smooth conduct of the Yatra.

During the visit to Baltal, the DC inspected key infrastructure including accommodation facilities, sanitation, essential services, and overall preparedness for the arrival of pilgrims. He emphasized the importance of ensuring all basic amenities are fully functional well before the commencement of the Yatra.

The DC visited the Joint Police Control Room (JPCR) at Baltal and reviewed its functioning, deployment of staff, and coordination mechanism. He directed all concerned departments to ensure seamless communication and timely sharing of information for effective coordination.

While supervising the pitching of tents within the base camp, the DC urged tent owners to ensure good quality tents equipped with proper bedding and necessary facilities for the pilgrims’ comfortable stay. He also instructed Fire and Emergency Services



INTERACTING WITH LOCAL SHOPKEEPERS AT BALTAL, THE DC URGED THEM TO MAINTAIN cleanliness in and around their establishments and strictly follow safety protocols while setting up their shops.

and SDM Kangan to maintain adequate spacing between tents and to ensure the availability of fire extinguishers at each tent to mitigate any fire-related risk.

Interacting with local shopkeepers at Baltal, the DC urged them to maintain cleanliness

in and around their establishments and strictly follow safety protocols while setting up their shops.

Later, the DC visited the Manigam Transit Camp and reviewed the preparedness of the camp. He directed the Nodal Officer, Transit Camp to ensure that all necessary utilities such as tents, shops, toilets, and other essential services are set up well in time so that pilgrims do not face any inconvenience during their halt at the transit point.

The DC reiterated the commitment of the District Administration to provide a safe, hygienic, and well-organized environment for the Yatris during SANJY-2025 and called upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination for the successful conduct of the Yatra.

Rainfall Brings Relief To Select Uptown Areas Of Sgr

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: While some parts of uptown Srinagar experienced rainfall on Wednesday morning, providing much-needed relief from the sweltering heat, large swathes of the city, including the city centre Lal Chowk, remained dry, leaving many residents disappointed and frustrated.

According to KNT, the brief spell of rain fell over isolated localities such as Rawalpura, Hyderpora, Chanapora, Mehjoor Nagar, Padshahi Bagh and Natipora. The showers, though not heavy, were enough to cool the air and temporarily break the oppressive heatwave that had gripped the Valley for days. Locals in these areas said the temperature dropped noticeably after the rain, bringing a sense of calm to what had otherwise been stifling mornings.

“It felt like the sky finally showed some mercy. Even this amount of rain was a huge relief,” said Altaf Ahmad, a resident of Jawahar Nagar.

However, the situation was quite different in Lal Chowk, and several other central and northern parts of Srinagar, where the skies remained over-

cast but no rain fell. Residents and shopkeepers in these areas voiced their discontent, saying the intense humidity, coupled with rising temperatures, has made daily life difficult.

“There is no power, no rain, and the heat is unbearable. It’s frustrating to see other areas get relief while we suffer,” said a vendor.

The heat over the past several days has caused widespread discomfort across the Valley, especially in areas lacking green cover or adequate ventilation. With temperatures hovering above normal, many people have reported headaches, fatigue, and disrupted sleep. Traders in congested markets like Maisuma and Hari Singh High Street said footfall has declined as people avoid venturing out during peak hours.

The selective rainfall also drew attention to Srinagar’s unique microclimate, where neighbouring areas often experience drastically different weather conditions. Officials from the Meteorological Department acknowledged the scattered nature of Wednesday’s rainfall and said such patterns are typical during summer months.

DC & SSP Doda Review Arrangements For Annual Yatras

Observer News Service

DODA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda, Harvinder Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Doda, Sandeep Kumar Mehta along with ADC Doda. Anil Kumar Thakur jointly chaired a comprehensive review meeting to discuss the preparations for the upcoming annual religious yatras across the district.

DC Doda discussed Annual Yatra in the district Shri Chandi Mata Yatra, Kulhand, Chandi Mata Yatra, Yatra Sarva Dharma Shenkhli, Dossa, Annual Chounda Mata Yatra, Charri Yatra, Monthla Nag, Chandi Mata Ken-thi Dhar Yatra, Yatra from Kanser to Malni Dhar, Bhaderwah, Dandasan Mata Yatra and Shri Chandi Mata Lakabar Yatra.

The meeting witnessed the participation of religious heads, including the President of Sanatan Dharam Sabha, and representatives from various Mandir

Committees.

During the meeting, DC Doda reviewed the arrangements related to uninterrupted power and water supply, adequate availability of firewood and essential commodities, sanitation and cleanliness along the yatra routes, Smooth traffic movement and transport facilities.

SSP Doda reviewed the security and traffic management plans for the yatras. He stressed the importance of coordinated efforts between the police, civil administration and local stakeholders to maintain law and order. Deployment of adequate security personnel and traffic regulation measures were also discussed in detail.

DC Doda and SSP Doda emphasized inter-departmental coordination and sought active participation from local religious and civil society representatives to ensure a peaceful and successful yatra season in the district.

Poultry Farm Guttled In Midnight Blaze In Kulgam

Observer News Service

KULGAM: A massive fire broke out late Tuesday night at a poultry farm in the Ponipora area of south Kashmir’s Kulgam district, reducing the entire structure to ashes and causing a significant loss of livestock and property.

According to KNT, officials said the fire erupted during the dead of night and quickly engulfed the poultry shed, leaving little time for salvage. Teams from the Fire and Emergency Services Department responded swiftly, successfully containing the flames and preventing the fire from spreading to nearby residential and commercial structures.

The Station House Officer, Kulgam, along with his team,

also reached the site and supervised the firefighting operation. Due to the coordinated efforts, no loss of human life or injury was reported in the incident.

However, the inferno inflicted heavy damage, completely destroying the poultry infrastructure and resulting in the death of hundreds of birds. The estimated financial loss is likely to run into several lakhs of rupees.

Officials said the exact cause of the fire is still unknown. Police have started an investigation to determine whether the blaze was accidental or triggered by other factors.

Locals have urged the administration to extend compensation to the affected owner, who reportedly relied solely on the poultry business for his livelihood.

MUHARRAM 2025

DC Bandipora Inspects Facilities At Imambaras Across Sumbal

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: In view of the forthcoming holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri conducted an extensive tour of various Imambaras across the Sumbal sub-division to assess the arrangements being put in place for the smooth observance of the religious period.

Accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police Bandipora, Harmeet Singh Mehta; Chief Planning Officer Bandipora, Tehsildar Sumbal, SDPO Sumbal and other officers, DC visited prominent locations of the sub-division and took firsthand appraisal of facilities being made available for the conduct of mourning processions and congregational gatherings.

DC interacted with intezamia committees of the respective

imambaras and enquired about their requirements and concerns. He directed officers of the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted power and water supply, especially during the peak hours of mourning gatherings.

On the occasion, DC directed Municipal Committees to maintain cleanliness and sanitation in and around all major congregation points. Emphasis was laid on the repair of approach roads, lanes, and by-lanes leading to the religious sites to ensure smooth access for devotees.

DC directed the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs department to ensure adequate ration supply during the holy days. He also asked the concerned departments to maintain coordination with the local religious bodies to address any emerging needs promptly.

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KO VIEW

End Statehood
Ambiguity

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah’s statement that he is open to the dissolution of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly once statehood is restored is a welcome political signal. At a time when public discourse on J&K is mostly dominated by security narratives, such a commitment, however conditional, shifts attention back to the core democratic demand of the region: restoration of statehood.

The chief minister’s remarks come against the backdrop of media reports suggesting that the restoration of statehood may entail fresh Assembly elections. Omar’s response seeks to address the notion that he is a barrier to democratic restoration. His rebuttal: "Let them dissolve the Assembly the day statehood is restored, we will recommend it ourselves," has gone down well with people.

There is reason to pay attention. In our earlier editorials, we have consistently argued that restoring trust in Kashmir requires more than administrative tweaks or security-centric policy. This demands the reestablishment of an accountable, and empowered political structure elected by people. The central government has often promised statehood "at an appropriate time," but no timelines have been given. And in the recent months, the central government has gone conspicuously silent over the issue.

If any issue has slipped into the background in Jammu and Kashmir following the brutal Pahalgam attack and the attendant four-day war between India and Pakistan, it is the issue of the statehood for the union territory. However, now fresh noises to this effect can once again be heard.

Now, the question is whether the centre has any immediate or near-term plan to reinstate statehood? There is no easy answer to this. If the recent statements by the senior union government leadership are anything to go by, there are no signs to this effect. This is a promise whose reiteration has been absent from the recent remarks on Kashmir. The PM too skipped any mention of J&K statehood in his recent visit to the region to inaugurate Chenab bridge. This, despite the fact that the Chief Minister specifically mentioned this in his speech on the occasion

However, Omar has brought new attention to the issue. His fresh remarks address an important political anxiety: that the restoration of statehood might be packaged as a power reshuffle rather than a return of popular sovereignty. The suspicion that New Delhi may impose another round of elections merely to rearrange loyalties in the region is not unfounded. But by publicly stating that his party would not resist fresh polls, Omar has attempted to pre-empt that narrative. It is a good political move, both to stay relevant and to signal readiness for democratic reckoning. Hope the centre responds with at least timeline now.

FINANCIAL FIX

Trust Can Trick You

Quick promises and rushed deals often hide financial traps. Slowing down can save your wallet.

Irshad Mushtaq

Trust comes easily in Kashmir. People often open their doors, their lives, and sometimes their wallets to those they believe are friends. But not all friendships are honest, and not every opportunity is what it seems.

Financial manipulation is quietly growing. It’s not always loud or obvious. It can start with a warm conversation, a request for help, or a story that tugs at your heart. Sometimes, it comes as a tempting offer—a quick return on an investment or a shortcut to wealth. Often, it comes with a push: Decide fast, or you’ll miss out.

But real financial opportunities don’t rush you. They don’t hide information, and they don’t play with mystery. Trusted businesses are open, clear, and willing to answer questions. The rush, the pressure, and the missing details are signs that something isn’t right.

Many people skip the simple steps that can protect them. A quick online search. A phone call to check if a company is real. Asking a financial advisor or a trusted friend with no stake in the deal. Slowing down can save you from quick losses.

It’s easy to think, this won’t happen to me. But manipulation often comes from people we feel comfortable with. Protecting your money means keeping control, asking questions, and making sure everything stays in your name.

In a place where trust is part of daily life, being careful isn’t a sign of doubt. It’s a way to keep your peace. Real friendships don’t need secrets, and good opportunities don’t vanish overnight.

The best money is the kind you know is safe, the kind you can trust to still be there tomorrow.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Letter to Editor

How Kashmir Can Adapt to Its Scorching New Normal

Kashmir is wilting under a heat wave like never before. This year’s soaring temperatures have shattered records, forcing schools to shut early for summer vacations. It is no longer just a season of mild sunshine and fresh breezes. The heat now grips our valley with an intensity that was once unthinkable.

The bigger question is: how do we live with this new normal? And how do we make these months meaningful, without being confined to our homes, waiting for the weather to turn kinder?

Kashmir’s average summer temperatures used to hover around 28°C to 30°C. But this year, parts of the valley touched highs of 35°C and beyond, according to data from the India Meteorological Department. The rise is not a passing phase. A

2022 study published in Nature Communications predicts that the Himalayan region, including Kashmir, will continue to experience more frequent and intense heat waves in the coming decades.

