

Are You Prepared?

Big Financial Changes Roll Out From July 1

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Get ready for a series of significant financial and travel regulation changes rolling out across India starting July 1. These updates will impact everything from how you file your income tax returns to how you use your credit cards and book train tickets, directly affecting individual taxpayers and customers of major banks like HDFC, SBI, and ICICI.

Aadhaar Now Mandatory for PAN Applications

One of the most impactful changes comes from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). From Tuesday, Aadhaar verification will be mandatory for all new PAN card applications. This means the days of using just a driving license or birth certificate for a new PAN are over. Existing PAN holders aren't exempt either; they must link their Aadhaar numbers by December 31 to avoid their PAN being deactivated.

Key Changes for Train Travel

The Railways are also tightening their rules, particularly for last-minute bookings. Aadhaar verification will become mandatory for booking Tatkal tickets. Furthermore, starting July 15, all train ticketing, whether online or in-person, will require two-factor authentication, involving a one-time password sent to your registered mobile phone. Travelers should also brace for a minor increase in ticket prices, potentially ranging from 1 paisa per km for non-AC coaches to two paise for AC coaches.

ITR Filing Deadline Extended

In a piece of good news for salaried individuals, the CBDT has extended the Income Tax Returns (ITR) filing deadline from July 31 to September 15. This provides an additional 46 days to complete your filings. However, those whose documentation is already prepared might consider sticking to the original schedule to avoid potential website glitches and errors that often occur as the extended | [More on P10](#)

Train Tickets To Cost More From Today

The railway ministry issued an official circular on Monday, increasing the fares of the non-air-conditioned class in mail and express trains by 1 paisa and all air-conditioned classes by 2 paise per kilometre from July 1. Ministry officials had on June 24 hinted at the proposed fare revision. However, the official circular with the fare table according to trains and class categories was released on Monday. | [More on P10](#)

Devotees Defy Fear, Choose Pahalgam Route

Massive Turnout Marks Day 1 Of Yatra Registration

Observer News Service

Jammu: Defying fear in the wake of the horrific April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, hundreds of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims from across the country lined up at the Saraswati Dham registration centre in Jammu on the first day of offline registration, many choosing to take the Pahalgam route as an act of tribute and resistance.

"Bullets and bombs cannot stop us from having Baba Barfani's darshan," said Devakar Kadam, a Mumbai resident



embarking on his 11th pilgrimage. "We will never bow to fear. This time, we walk for those who were killed in Pahalgam." The terror attack in April had left 26 people, mostly tourists, dead in a targeted assault allegedly based on religious profiling. But instead | [More on P10](#)

This Year's Yatra Arrangements Better From Previous Years: LG Sinha

Says Significant Upgradation Done To Ensure Safe, Hassle-Free Pilgrimage

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that the arrangements made for this year's Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra are significantly better than in previous years, both in terms of security and facilities for pilgrims.

Reviewing the preparedness