Other parts of the world have already faced this challenge and found ways to cope. In the Middle East, where summer temperatures often climb above 45°C, cities adjust their daily routines. Schools and offices start earlier in the morning and close by midday, giving people time to rest during the hottest hours. In Spain, the traditional siesta, a long afternoon break, still helps people manage the heat, especially in rural areas where temperatures can exceed 40°C.

Educational systems in countries like the United Arab Emirates have adopted flexible calendars. Some schools offer hybrid or virtual classes

during peak summer months to keep learning alive without risking children’s health. Public spaces in cities like Dubai and Doha are designed with shaded walkways, water misting systems, and green corridors to reduce heat exposure.

These measures are backed by solid science. Studies show that shaded areas and greenery can lower surrounding temperatures by several degrees.

In Australia, where heat waves are part of life, community centers offer “cooling hubs” — safe, air-conditioned spaces where residents can gather, particularly those without reliable cooling at home. Municipal governments actively run awareness campaigns about hydration, heat safety, and energy-efficient ways to stay cool.

Kashmir can borrow from these

examples. Schools can consider shorter school days or a shift to early morning classes in summer. There is room to build more green spaces, promote home-based learning during extreme heat, and introduce community cooling centers in towns and villages.

Local authorities can encourage designs that reflect heat instead of absorbing it, like whitewashed rooftops, shaded bus stops, and tree-lined streets.

Climate change has altered the rhythm of our seasons. Waiting for cooler days is no longer enough. It is time for Kashmir to think, plan, and adapt like the rest of the warming world.

Sincerely,
Dr. Hafeez Mir
Srinagar

Kashmir’s
Reservation Reversal

JKNC’s election vow to fix the flawed reservation policy is now buried under red tape, and young Kashmiris aren’t buying the excuses.

Ummar Jamal

When the election schedule for Jammu and Kashmir was announced, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) stood out among local political parties in vehemently opposing the New Reservation Policy introduced in March 2024.

The party criticized it as deeply flawed and discriminatory, promising to rationalize the policy if voted to power.

This promise was not made in vague terms, it found clear and unambiguous mention in the party’s manifesto.

The way JKNC leaders publicly spoke and wrote about the skewed nature of the policy created a strong impression among Kashmiri youth that if nothing else, Kashmir’s grand old party was contesting elections primarily to undo the controversial changes to the reservation framework.

That promise, however, now appears to have been little more than an electoral gimmick aimed at securing youth support.

Nearly nine months since assuming power, the commitment to rationalize the reservation policy is yet to see any meaningful action. The same youth who were promised justice and reform now feel disillusioned and betrayed. To them, it seems they were promised a bridge where no river existed.

Given the critical nature of the issue, one that affects thousands of youth across the region, the public had expected swift administrative action once JKNC formed the government. The rollback of the March 2024 policy did not require massive financial resources. It merely demanded political will.

Yet, what followed was a pattern of delays and shifting goalposts that indicate anything but a genuine intent to deliver on the poll promise.

The first major delay came only after massive protests broke out, one notably held at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar and another outside the

Chief Minister’s residence in Srinagar.

It was only in response to public pressure that the government set a six-month deadline for a cabinet sub-committee to submit its report on the reservation policy.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at the time assured the public that while six months was the maximum time, the report would likely be submitted sooner. That assurance, however, turned out to be hollow. The sub-committee waited until the very last day of the deadline before finally submitting its report, a clear indication that urgency and sincerity were lacking.

Yet the delays did not end there. Once the report was submitted, the government introduced yet another bureaucratic hurdle: it needed to be presented before the Cabinet.

Even as public frustration mounted, youth chose to remain patient, thinking this would only take a few weeks. But just as the Cabinet meeting was expected, a new twist was introduced.

Instead of placing the report before the Cabinet for discussion and approval, the government sent it to the J&K Law Department for “vetting”, again, without any fixed timeline.

The recurring theme throughout this process has been delay after delay. The pattern is unmistakable.

Each time a deadline approaches or expectations rise, a new procedural hurdle is introduced to push the matter further down the road.

First it was the sub-committee’s timeline, then the Cabinet meeting, and now the legal vetting process — all without any transparency or accountability.

The way events have unfolded strongly suggests that the JKNC government is not genuinely committed to reforming the reservation policy.

Rather than taking decisive steps to fulfill its campaign promise, it appears more focused on buying time and diffusing public pressure. The youth of Kashmir, who placed

their trust in JKNC, are now left with a growing sense of betrayal.

The government would do well to remember that the youth are not merely spectators, they are the drivers of change. Those who voted a party into power can just as easily vote it out. The patience of the public, particularly the student community, is wearing thin. Anger is simmering, and political apathy is turning into political awareness.

The situation calls for immediate and honest action. JKNC must uphold the commitment it made during the elections. Continuing to string people along with vague reassurances and procedural delays will only deepen the public’s distrust in democratic institutions and the very idea of political accountability.

Nine months is more than enough time for any government to act on a promise that requires no massive infrastructural investment or other convoluted procedure.

At this stage, further delay can only be interpreted as an act of willful neglect — a deliberate attempt to mislead the public under the pretense of procedural formality.

If the NC cannot restore the special status it once promised to defend, the least it can do is deliver on its own commitments within the present constitutional framework. Failing to act even on this modest front raises serious questions about its will, priorities, and accountability to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The time for excuses is over. The youth of Kashmir are watching closely, and they deserve better. It is time for the JKNC government to act, not with another committee or consultation, but with the courage and clarity that leadership demands. If not now, then when?

The author is a National President of J&K Students Association and a Kashmir based columnist. He can be reached at umarjama1968@gmail.com)

The Silence of Addiction
Parents’ fear of social shame is pushing young drug users deeper into addiction. It’s time to break this cycle together.

Ayaan Saroori

amines. The World Drug Report of 2024 makes it clear that men make up the majority of drug users worldwide. Teenagers are also getting trapped at alarming rates. The report says cannabis use among adolescents is now higher than among adults in many parts of the world. This is a serious warning. When the young generation gets hooked, the damage does not stop with them. It carries forward into the next generation.

The same report shows something else that is deeply worrying. Fewer people are getting treatment now than in the past. The rate of treatment has dropped from 11 percent in 2015 to 9 percent in 2022. This points to a bigger problem.

Families are unwilling to come forward. They fear judgement more

than they fear losing their child. But this delay can cost lives.

De-addiction teams and district authorities must step in with more care and more trust-building. Families should not feel afraid of these centers. The aim should be to make treatment a normal and supported step.

Families should be guided, not shamed. In our homes, we need to keep a closer watch. Parents should know who their children are spending time with and where their pocket money is going. Governments can pass laws, but nothing will work if homes remain in the dark.

Fighting addiction also means building safer spaces around our children. It means filling their time with meaningful activities and surrounding them with good influences. In many families, communica-

tion has broken down. Parents give money but don’t ask how it is spent. They leave children to figure things out on their own. But addiction thrives in this silence. We must open those conversations again.

Communities can help by coming together. Local campaigns, street plays, sports, music, and writing competitions can offer young people another direction. Religious leaders can also play a strong role. Their words carry weight in many homes. They can spread the message that drug abuse is not just a health risk, it is a moral loss too.

This is not a fight the administration can win alone. It is not something that can be solved by police or doctors if families and communities keep stepping back. Parents, neighbours, social workers must all come together.

Those who push drugs into our streets may think they can escape justice. But no one escapes forever. Not from the law, not from the damage they cause, and not from the accountability that life demands.

May we find the strength to keep addiction away from our homes and help each other build a safer, kinder society.

Ayaan Saroori is a freelance writer and columnist.

Don't Let Warwan Become a Waste Valley

On a recent visit to the breathtaking Himalayan valley, I saw a land rich in beauty but abandoned by governance. What Warwan needs is conservation, not concrete.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

I recently visited Warwan valley, tucked deep in the Marwah subdivision of Kishtwar district. Although it's in the Jammu division, the road to Warwan passes through Anantnag in Kashmir, going via Kokernag, Vailoo, Matigawran, and the beautiful Margan Top.

It's a long journey, but the moment I stepped into the valley, I felt I had entered a forgotten world.

Warwan has around 14 villages, home to ethnic Kashmiris who have lived there for at least two centuries, probably more.

Local sources estimate the population is about 14,000 today, nearly a 50% increase from the 2011 census.

Though it was granted tehsil status some years ago and falls under the Inderwal assembly segment, you wouldn't know it from the condition of the place.

There's no direct road from Kishtwar to Warwan, even though it's only 68 kilometers away. The Marusudar river flows through the valley, born from the Batkot and Gumar streams. It's one of the most important right-bank tributaries of the Chenab.

The water is pure, the air crisp. But everything else, like basic healthcare, sanitation, electricity, internet, is either broken or missing altogether.

You wouldn't think this place had been part of India's "Digital India" campaign.

Villagers I spoke to had never heard of Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin, PM-Kisan, or Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana.

Funds meant to preserve cultural heritage seem to vanish before reaching the valley. There's so much potential here, for adventure tourism, hydropower, and me-



dicinal plant farming.

And yet, it feels like the place has been written out of every planning document.

What hurt the most was seeing the traditional wooden and mud homes being pulled down and replaced with concrete blocks. Some of these old houses and mosques are over half a century old, and they're stunning. Tourists would love them, especially international travelers.

But nobody's guiding or helping the locals to preserve them. There's no heritage

conservation board, no incentives, not even awareness. The local officials don't seem to realize what's being lost.

Then there's the garbage.

It's creeping in from all sides: visitors bringing plastic, shops selling packaged junk, locals tossing waste into the open. Places like Margan Top, once pristine, are now dotted with litter.

I tried talking to a few shopkeepers, asking them not to bring in so much packaged stuff, but most of them didn't see the problem.

Local officials could easily step in and ban single-use plastics here, but that would require both vision and will.

Sanitation, too, is a disaster. For the last few years, the Rural Development Department has been responsible for managing rural waste in J&K. Gram Panchayats are supposed to team up with NGOs and SHGs to run solid and liquid waste programs. That's the theory.

In practice, I didn't see a single compost pit or soakage pit in any of the five or six vil-

lages I visited. Not even one. No waste collection trucks either, despite road access to most villages now.

The government gives Rs 5,500 for compost pits and Rs 11,300 for soakage pits under Swachh Bharat. But in Warwan, no one seems to know these funds exist. The money is being spent, somewhere. But not here.

And then there are Chopans, Kashmiri shepherds who've always lived close to the land. They don't own livestock themselves, but they graze the sheep of others across high-altitude meadows.

After Article 370 was abrogated, many of them hoped the Forest Rights Act would finally give them legal access to the pastures they've used for generations. That hasn't happened.

Instead, private individuals are encroaching on the land and renting it out to outsiders. The government has done little to protect the Chopans or even recognize their existence.

This isn't just Warwan's story. It's the story of many virgin destinations in J&K that are being overlooked or mishandled.

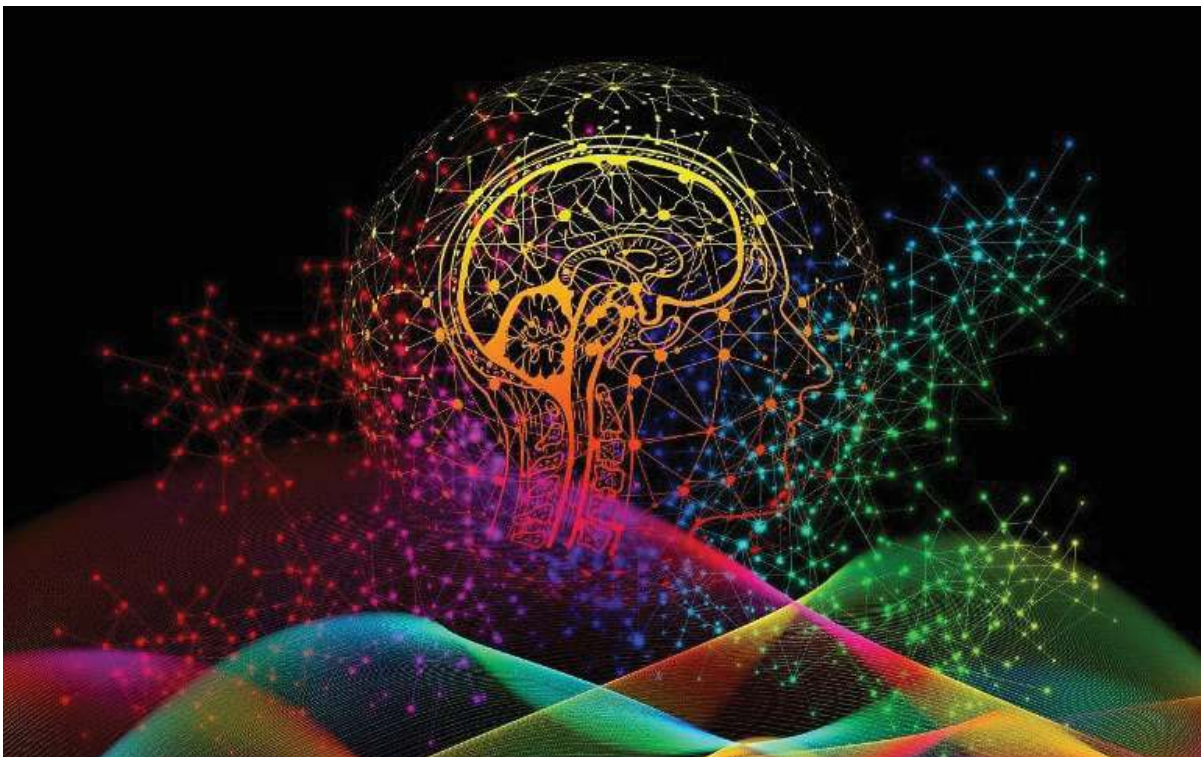
Over the last few decades, the state has created a string of tourism development authorities. But what places like Warwan, Marwah and Gurez need now are Conservation Authorities. Because the damage we're doing isn't reversible.

If we don't act, Warwan will soon be a case study in how to ruin paradise. I hope the administration, especially Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, pays attention before it's too late.

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement.

The Puzzle of Existence

We may be specks in the universe, but each of us holds a world inside.



Dr Ambreen Hamadani

Picture a single image with a million pixels. Now, imagine a million headshots within that image. Then, a billion people in a single frame. Next, consider some eight billion. And finally, all the zillions that have ever lived.

The sheer number of individuals who have walked the earth is staggering.

On top of all that, there is the complicated journey of life itself. This complex, meandering road is different for each one of us. We meet at cross-sections, sometimes share a track or two with others, and continue our separate ways.

Often, we scale mountains or cross oceans. Each of us is walking towards a common endpoint- the inevitable end.

Hitchhiking makes travel a little easier, but that is not always an option. Inescapably, we drag our tired feet and carry huge baggage on our shoulders and hearts. Some journeys conclude with tranquility, while others result in complete turmoil.

Some of us will take longer roads while others are destined for very short ones. In between, everything is ranging from a mild, pleasant breeze to hurricanes; a few predictable and others, a bolt from the blue.

Invariably, there is a share of joy, sorrow, hope, hopelessness, turmoil, pain,

and ecstasy for all.

Whether all find meaning before the close, I do not know. Maybe no one does. But it is amazing how many stories are running simultaneously. The magnitude of the drama of life and the infinite permutations of even a millisecond of every life are incomprehensible.

For example, the heart-wrenching Ahmedabad plane crash intertwined hundreds of complex lives and stories, converging them to a single point in time, and the aftermath left marks on thousands more.

Even at the DNA level, every individual is different, leading to a different face, a demeanor, a style, a speech, and a mind. Every mind is incessantly thinking different thoughts, making different decisions.

Now, if you subscribe to the multiverse theory, then that is where the mind gives up completely. With so many lives and so many stories, how ordinary and immaterial must one life be?

If one less person is born, would that make a difference to this vast and never-ending universe? If a speck of sand vanishes from the beaches, would anyone notice?

Would a single strand falling from a headful of hair make any difference at all?

Every day, millions of such strands fall, and the world continues to spin.

Yet and just yet, how each soul manages to be important is more incredible than all this. Each of us creates a personal universe.

In this world of infinite possibilities, we manage to be perfectly unique, like a tiny piece of a giant jigsaw fitting where it must. Playing a role, unknowingly, until it is time to sign off. This is beyond amazing. As this is what makes us all stupendously unordinary, completely irreplaceable in a minuscule space and at a tiny point in time.

Every story is complex, intricate, and interwoven with tremendous detail. It begins at a point, takes a definite trajectory, and makes special appearances in many more stories.

There is a paradox in this relative importance. From one perspective, you are the center of the universe; from another, it matters not that you were born.

These thoughts are complex, and they lead us through a labyrinth to eventually just one possibility, a slight modification of Dumbledore's wise words: it doesn't do to dwell on complicated ideas and forget to live. This way or that, we must live.

The author is Assistant Professor and Junior Scientist at the AI & Machine Learning Center, SKUAST-Kashmir, with a PhD and postdoctoral training from the USA.

When the Question Lives

A reflection on why asking questions is the pulse of human progress, and why some societies fear it.

Abid Hussain Rather

Dostoevsky once said that a time would come when intelligent people would be stopped from thinking, from asking questions, just so they wouldn't offend fools. It's a chilling thought.

Foolishness often survives because it demands blind acceptance. It doesn't like to be challenged. When you start to question, you begin to search, for truth, clarity, and understanding.

And that can be dangerous to those who benefit from silence.

If we really think about it, all of human civilization rests on questions. Simple, urgent, sometimes childlike questions. Who am I? Who are you? What are clouds? What is the wind? Why does it blow, and why does it stop? Why does the sun always rise in the east? If the Earth is spinning, what stays still? If all human brains are built the same way, why do some people seem to think faster, or deeper, than others? Who decides what it means to be insane? If iron sinks in water, how can ships float? How do civilizations rise and fall? How does a thought become a belief, and how does it later grow into a scientific fact?

Someone, somewhere, must have asked these questions. That's how we moved from caves to building rockets. That's how we crossed oceans and made homes in space. A question is what gives birth to an answer. A question carries the blueprint of the human mind. It shows who we are. It maps out our intelligence, blind spots, and depth. The answer may be plain. But the question, never.

Some questions might sound silly at first. Why does an apple fall instead of floating away? But this simple thought gave us the key to gravity. When all human blood is red, when our brains are roughly the same size, when the earth belongs to all of us, and when death comes for everyone—what gives rise to class, caste, and social hierarchies?

Karl Marx started from that question. Which is stronger: violence or non-violence? The lives of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela answered that.

If we are given the gift of reason, why must we stay locked in one idea forever? Why can't we explore new ways of thinking? And when we're stopped from doing so, what happens to us? These questions led to the birth of enlightenment.

A question is like water. Let it flow, and it gives life. Block it, and it goes stale. We don't have to look far to understand this. Just look at ourselves. Look at the places where asking questions is a crime, where seeking the truth is punished. Compare them to the societies that embraced curiosity, chased answers, and reshaped their futures.

Watch those who cling to the idea that they alone hold the truth. Compare them to those who are willing to be wrong, who know that through open, patient conversation, people can find a shared path. This is what separates those who move forward from those who stand still.

The moment we start removing words like "without a doubt," "certainly," "impossible," or "I blindly trust" from our daily talk, and start stepping, even slowly, toward curiosity and doubt, something shifts. That's when the long-paused journey of intellectual growth begins again.

But there's something we often forget. Before asking a question, we must first listen. Truly listen. Otherwise, our questions can become weapons. They can fuel arguments instead of discovery. A question can be more powerful than a bomb. It can break the strongest walls.

In many of our schools, colleges, and madrasas, a student who dares to question is seen as a troublemaker. Instead of encouraging them to think, we train them to memorize, to obey, to repeat. We build generations who can recite, but not reason.

If we could raise children who ask, who wonder, who challenge, who think beyond what they are told, perhaps we could begin to heal some of our deepest wounds.

Otherwise, the angel Israfil (AS) waits quietly, watching the clock, knowing what we pretend not to know, that our time isn't endless.

The author hails from Kulgam and can be reached at rather1294@gmail.com.

Study Finds Diabetes Risk May Increase In Roles With Emotional Demands Confrontations

Press Trust Of India

Emotional demands at a workplace and in-person confrontations with colleagues could be related with upto a 24 per cent increased risk of developing diabetes, a study has suggested.

Risk of the metabolic disorder was found to be highest (47 per cent) in women working emotionally demanding jobs, but had a low social support at work. The analysis is published in the journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

Researchers from Sweden's Karolinska Institutet said the findings support the notion that working in roles requiring a constant engagement with people can be stressful, which can eventually affect workers' metabolic health.

They said that factors, such as job strain, insecurity, violence or bullying at workplace, are all known to heighten the chance of developing diabetes.

However, how working in roles requiring in-person exchanges with patients, customers, clients or passengers can impact one's risk is not known, they added.

The analysis looked at data of about 30 lakh people who were part of a study group registered in Sweden in 2005. The participants were aged 30-60 in 2005, with no history of diabetes diagnosis or medications.

Twenty job roles in industries requiring highest levels of in-person contact were analysed, including service, healthcare, hospitality and education. Three types of interactions were looked at -- general, emotional demands in a stressed situation and confrontation.

Between 2006 and 2020, over two lakh people were found to have developed type 2 diabetes, of which about 60 per cent were men.

The affected tended to be older, more likely to be born outside Sweden, and to have a lower level of education and low job control, compared to those who did not develop the metabolic condition, the

researchers said.

"High exposures to emotional demands and confrontation were respectively associated with 20 per cent and 15 per cent increased risks of type 2 diabetes in men, and 24 per cent and 20 per cent in women," the authors wrote.

Chronic or persistent levels of stress that affect the endocrine system (which produces hormones), resulting in an excess production of the stress hormone 'cortisol' and increased insulin resistance, could be a possible biological mechanism behind the links, they said.

These biological processes could worsen due to a lack of social support at the workplace, the team said.

"With regards to having contact with people at work, there are expectations for emotional management where workers are required to express or hide emotions according to societal, occupational and organisational norms. It is especially stressful when the displayed emotion and the genuinely felt emotion are not aligned," the authors wrote.

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PREMISES REQUIRED

The Jammu & Kashmir Bank invites offers from Owners of premises **on lease basis/outright purchase** for housing its **Offsite CRM (Cash Recycler Machine) on ground floor** at Hospital Road Yaripora, Kulgam, as per the details given below:

S. No	Name of the Proposed Site	Location	Carpet Area in sq. ft.(approx.)
01	Offsite CRM at Hospital Road Yaripora, Kulgam	Locality: Hospital Road Yaripora. Tehsil: Yaripora. District: Kulgam.	Upto 120 sq. ft

Further details, requirements, terms and conditions, Technical Bids and Financial Bids proforma relating to the same can be obtained in person from **Zonal Office Anantnag** during working hours and also can be downloaded from Bank's website www.jkbank.com from **27/06/2025 under the link "EOI & Tender / Notification"** in the **Quick Access Tab**. The interested parties/persons owning the premises and having a clear title over the property should submit their offers in format **prescribed by Bank by or before 10/07/2025 (05:00 PM IST)** at **Zonal Office Anantnag-192101**.
Note: Those interested persons who have previously applied for any such tender need to apply afresh.
Bank reserves the right to cancel/reject any/all offer(s) without assigning any reason thereof.

Ref No: JKB/ZOA/Acquisition/Premises-1437
Dated: 25/06/2025
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DIPK-NB-899/25 dated: 25-06-2025

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Keller

Subject: Engagement of Sahayikas (AWHs)in Anganwadi centres of Poshan Project Keller on Honorarium basis
Ref: Government. Order No. 103 JK-(SWD) of 2023 Dated 28-04-2023 issued by Commissioner Secretary to Government Social Welfare Department J&K

Ref: MD/Poshan/Estt/ 2025-26/21564-67 Dated 29-05-2025
Ref: DPOP/Poshan/Estt/2025-26/153-54 Dated 30-05-2025

EXTENSION NOTICE

In view of limited number of application received, it is for the information of all the concerned that the last date of receipt of the application form for Engagement of Sahayikas Anganwadi Helpers of below mentioned AWCs advertised vide Notice No. CD-POS/POSHAN/Kel/Adv/2025-26/179-92 Dated. Dated: 31-05-2025 is hereby extended for period of 05 days from date of publication of this notice.

S. No	Name of District	Name of Project	Name of Panchayat	Recruitment of SAHAYIKAS (AWHs)
				Panch Ward
1	Shopian	Keller	Zawoora-A	01
2	Shopian	Keller	Zawoora-A	05
3.	Pulwama	Keller	Bellow	11

Child Dev. Project Officer
Keller

DIPK-2903/25
Dated: -25-06-2025
No: -CDPOS/POSHAN/Kel/Adv/2025-26/

GOVERNMENT OF UT JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PCD(PHQ) J&K JAMMU/ SRINAGAR

INVITING E-TENDER NOTICE

e-NIT No/EE-PCD/PHQ/26/2025-26 Dated: - 23-06-2025

Executive Engineer PCD PHQJ&K JAMMU/SRINAGARon behalf of The President of India invites tenders by e-tendering on Percentage rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Govt. / CPWD / Railways and other State / Central Governments for the following works.

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Estimated Cost (Rs. In lacs)	Cost of document (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time Allowed for completion	Date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Construction of Single Storied 30 bedded barrack at GRP/ARP (Additional Deployment) at Railway Station Anantnag (Under Head buildings & structures in Demand-51 Police	PCD (PHQ) J&K, Jmu/ Sgr	152.08 lacs	4000/-	304160/-	210 working days	08-07-2025	"A"

1. Date of Publishing 26-06-2025 at 1600 hours.
2. The Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>from 1630 hours on 26-06-2025.
i. The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in>from 28-06-2025 to 07-07-2025 upto1600 Hrs. The bids received will be opened at 1100 hours on 08-07-2025 online.
ii. The complete bidding process will be online.
iii. Technical bids of bidders shall be opened online in the office of Executive Engineer PCD PHQ J&K Jammu/ Srinagar on 08-07-2025 at 1100 Hrs.
iv. The lowest bidder i. e. L1 shall be intimated to deposit the original copy of required earnest money in shape of CDR/ FDR and hard copies of all relevant documents as mentioned in clause 2 of general instructions to the bidders within five days from opening of financial bids.
v. In light of Govt. Notification issued by Finance Department Civil Secretariat Vide No. A/24(2017)-651 dated:- 07-06-2018, the bidder must upload the copy of challan / receipt on account of cost of tender documents remitted in the treasury concerned for that the bidders must write an application to be addressed to treasury officer concerned requesting therein for remittance of amount as cost of tender documents towards M. H. 0055/ Revenue (others).

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Police Construction Division
PHQ, J&K, Jmu/Sgr.

No:- e-NIT/EE-PCD/PHQ/2025-26/5733-40
DIPK-2934/25 Dated: 25-06-2025.

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India On Track To Become USD 5 Trillion Economy By 2027: Goyal

Press Trust Of India

KOLKATA- Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said India is firmly on track to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2027 despite global turbulence, driven by a collective national effort and strong leadership under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Speaking at a virtual session organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Goyal also hailed the government's decade-long economic reforms as transformational rather than incremental.

"We are well on track to achieve the USD 5 trillion economy goal in the next three years. This will be the first milestone on our journey to 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047," Goyal said on Tuesday.

Taking note of the global economic volatility and geopolitical headwinds, the minister said India must navigate turbulent waters with unity and determination.

"Great economies aren't built in calm waters. This is India's time. We must seize the moment and work together to claim our rightful place among the world's leading nations," he said.

Goyal described the government's development model as one focused on inclusive, sustainable, and honest growth, emphasising service, good governance, and innovation.

"The last 11 years have not been about incremental change. We have aimed for quantum leaps," he said.

Citing economic indicators, Goyal said India has moved from being part of the 'Fragile Five' to becoming one of the top five global economies.

He highlighted the country's foreign exchange reserves, which recently touched USD 698 billion, robust banking sector



health, and inflation levels averaging among the lowest in post-independence history.

He also praised Prime Minister Modi's personal commitment to citizen welfare, referencing the government's swift evacuation efforts in global conflict zones, like Iran and Ukraine.

Referring to the Emergency imposed in 1975, the minister drew a contrast with present-day India, calling it an "oasis of stability" in a globally unstable ecosystem.

He also pointed to the government's aggressive free trade agreements (FTAs) with developed economies such as the UK, Australia, and the EU, which he said are designed to benefit Indian exporters and MSMEs.

"The FTAs we are signing are not with weak or competing economies but with advanced markets. These are complementary relationships, offering immense opportunities for our industry," he said, urging exporters and startups to take advantage of these deals.

Touching on the potential of AI and emerging technologies, Goyal said India is ready to lead in sectors like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and 3D printing.

"Rather than fearing job losses, we should focus on the opportunities to create new employment. Our youth are aspirational, and the government is working with industry bodies like NASSCOM to build AI skills," he added.

Key Indicators Point At Economic Resilience Despite Global Tensions: RBI Bulletin

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Key economic indicators point towards resilient economic activity in India across industrial and services sectors amid twin shocks of global trade policy uncertainties and heightened geopolitical tensions, the Reserve Bank's Bulletin said on Wednesday.

An article published in the RBI's June Bulletin said the global economy is in a state of flux.

"In this state of elevated global uncertainty, various high-frequency indicators for May 2025 point towards resilient economic activity in India across the industrial and services sectors," it said.

Agriculture showed a broad-based increase in production across most major crops during 2024-25.

Also, the domestic prices situation remains benign, with headline inflation staying below the target for the fourth consecutive month in May.

Financial conditions remained conducive to facilitating an efficient transmission of rate cuts to the credit market, the article on 'State of the Economy' said.

"In this state of elevated global uncertainty, various high-frequency indicators for May 2025 point towards resilient economic activity in India across the industrial and services sectors," the bulletin said.



According to the article, gross inward foreign direct investment (FDI) amounted to USD 8.8 billion in April 2025, higher than USD 5.9 billion in March 2025 and USD 7.2 billion in April 2024.

Manufacturing and business services accounted for nearly half of the gross FDI inflows in April 2025.

The net outward FDI also increased, along with a moderation in repatriation.

The net FDI inflows more than doubled year-on-year to USD 3.9 billion in April 2025, it said.

High-frequency food price data for June so far (up to June 20, 2025) shows moderation in rates of pulses, while prices of cereals have risen marginally, it added.

Edible oil prices, on the other hand, have firmed up,

driven by soybean, sunflower, and mustard oil, while palm and groundnut oil prices moderated.

Among the key vegetables, onion prices have recorded further correction, while that of potato and tomato prices increased, it said.

The article said that protracted trade policy uncertainties and rising trade barriers pose the risk of significantly scarring the global economy.

"The intensifying geopolitical tensions too may further debilitate the already weakened growth impulses. In this context, the trade policy outcomes in July, after the temporary tariff hiatus is over, and the future course of geopolitical events would likely shape the medium-term economic prospects," it said.



IN THIS STATE OF ELEVATED GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY, various high-frequency indicators for May 2025 point towards resilient economic activity in India across the industrial and services sectors," the bulletin said.

BTA With US Likely To Reduce India's Goods Trade Surplus With US: CRISIL

Press Trust Of India

KOLKATA- The imminent bilateral trade agreements (BTA) with the US is likely to reduce India's goods trade surplus with that country, according to a research report by CRISIL.

During the financial year 2024-25, India's trade surplus with the US stood at USD 41.18 billion, according to data of the Indian government.

The report said after completion of trade pact, India will be able to import more energy, certain agriculture products and defence equipment among others.

Although the US is India's largest export partner, there is scope to increase exports further in areas like smartphones, pharmaceutical products and labour-intensive exports such as textiles, gems and jewellery, the report said.

The US announced reciprocal tariffs on India and a host of other nations in April 2025, and then paused the increase for 90 days from April 10 to negotiate trade deals with these countries.

As India negotiates a trade deal with the US in the form of BTA, the first tranche is expected to be completed by



The US announced reciprocal tariffs on India and a host of other nations in April 2025, and then paused the increase for 90 days from April 10 to negotiate trade deals with these countries.

September this year.

The report said that India should be prepared to see more imports from the US under BTA. This is because India's tariffs are much higher than the US and bringing these down would benefit the exporters in the US.

India's exports, however, are unlikely to see a major spike because the focus of the US administration is to reduce the trade deficit with India and most of the top exports are already duty-free.

The US is not only the world's largest economy, but also the world's largest importer, according to the report.



JKEDI Commences Week-Long Management Development Programs In 4 Districts

84 entrepreneurs, MSMEs enrolled

Observer news Service

JAMMU- The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Wednesday commenced Management Development Programs (MDP) in 04 Districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme. The initiative is funded by the Union Ministry of MSME and is being implemented in the Union Territory by the Industries and Commerce Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Management Development Programmes (MDPs) were inaugurated in district Jammu, Doda, Ramban and Kulgam. A total of 84 candidates including 70 women have been registered for the MDP, who shall undergo a 30-hour training over six days.

The MDPs coordinated by JKEDI District Centres has 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 managerial, financial and strategic skills of 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.

Over the next six days, local entrepreneurs, MSME operators and aspiring business leaders will engage with industry professionals, JKEDI faculty and certified trainers in an interactive learning environment. The simultaneous launch of MDPs ensures equitable access to resources and training opportunities, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. The MDPs under RAMP initiative in the remaining five districts of Jammu and Kashmir shall begin shortly on June 30, 2025. This initiative is expected to benefit the entrepreneurs directly, while creating a ripple effect of enhanced business practices and job creation across the UT.

Markets Log Gains For 2nd Day; Sensex, Nifty Surge Nearly 1% On Global Rally

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent on Wednesday, powered by widespread buying and a positive trend in global equities amid easing tensions in the Middle East following a ceasefire between Iran and Israel.

Besides, intense buying market heavyweights HDFC Bank, Infosys and Reliance Industries supported domestic equities, traders said.

Extending its previous day's rally, the 30-share Sensex jumped 700.40 points or 0.85 per cent to settle at 82,755.51. During the day, it surged 760.8 points or 0.92 per cent to 82,815.91.

As many as 2,821 stocks advanced while 1,207 declined and 134 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Similarly, the wider gauge NSE Nifty climbed 200.40 points or 0.80 per cent to 25,244.75.

"Benchmark indices extended their winning streak for a second consecutive session on Wednesday, closing decisively in the green as investor sentiment got a boost from the

Israel-Iran ceasefire, which alleviated geopolitical overhang. The Nifty kicked off trade on a buoyant note, subsequently oscillated in a narrow band with a positive undertone," according to Bajaj Broking market commentary.

From the Sensex pack, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Power Grid, Tata Consultancy Services and Bharti Airtel were among the major gainers.

On the other hand, Bharat Electronics, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Axis Bank were the laggards.

"Markets maintained their positive tone and gained nearly a per cent, supported by favourable global cues. A strong handover from the US markets triggered a gap-up start, which was further fuelled by buying interest in select heavyweight stocks," Ajit Mishra -- SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Meanwhile, Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani have partnered to sell automotive fuels by leveraging each other's fuel retail networks -- marking the second business collaboration between the two billionaire industrialists.

Tata Sons, Singapore Airlines Invest Rs 9,558 Crore In Air India In 2024-25

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines invested Rs 9,558 crore in loss-making Air India in 2024-25, with the promoters pumping in Rs 4,306 crore alone in March this year.

The airline, being piloted by Tatas since January 2022, has embarked on an ambitious five-year transformation plan. In November 2024, Vistara -- a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines -- was merged with Air India, following which the Singaporean carrier acquired a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India.

In response to queries about fundraising, an Air India spokesperson told PTI on Wednesday that its shareholders have together infused fresh capital of more than Rs 9,500 crore in 2024-25 to meet the airline's capital expenditure requirements.

Tata Sons invested Rs 3,224.82 crore, and Singapore Airlines put in Rs

6,333.18 crore in Air India, taking the total fund infusion to Rs 9,558 crore in the financial year ended March 2025.

"Pursuant to the merger of Vistara with Air India in November 2024, the shareholders have together infused fresh capital of over Rs 9,500 crore in the fiscal year 2024-25. The said infusion is to meet the company's requirement towards capital expenditure, working capital and growth initiatives," the Air India spokesperson said in a statement to PTI.

In March this year, Tata Sons pumped in Rs 3,224.82 crore, and Singapore Airlines invested Rs 1,080.68 crore in Air India, according to regulatory filings accessed by business intelligence platform Tofler.

Through the preferential allotment route, Tata Sons was issued little over 523 crore equity shares and Singapore Airlines was allotted little more than 175 crore equity shares at a price of Rs 6.1632 apiece, the filings showed.

Rupee Falls 3 Paise To Close At 86.08 Against US Dollar

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The rupee gave up its gains and settled for the day lower by 3 paise at 86.08 against the US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by the recovery in the US Dollar index and selling pressure from foreign funds.

Forex traders said the ceasefire between Israel and Iran has led to a rise in risk appetite. Moreover, a strong show in the domestic equity market prevented steep losses in the local unit, they said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.00 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 85.79-86.14 before settling at 86.08, down 3 paise from its previous close.

The Indian rupee closed almost flat amid quiet regional price action. "Traders are now focused on upcoming trade-related updates for short-term direction. Near-term, USD/INR has support at 85.10 and resistance at 85.90," said Dilip Parmar, Research

Analyst, HDFC Securities.

The local unit had logged its steepest single-day gain in nearly five years on Tuesday to end 73 paise higher at 86.05 against the greenback.

"The rupee made a high of 85.79 before oil companies stepped in and took it lower to 86.13 with the market still sceptical of the Iran-Israel ceasefire," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

"We await the current account data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to gauge how it performed during 2024-25, while the IIP data is also due to be announced today (Wednesday)," he said, adding that the rupee is expected in the range of 85.75-86.50 on Thursday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 1.43 per cent to USD 68.10 per barrel in futures trade after US President Donald Trump claimed to have brokered a ceasefire between Iran and Israel.

Ambani, Adani Join Hands For Fuel Marketing In Second Business Partnership

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani have partnered to sell automotive fuels by leveraging each other's fuel retail networks -- marking the second business collaboration between the two billionaire industrialists.

Ambani's fuel venture with UK's BP, Jio-bp, will set up petrol and diesel dispensers at CNG retail outlets of Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL). Alongside, ATGL -- the equal city gas joint venture of Adani Group and TotalEnergies of France -- will put up CNG dispensing units at Jio-bp's fuel pumps, according to a joint statement on Wednesday.

The partnership will cover both group's existing as well as future outlets.

Jio-bp owns 1,972 petrol pumps across the country while ATGL oper-

ates a network of 650 CNG stations in 34 geographical areas.

"Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL) and Jio-bp (operating brand of Reliance BP Mobility Ltd) today (Wednesday) announced signing of an agreement to redefine the auto fuel retail experience for Indian consumers.

"Under this partnership, select ATGL fuel outlets will offer Jio-bp's high-performance liquid fuels (petrol and diesel), while select Jio-bp fuel outlets will integrate ATGL's CNG dispensing units, within ATGL's authorised geographical areas (GA), thus enhancing the supply of high-quality fuels to transport consumers," the statement said.

This is the second time in recent months that the rival billionaires have come together. In March last year, the two had signed the pact for their first-ever collaboration for a power project in Madhya Pradesh.

Public Shaming Of Theft Accused By Police In Jammu Group Of Advocates Lodges Complaint With NHRC

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: A group of prominent advocates has lodged a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) alleging public shaming and unlawful parade of accused persons by the police in Jammu.

The complaint was lodged by 11 lawyers led by Nikhil Padha, an advocate in the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court and founder of Human Rights and Harmony.

It came a day after a man accused of stealing was paraded on the streets of Jammu after being garlanded with shoes.

Supreme Court lawyers Sonal Gupta and Reetik Jasrotia, advocates Namita Chhabra and Padamja Sharma of Delhi High Court, advocate Rameez Rena of Patna High Court, advocates Akarshan Magotra and Abrar

Hussain of J-K and Ladakh high Court and lawyers Lavanya Bhatt, Rishika Chaurasia and Jiya Gupta were the other signatories in the complaint, which flagged the public shaming of alleged criminals after their arrest in Gangyal on June 11 and in Bakshi Nagar on June 24.

"We, the advocates enrolled with various courts across India, write to you with grave concern and utmost urgency regarding recent events in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir wherein police personnel engaged in unconstitutional acts of public shaming and parade-like punishments of accused persons.

"These actions, widely circulated through media and social platforms, constitute a gross violation of human rights, the right to dignity, and established

jurisprudence on custodial rights under Indian law," said the complaint addressed to NHRC Chairperson Justice V Ramasubramanian.

The advocates said they have observed with collective anguish, and professional obligation, that law enforcement authorities are bypassing constitutional safeguards and replacing lawful investigative procedures with performative public punishment, leading to irreversible damage to the dignity and fundamental rights of the accused persons.

In a dramatic incident in the heart of Jammu on Tuesday, a suspected thief, linked to a busted gang, was publicly humiliated with a garland of shoes and made to sit on the bonnet of a moving police vehicle, prompting an official inquiry.

A video of the incident, purportedly showing several onlookers cheering the act, surfaced online, sparking a debate among social media users, with many questioning the legality and ethics of the police action, with some even terming it "jungle raj".

Condemning the incident, Jammu SSP Joginder Singh ordered a department inquiry into the matter.

Singh said the police action was "unprofessional, unbecoming of the members of a disciplined organisation", and called for stern action.

"To ascertain the actual facts, a preliminary inquiry is hereby ordered and entrusted to the SDPO, City North, Jammu, who will inquire into the matter and submit his findings to this office within a week's time," the SSP said in an order.

Dr Farooq Asks Film-makers To Make Movies In Kashmiri Language

Observer News Service

Srinagar: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday expressed hope that more film-makers would make movies in Kashmiri language to showcase the Valley's beauty and local talent.

Speaking to reporters after the premiere of the first-ever Kashmiri-Kannada film 'Harmukh' in Srinagar, he said, "This is very good, they have acted very well."

The former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, said more films should be made in Kashmiri language, which could then be dubbed in other languages to reach a wider audience.

"I hope they make more films in Kashmiri language, like in other states such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Bengal and Bollywood. We want them to



make Kashmiri films that are watched everywhere, because there are Kashmiris everywhere. We can dub these movies in other languages so that others can understand them as well," he said.

The veteran politician, however, asked the film-makers to make quality films, unlike "some in the past that could not be screened" over lack of artistry.

"Let our producers and directors make good films. Kashmir is a beautiful place and there is tremendous talent. The local actors will get a break here, they can then showcase their talent elsewhere," he added.

About 'Harmukh', Farooq said he felt happy after watching it. "God willing, it will soon come on Netflix and the whole world can watch it," he said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Is Getting

the region. Men, in particular, are gaining weight at an alarming rate.

The rise in obesity is not just about looks or weight. It brings serious health risks, like heart attacks, strokes, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and breathing problems.

Many people are also facing mental health challenges like anxiety and depression, which are often linked to these physical conditions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised this issue early this year in his "Mann Ki Baat" radio address. He spoke about the growing obesity problem in India and called for urgent public awareness. He invited political leaders, business figures, actors, and others to join the fight against unhealthy eating habits and sedentary lifestyles.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah responded quickly. "I am pleased to join the campaign against obesity launched by PM Narendra Modi ji," he said at the time.

Abdullah emphasized the need for collective action and acknowledged that the problem is now serious in the region.

But the habits that lead to obesity are hard to break. Fast food is popular, and social media is making it even more appealing. Food bloggers regularly post photos and videos of rich, oily dishes and sweet desserts, encouraging people to try them. These bloggers often get free meals and are paid to promote restaurants.

Many people now see dining out as a sign of success and modern life. Eating what is considered "global" food has become fashionable, even though much of it is processed, high in fat, sugar, and salt.

"Restaurant food can cause long-term damage like obesity and heart disease," said Dr. Narendra Kotwal, a senior physician, worrying about this new lifestyle. "But diseases linked to obesity, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, breast cancer, and dementia, are often avoidable to a significant extent."

In the past, Kashmiri diets included plenty of meat, but people balanced it with regular, demanding physical work and walking long distances. Now, most people drive or stay indoors.

A study shows that 84 percent of adults in Kashmir lead sedentary lives, spending much of their time sitting, with little exercise.

Mairaj Khan remembers what life used to look like. "I used to walk from Jawahar Nagar to Charar-e-Sharif with my family during special occasions. Walking to Hazratbal or Makhdoom Sahib was part of our routine," he says. "Now, people hardly walk anymore."

Chanchal Sharma from Jammu has a similar memory. "As children, we would walk from Jewel Chowk to Shastri Nagar and back without thinking twice. It was just how life was," she recalls. "Today, even short distances are covered by car or rickshaw."

The rise of food delivery apps has changed eating habits even further.

A leading delivery platform recently reported that more than 40 percent of its new users are now from smaller cities and towns. Jammu and Kashmir is part of this growing trend. With more disposable income and access to a variety of cuisines, eating out or ordering in has become easier than ever.

But with this convenience comes growing health risks.

Lifestyle diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, and fatty liver are on the rise. The World Obesity Atlas 2024 has warned that obesity is not just a local problem, it is a global one.

In 2019 alone, five million deaths were linked to diseases caused by high body weight. The report also predicts that by 2035, half the world's population could be obese.

While the world is working to end hunger and poverty by 2030, as part

of the Sustainable Development Goals, the obesity epidemic is spreading, even in countries where people once struggled to get enough to eat.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the solution may lie in going back to simpler habits: cooking at home, walking more, and enjoying restaurant food in moderation.

Dr. Gupta believes that prevention is still possible. "We can make better choices," he says. "It's not about avoiding good food, but about balance."

Axiom Mission

legend Sachin Tendulkar among others hailed the space mission.

"As Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla creates a new milestone in space for India, the whole nation is excited and proud of an Indian's journey into the stars," Murmu said in a post on X.

"The Indian Astronaut, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is on the way to become the first Indian to go to the International Space Station. He carries with him the wishes, hopes and aspirations of 1.4 billion Indians," Modi said in a post on X.

The Union Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Modi, adopted a resolution wishing Shukla all the success in his space mission.

"Greetings from India. Wishing you all the very best. To the crew -- Godspeed and spend as much time as possible looking out of the window. Have a fun time guys," said Rakesh Sharma, the first Indian astronaut to travel to space, in a video message.

The astronauts will spend 14 days at the ISS and conduct 60 scientific experiments during their mission. The commercial mission by Axiom Space, a US-based startup, is expected to contribute to microgravity research in areas including human physiology, nutrition, and seed germination in space.

In addition to the planned experiments, the astronauts are flying food that celebrates their heritage: Indian curry and rice with mango nectar; spicy Hungarian paprika paste; and freeze-fried Polish pierogies (dumplings).

Once in orbit, the astronauts revealed the name they gave to their brand-new capsule – Grace.

"Good things come to those who wait. Godspeed to the maiden crew of Grace," SpaceX told the crew.

Before the flight, Shukla, who has over 2,000 hours of flying experience on elite fighter aircraft, said he hopes "to ignite the curiosity of an entire generation in my country" and drive innovation.

"I truly believe that even though I, as an individual, am travelling to space, this is the journey of 1.4 billion people," he said.

Shukla is expected to participate in several outreach events during his stay at the ISS and also likely to interact with Prime Minister Modi.

Chants of "Hip Hip Hurray", spontaneous bhangra and quiet tears marked the watch party at Shukla's alma mater City Montessori School in Lucknow.

"It's a great moment not just for us but for our country. What can we say at this moment, I am struggling for words now. My blessings are always there with my son," his father Shambhu Shukla told PTI.

"My parents started the day with prayers. We also spoke to Shubhanshu in the morning – he sounded confident, calm, and happy that the moment he had prepared for so long had finally arrived. He must have been nervous, but he didn't show it. That's just how he is," Suchi Shukla, the astronaut's sister, said.

Hailing the Ax-4 mission, the IAF said Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has set forth on a landmark space odyssey, carrying the pride of the nation beyond the Earth, and asserted that it is a reaffirmation of India's ever-expanding horizon.

The IAF post on X called it a "deja vu moment for India", coming after

astronaut Rakesh Sharma's mission in 1984.

It also shared a profile photo of Shukla, with a caption "Trained in Blue, Bound for the Stars" along with a tricoloured message, reading, "Wishing You Success in this Glorious Mission".

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, too, shared his thoughts on the feat and posted on X, "The Space Mission carrying astronauts from four countries, including India, is going to be a significant milestone in the history of space exploration."

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal also took to X and wished Shukla a "successful mission". "Astronaut Shukla will also conduct microgravity experiments for R&D and academic institutions of India. Wishing him a successful mission," he wrote.

The much-awaited launch was originally scheduled for May 29 when technical snags, weather parameters on Falcon-9 ascent path, Dragon spacecraft and aboard the ISS led to multiple delays.

Wednesday's launch took place after a series of delays as SpaceX, Axiom and NASA scrambled to fix the glitches, and replenish the biological test samples as the four astronauts remained into quarantine that stretched nearly a month.

The Falcon 9 is a partially reusable, two-stage rocket developed by SpaceX. The first stage of the Falcon 9 is designed to return to Earth and land vertically for reuse.

As part of a collaboration between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Ax-4 delivers on a commitment highlighted by US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to send the first ISRO astronaut to the station, according to a NASA statement.

Rain Relief,

days will bring down maximum temperatures slightly, leading to some improvement in heatwave conditions," he said. He added that these showers are expected to reduce the rainfall deficiency, particularly in Jammu, where heavy rains are forecasted in the next 24 to 48 hours.

Temperatures across various locations on Wednesday ranged as follows: Srinagar at 32.5°C, Qazigund at 30.2°C, Pahalgam at 27.4°C, Kokernag at 30.8°C, Kupwara at 32.8°C, and Gulmarg at 23.2°C. Jammu city recorded 32.6°C, while Banihal was at 27.7°C. Batote, Bhaderwah, and Katra experienced maximum temperatures of 26.2°C, 30.6°C, and 29.0°C, respectively.

The rains are expected to bring further relief to both residents and tourists, especially ahead of the Amarnath Yatra, which begins on July 3.

Heatwave Hits

Munshi Bagh, 2.78 ft at Asham, while Pampore reported a negative level of -1.16 metres. Wullar Lake, a major water body in north Kashmir, was recorded at 1575.02 metres—well below its seasonal average of 1578.00 metres.

Tributaries feeding the Jhelum showed similar signs of stress: Vishow Nallah at Khudwani registered 2.38 metres, Rambiyara at Wachi dropped to -0.35 metres, Liddar Nallah at Batkoot stood at 0.37 metres, and Sindh Nallah at Doderhama read 1.30 metres.

While independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif Keng acknowledged the decline, he stated that it's "not the worst" dry spell the Valley has seen. "Kashmir has witnessed more severe conditions in the past," he noted.

Despite rising demand, officials from the Jal Shakti Department say water supply remains stable. "The situation is under control. Over a dozen water tankers are operational in Srinagar and

more can be deployed if needed," said Er Taj Mohammad Chowdhary, Chief Engineer of Jal Shakti (PHE) Kashmir.

Chowdhary flagged misuse of potable water as a key issue. "Water is being used for non-essential purposes like lawns. Surveillance teams have been formed to monitor this and ensure essential services like hospitals are prioritized," he added.

On June 19, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah chaired a high-level meeting in Jammu, directing officials to ensure uninterrupted water and electricity supply across the Valley, especially during the Amarnath Yatra and Muharram.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department has forecast light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms across the Valley from June 25 to 27. Parts of Jammu may witness heavy rain during the same period, potentially offering some respite from the parched conditions.

Parliamentary Panel

of a wider itinerary that also includes stops in Mumbai and Coorg.

In preparation for the visit, the Jammu and Kashmir government has appointed S.P. Rukwal, Director of Geology and Mining, as the nodal coordinator for the committee's visit. According to an official order, Rukwal will manage all logistical, administrative, and protocol-related arrangements.

Two additional officers from the Mining Department have also been assigned to work in close coordination with the Lok Sabha Secretariat to ensure the smooth conduct of the tour.

This marks the first parliamentary visit to the region following the Baisaran tragedy, after which several scheduled visits by other panels—including the Committees on Home Affairs, Housing & Urban Affairs, and the Joint Parliamentary Committee—were quietly withdrawn in the wake of security concerns.

The visit is being seen as a symbolic return of parliamentary engagement in the Valley and a step towards restoring normalcy after the recent violence. a parliamentary panel will visit the Kashmir Valley in the first week of July, marking the first such official tour since the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of 26 civilians, most of them tourists.

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel, chaired by BJP MP Anurag Thakur, is scheduled to tour Srinagar as part of a wider itinerary that also includes stops in Mumbai and Coorg.

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Emergency 'Darkest

post on X. "On #SamvidhanHatyaDiwas, I pay tribute to millions of satyagrahis who fought to revive democracy and continued their struggle to safeguard constitutional values during the darkest period of India's democratic history."

In his address, the LG said the

Emergency period witnessed a direct assault on civil liberties and the suppression of press freedom. "The soul of the country was crushed, constitutional safeguards were violated, and the dreams of nation-building were buried," he said.

He called the Emergency not just a moment in history, but a warning for the future. "We must learn from those incidents and prepare the young generation to prevent such atrocities from repeating. It is also an opportunity to create awareness about constitutional values so that no dictatorial mentality can take root again," Sinha said.

Terming dictatorship as a "mindset," he emphasized that the new generation must know how democracy was held hostage and how political ambition overpowered national interest. "A handful of people ruthlessly bled the soul of the republic, assaulted our democratic norms, and damaged the four pillars of democracy," he said.

Sinha praised the resilience of leaders, journalists, activists, and common citizens who resisted authoritarianism. "Their courage and unshakable loyalty to democratic values continue to inspire us."

He added that democracy is not just a political system but deeply embedded in India's cultural fabric. "Democracy is in the nature of India. It is ingrained in our veins, and that is why India is called the mother of democracy."

The LG called for renewed commitment to constitutional morality and deeper democratic foundations. "Today's observation is not merely historical remembrance—it is a call to action," he said.

Several political leaders and citizens who were victims of the Emergency also shared their personal stories during the event. The Lieutenant Governor assured them that their issues and concerns will be taken up with the concerned authorities.

Multi-Layered

of every yatri," Birdi told reporters during his visit to the Nunwan base camp along the Pahalgam route.

The 38-day-long pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath, situated at an altitude of 3,888 metres in south Kashmir Himalayas, will see thousands of devotees undertake the spiritual journey. The yatra will be conducted via two traditional routes – Pahalgam in Anantnag and Baltal in Ganderbal district.

Birdi said security preparations have been structured at various levels, including zonal, and include joint drills and area domination exercises. "The aim of these drills is to refine alertness and enhance coordination among all forces. Camps, roads, and interior stretches along the yatra route were covered during today's exercises," he said.

Security drills were carried out at key points including Pahalgam, Anantnag, and Qazigund in south Kashmir; Pantha Chowk in Srinagar; and Sumbal in north Kashmir's Baniptara district.

Highlighting the critical role of the local population, the IGP noted that the success of the Yatra has always depended on local support. "The pilgrimage cannot be conducted without the cooperation of locals. They are always ready to help, and this year too, the community is enthusiastic to welcome the yatratis," he said.

The Amarnath Yatra holds deep religious significance for Hindu devotees, and its security has been a top priority for authorities due to the large turnout and sensitive terrain. The police chief expressed confidence in the collective efforts of security forces and the local population to ensure a peaceful pilgrimage season.

Mock Drills Held

readiness of security and emergency response agencies.

The large-scale drills, led by Jammu and Kashmir Police, involved personnel from the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). The exercises simulated a range of emergency scenarios—including road accidents, stampedes, militant attacks, and natural disasters—with the aim of improving coordination, sharpening response time, and reassuring the public and pilgrims of their safety.

Mock drills were conducted across eight zones of Srinagar. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr. G.V. Sandeep Chakravathy (IPS), who oversaw the drills, said the exercises were vital to evaluate how different agencies "respond, act, and react" during crisis situations.

"Our goal is to be fully prepared for any emergency that might arise during the Yatra," Dr. Chakravathy told reporters. "Today's drills ensured that the police, CAPFs, and SDRF worked together effectively to handle a variety of contingencies."

The SSP emphasized that the mock drills were not merely routine exercises but crucial confidence-building measures. "They send a clear message that the Amarnath Yatra is safe and secure, and the administration is fully prepared to deal with any eventuality," he said.

Appealing for public cooperation, particularly regarding cut-off timings during the Yatra, the SSP described them as essential for ensuring smooth and safe movement along the route. "The people's cooperation is not only welcomed—it is essential," he said.

Responding to questions about technological preparedness, Dr. Chakravathy said that the police are continuously upgrading surveillance systems and emergency response tools. "Various gadgets and systems are being monitored and updated in real-time to strengthen on-ground response," he noted.

With the Amarnath Yatra set to begin soon, the SSP said these exercises reflect the administration's proactive approach to maintaining peace and ensuring the safety of all participants.

In Qazigund (Kulgam), police carried out a comprehensive mock drill along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway to train teams for real-time emergency response. Officials emphasize that "every inch of the yatra route is under constant surveillance" using both human intelligence and advanced technology. "All potential threats are being neutralized well in advance. Our objective is zero tolerance for any disruption, and pilgrims' safety is our top priority," said a senior

official.

Centre Plans

other parts of the Valley has suffered a major setback, severely affecting livelihoods in the region," they said.

After the April 22 terror attack the occupancy in hotels across the region also declined drastically. "Most of the advance bookings were cancelled and the foothall has almost been negligible," an official said.

The Centre and the J&K government have been making all-out efforts to bring tourists back to Kashmir to revive the stalled tourism industry.

Last week, Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat visited Baisaran, the site of the terror attack and praised the resilience and spirit of the Kashmiris.

He also assured that foolproof security measures would be in place for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra and tourists visiting the Valley.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also chaired a cabinet meeting in Pahalgam, a first of its kind, to send a clear message that violence has no place in Jammu and Kashmir. -With inputs from KNO

‘Gill Didn't Quite Have On-Field Aura Of Rohit & Virat’

Press Trust of India

LEEDS: India's new captain Shubman Gill's tactics in the first Test against England have drawn flak after the visiting side's five-wicket loss with former skipper Nasser Hussain stating that he "didn't quite have the on-field aura of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli".

India lost the opening Test despite five of their batters scoring centuries, as England chased down 371 in the fourth innings to take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

It was baptism of fire for Gill in his first Test as skipper since succeeding the now-retired Rohit Sharma, and Hussain said the youngster was "reactive rather than proactive" as a leader.

"I saw someone finding his way. He (Gill) didn't quite have that on-field aura of Rohit and (Virat Kohli). I thought he followed the ball a lot and was reactive rather than proactive," Hussain said on Sky Sports.

"When Rohit and Kohli captained, you looked down and you immediately knew who was in charge but when I looked down in this game I saw two or three captains, captaincy by committee," Hussain said, alluding to Gill not taking complete



control of the team.

Hussain, however, said India lost the match because of two things Gill couldn't control -- drop catches and batting collapses.

"The collapses concern me. In India they have had spin-bowling all-rounders that are magnificent - Ravi Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel - but in England they are still looking for a seam-bowling all-rounder who can bat.

"If they keep going 6-31 and 7-41 this could be a quick series," said the 57-year-old who played 96 Tests between 1990 and 2004.

Former India coach Ravi Shastri, however, feels that Gill has done "more than can be asked of him."

"There is a big role for the coaching staff to take the positives. As a captain, Gill has done more than can be asked of him. "He got a hundred in his first

Test in charge and the dropped catches (and collapses) are not in his control."

Gill scored 147 in India's first innings total of 471 and 8 in the second essay.

"This will be a tough pill for India to swallow. You don't get in positions like this very often and blow it from there. They had a chance to take England out of the contest and dictate terms.

"They have to learn and they

need more bottle from the tail, for them to be stubborn and put a price tag on their wicket," added Shastri.

The former India all-rounder also said that strike bowler Jasprit Bumrah should play in the second Test starting on July 2 in Birmingham.

"If he was looking at a rest you may have to think twice. If you don't have him and then go 2-0 down it could be an uphill task."

District Rugby C'ship 2025 Kicks Off In Bandipora

District Rugby championship Bandipora 2025 began Wednesday aimed to raise awareness on drug abuse under the government's flag-ship programme, 'Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.'

The event was formally inaugurated by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bandipora, Zaffar Hussain Shawl, at Government Higher Secondary School Nadihal, Bandipora.

In his address to the young rugby athletes, ADC expressed deep appreciation for their commitment and spirit. "Rugby is a unique and globally recognized sport, and it is truly inspiring to witness our Bandipora athletes, who have represented at the national level," he said.

Veteran sports personality and former Zonal Physical Education Officer Sunnaullah Mir was present as the guest of honour, alongside the dedicated staff of GHSS Nadihal and officials from the Department of Youth Services and Sports.

The championship witnessed vibrant participation from over 26 boys' and girls' teams, representing various clubs and regions across district Bandipora. Teams from all age categories are competing in the tournament. (Observer News Service)

Pant Reaches Career-High 7th In ICC Test Rankings

India's swashbuckling wicketkeeper Rishabh

Pant reached a career-high seventh in the latest ICC Test rankings for batters on Wednesday, following his twin centuries in the series-opener against England in Leeds.

India's new Test captain Shubman Gill jumped five rungs to 20th overall following his century in the innings of the match that his team lost by five wickets despite setting England a stiff target of 371.

Pant, who became only the second wicketkeeper to hit two hundreds in the same match during the first Test of the five-match series, climbed one spot in the list.

Before the 27-year-old Pant joined him, Zimbabwe's Andy Flower remained the sole stumper with two centuries in the same Test match.

Pant struck 134 and 118 in the thrilling Leeds Test that England won by five wickets.

There was little change in the rankings for Test bowlers, with India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah maintaining his place at the top of charts following yet another five-wicket haul in the Headingley Test.

England veteran Joe Root remained the No.1 ranked Test batter, with teammate Harry Brook his closest challenger. (PTI)

Speedster Harshit Rana Released From Indian Squad

Young speedster Harshit Rana, who was added as a cover to the Indian squad for the opening Test against England at Leeds, has been released by the team management on Wednesday.

Rana, who played two Tests in Australia with modest results, was a part of India A squad but hardly made an impact in the unofficial Test against England Lions in Canterbury where he was hit for 99 runs for a solitary wicket in 27 overs.

The 23-year-old Rana, a protégé of head coach Gautam Gambhir, is a bustling hit-the-deck bowler who hit the headlines with a lovely off-cutter which breached Travis Head's defence in Perth.

However, over time it has been evident that he is not ready to play top flight red-ball cricket and is a work in progress.

"Harshit Rana, I will discuss with chairman of selectors. He was held back because of some niggles... everything is fine. I will discuss, and we will then take that call," Gambhir said after India lost the opening Test by five wickets. (PTI)

FIFA Investigates If Madrid's Rüdiger Was Racially Abused

FIFA has opened a disciplinary case at the Club World Cup after Real Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger claimed he was racially abused by Pachuca captain Gustavo Cabral.

Rüdiger, who is Black, and Cabral clashed in the final minutes of Madrid's 3-1 win Sunday in Charlotte, North Carolina.

After the German player spoke to referee Ramon Abatti, the Brazilian match official made the FIFA-approved signal with raised arms crossed to start an anti-discrimination protocol.

FIFA confirmed late Tuesday it is formally investigating.

"Following an assessment of the match reports, the FIFA disciplinary committee has opened proceedings against Pachuca player Gustavo Cabral in relation to the incident involving him and Real Madrid's Antonio Rüdiger," the soccer body said.

A verdict is likely before Pachuca plays Thursday in its final Group H game, against Al Hilal in Nashville. It will be Pachuca's last game at the Club World Cup because the Mexican team cannot finish higher than third in the standings and will not advance to the round of 16.

The 39-year-old Cabral has denied the racism allegation and said he used an insult that is common in his native Argentina. (AP)



J&K Athletes Shine at National Deaf Sports Championships

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Athletes from the All J&K Sports Association of the Deaf have won 12 medals at the 10th National Deaf Sub-Junior & Junior and 27th National Deaf Senior Sports Championships held in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, this June.

The championships witnessed exceptional performances by J&K athletes in karate and judo, with victories across both men's and women's divisions.

Satish Sharma, Minister for Youth Services and Sports, J&K; Sarmad Hafeez (IAS), Secretary to the Government, Youth Services & Sports Department; and Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council all hailed the athletes for their outstanding performance.

"These champions are the true symbols of strength, peace, and perseverance. Jammu and Kashmir is committed to empowering every athlete, regardless of ability or gender," Sharma said.

"These medal-winning performances by

KARATE ACHIEVEMENTS (13-15 JUNE)

MEN'S CATEGORY:

- AAJAZ AHMAD BHAT (67KG) - SILVER
- ANAM ULLA RATHER (75KG) - BRONZE

JUDO ACHIEVEMENTS (20-23 JUNE):

MEN'S CATEGORY:

- RAKESH SINGH (66KG) - GOLD
- NABEEL AHMED DAR (81KG) - SILVER
- AJAZ AHMED (90KG) - SILVER
- ROHIT KUMAR (60KG) - BRONZE
- VISHAL KHAJURIA (73KG) - BRONZE
- GULSHAN KUMAR SHARMA (-100KG) - BRONZE

WOMEN'S CATEGORY:

- RAKSHINDA MEHAK (-78KG) - GOLD
- SHIKHA KUMARI (52KG) - SILVER
- SONAM CHIB (70KG) - SILVER
- GARIMA MISRA (57KG) - BRONZE

specially-abled athletes reflect the evolving spirit of sports in J&K," said Hafeez.

"This success is a testament to what is possible when we create spaces for every athlete to shine," Gul said.



Royal Springs Four Ball Best Ball Golf Tournament Ends

Observer News Service

Royal Springs Golf Course Four Ball Best Ball Tournament 2025 (partners by choice), which was played over five rounds, on a match-play knockout basis, was won by Mushtaq A. Trambo and Shabir A. Bhat at Royal Springs Golf Course in Srinagar.

In a keenly contested final, they defeated Khurshed A. Badlo and Umar Y. Mir on the hole 14 by a margin of 6 up.

The Tournament featured 40 prominent golfers from the club. A total of 19 matches were played, witnessing keen contests as some matches extended to extra holes, with decisions made on a sudden-death basis.

The Secretary RSGC and the Tour-



namment Committee congratulated the winning pair and appreciated their hard work, dedication and sportsmanship. They also thanked and congratulated all the other participants for making the tournament exciting and competitive till the end.

ECB, BCCI Join Hands Against Saudi T20: Media Reports

Press Trust of India

LONDON: The ambitious Saudi T20 league, which is believed to be a USD 400 million project, won't be backed by the BCCI or the England and Wales Cricket Board as they try to protect their respective flagship tournaments from getting diluted, British newspaper The Guardian has reported.

"During discussions at the World Test Championship final at Lord's this month, the ECB and BCCI agreed to unite in opposing the new league. The boards agreed they would not issue "no objection certificates" to their players to sign up for the new competition, as well as lobbying the International Cricket Council (ICC) to withhold their endorsement," the newspaper wrote.

Apparently Cricket Australia (CA) was keen on partnering with Saudi investors in the league.

"Under plans that emerged in Australia

this year, Saudi's SRJ Sports Investments has pledged to inject USD 400m to set up the new league, which would have eight teams playing four tournaments in different locations each year in a set-up that has been compared to tennis's Grand Slams," Guardian said.

For CA, the main aim is to earn profit from the cash inflow by a private investor as the Big Bash League (BBL) franchises are owned by the governing body and the states.

However, IPL is a USD 12 billion product and the ECB is all set to get richer by GBP 520m (USD 700 million) from the sale of 49% of the eight 'Hundred franchises'. "Cricket South Africa raised more than GBP 100m (USD 136 million) by selling franchises in its SA20 competition to Indian Premier League owners three years ago."

The paper also reported that the ICC, currently run by former BCCI secretary Jay Shah, is unlikely to go against the wishes of the Indian board.

Players, Fans At CWC Cope With High Temps Amid Heat Wave

Associated Press

Substitutes who watch from the locker room, abandoned practice sessions and sweat-soaked jerseys. A heat wave hitting a wide swath of the country is taking a toll on players at the FIFA Club World Cup.

The grueling conditions could also be a preview of what's to come next summer when the United States, Canada and Mexico host soccer's premier event, the 2026 World Cup.

"It's impossible, it's terribly hot. My toes were sore, even my toenails were hurting. I couldn't stop or start. In the end, it's incredible,



but since it's the same for everyone, there's no excuse," Atlético's Marcos Llorente said following a match against Paris Saint-Germain.

A "heat dome" of high pressure has settled in over the central and

eastern United States, sending temperatures soaring into the 90s in Fahrenheit and above in many areas.

That's rough on both Club World Cup players and fans, who can potentially experience dehydration

and cramps, or more serious conditions like heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

"In Europe it's more of a dry heat and this is more of a humid heat. I think it's going to hit them twice as hard," fan Tyler Fernando said before Bayern Munich's match against Benfica on Tuesday in Charlotte, North Carolina, where the temperature was 97 degrees Fahrenheit (36 Celsius) at game time.

Those at the Auckland City match against Boca Juniors in Nashville on Tuesday braved temperatures in the upper 90s. Male spectators went shirtless and fans sought sections where there was shade.

Heat is of particular concern

during big tournaments like the Club World Cup because the players don't have much time off to recover between games. And in the group stages, matches are usually staggered each day, meaning some teams play in the midday sun.

Chelsea cut short a practice session in Philadelphia, where temperatures reached the 90s.

"I always try to avoid excuse, I always try to be honest. It's not about excuses, it's about reality. It's an excuse when it's not hot, and we say it's hot. That's an excuse. But if it's hot, it's hot. But we are here, and we're trying to do our best," Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca said.

Are These 14 Drugs Safe? Karnataka Declares Them Substandard



Press Trust of India

The Karnataka government's Drug Testing Laboratory declared 14 drugs manufactured by 14 different companies as "substandard" on Wednesday.

The state's Food Safety and Drug Administration department has directed chemists, wholesalers, doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes not to stock, sell, or use these drugs and cosmetics, an official statement said.

"In case they hold any stock, they are requested to inform the concerned area Drugs Inspector or Assistant Drugs Controller. The

public is also advised not to use these drugs or cosmetics," the statement added.

The substandard drugs include compound sodium lactate injection IP (Ringer-Lactate solution for injection) manufactured by Ultra Laboratories (batch no: KI124110) and Tam Bran Pharmaceuticals; Pomol-650 (Paracetamol tablets I P 650 mg) by Aban Pharmaceuticals (batch no: 13-4536) and MITO Q7 Syrup by Bion Therapeutics India (batch no: CHS-40170) among others.

The department has urged strict compliance with these directions to safeguard public health.

Letting Cops Summon Lawyers Threatens Justice System: SC

Press Trust of India

New Delhi- The Supreme Court on Wednesday said allowing police or probe agencies to directly summon lawyers for advising clients would seriously undermine the autonomy of legal profession and was a "direct threat" to the independence of justice administration.

A bench of Justices K V Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh observed the legal profession was an integral component of the process of administration of justice.

"Permitting the investigating agencies/police to directly summon

defense counsel or advocates who advise parties in a given case would seriously undermine the autonomy of legal profession and would even constitute a direct threat to the independence of the administration of justice," the apex court said.

The bench also framed a couple of questions in the matter.

"Some of the questions which arise for consideration are: (1) when an individual has a association with a case only as a lawyer advising the party, could the investigating agency/prosecuting agency/police directly summon the lawyer for questioning?" the bench asked.

Bhangra, Tears And Chants In Lucknow As Shubhanshu Shukla Heads To Space



Press Trust of India

Lucknow: Chants of "Hip Hip Hurray", spontaneous bhangra and quiet tears. It was a morning to remember at the City Montessori School as Lucknow boy Shubhanshu Shukla lifted off into space -- and history -- on board the SpaceX Falcon 9-rocket from the Kennedy Space Centre (KSC) in Florida on Wednesday.

As the rocket pierced through Florida skies, Group Captain Shukla became only the second Indian history to travel to space after Rakesh Shukla in 1984 and the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station.

"It's a great moment not just for us but for our country. What can we say at this moment, I am struggling for words now. My blessings are always there with my son," his father Shambhu Shukla told PTI.

"I have nothing more to say at this moment. I am delighted," Shubhanshu's mother Asha Shukla said. "I know he will be successful. Though I am eagerly looking forward for him to return after a successful mission, I also know that even after returning back on earth, it will take a while before he

actually gets to back amongst us," she told PTI.

The proud parents were there with many others at CMS Kanpur Road's World Unity Convention Centre (WUCC) auditorium to witness the launch live. Among those gathered were his sisters, senior defence personnel, CMS faculty, the city's who's who and wide-eyed students.

There was thunderous applause, cheers and impromptu bhangra as the rocket lifted off.

Posters of Shubhanshu congratulating him on his historic space voyage have come up all over the state capital. And his alma mater CMS hosted Vyo-matsav, an immersive watch-party that transformed the campus into a vibrant "mini space centre", paying tribute to its illustrious alumnus.

The celebrations are set to continue through the day. CMS also arranged a live AXIOM mission broadcast, a replica of the ISS Cupola module, a "Defy Gravity" photo booth, telescope viewings, and a simulated Mission Control Centre.

Born in Lucknow in 1985 and educated from Montessori through Class 12 at CMS Aliganj, Shukla went on to graduate from the National

Defence Academy and was commissioned into the Indian Air Force in 2006. With over 2,000 hours of flight experience on elite combat aircraft, he was selected in 2019 for India's Gaganyaan human space-flight programme and later chosen as the pilot for Ax-4.

Sharing the capsule with NASA senior Dr. Peggy Whitson (mission commander) and astronauts from Hungary and Poland, the 39-year-old's 14-day mission as part of a commercial mission by Axiom Space will contribute to microgravity research in areas including human physiology, nutrition, and seed germination in space.

CMS founder-director Bharti Gandhi said, "Many CMS students have brought us laurels, but Shubhanshu's journey to space will forever shine as a beacon of possibility for every Indian child." Added the school president and manager Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, "We are all overjoyed. Though their rocket is yet to reach the space, we are already over the moon."

"From a curious young learner in our classrooms to a pioneering astronaut, Shux's story beautifully encapsulates our school's mission of 'Education for World Unity and Peace'."

World's most peaceful countries of 2025 revealed

Mariam Khan/ Gulf News

In a time of global uncertainty and tensions, safety and peace are top of mind. Although conflict is on the rise globally, many countries continue to uphold a secure environment.

One way to analyse these changes is through the Global Peace Index, which provides an overview of the world's changing stability. Spearheaded by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the organization recently revealed their 2025 rankings.

Here's a look at the top 10 most peaceful countries, as per the Global Peace Index report of 2025.

1. Iceland | Score: 1.095

Iceland has held the position for the world's most peaceful country since 2008. This year, Iceland gained the top spot by a significant margin, with an apparent large difference between the peace scores of the first and second country. Notably, Iceland does not have a military, making it the only country within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) alliance to do so.

2. Ireland | Score: 1.260

Ireland has once again ranked number two in the Global Peace Index. Ireland is also the second most peaceful country in the European region, ranking just below Iceland once again. Traditionally, Ireland has been a key player in global peacemaking as an avid contributor to the United Nations Peacekeeping organisation.

3. New Zealand | Score: 1.282

New Zealand climbed up one position from last year's results, placing it in the top three. In fact, the country recorded an improvement in peacefulness of 3.1 percent in the past year. Regionally, New Zealand takes the top position for 2025, while also being the only Pacific nation to make the top 10 list. The country maintains an active role in global peace efforts, and even served on the United Nations Security Council in 2015-2016.

4. Austria | Score: 1.294

This year, Austria's ranking fell by one spot, dethroning it from the top three group. The country placed third in the regional Western and Central Europe ranks. Austria has had a long history of participating in UN Peacekeeping Africa, Balkans and Middle East. In fact, in 2024, the country marked

their 50 year landmark involvement with the UN.

5. Switzerland | Score: 1.294

Switzerland's ranking has improved by one spot this year, making it a part of the top five most peaceful countries. Within Europe, Switzerland ranks number four for most peaceful country. In terms of global contribution, Switzerland has provided over \$34 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund since it first began in 2006.

6. Singapore | Score: 1.357

Singapore ranked in the sixth position this year, dropping by one spot. Despite its small size, the island city-state ranks number two regionally. Singapore is the only Asian country to achieve a position in the top 10. Internationally, for more than 35 years, the Singaporean military and police have been involved in 17 peacekeeping and observer missions.

7. Portugal | Score: 1.371

Portugal has maintained its seventh position from last year. Regionally, Portugal has earned a spot in the top five most peaceful countries. For 65 years, the country has been participating in UN Peacekeeping and most actively works with the UN Missions in Central African Republic, Colombia, and South Sudan.

8. Denmark | Score: 1.393

Denmark has also maintained its rank from 2024's rankings. Among other European nations, Denmark ranks sixth. The Global Peace Index also reports that Denmark is one of the nations that reported some of the largest deteriorations of militarisation in 2025. Denmark was one of the key players involved in the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and even served as a member in 2023 and 2024.

9. Slovenia | Score: 1.409

Slovenia's ranking remains unchanged since last year. In Europe specifically, Slovenia has earned the seventh position. One of the country's recent contributions to peacekeeping includes becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. This is the second time the country has taken this position.

10. Finland | Score: 1.420

Finland has had the best improvement in the Global Peace Index, as it climbed up by three positions, making it in the top 10 group for 2025. Regionally, the country ranks at eighth position.

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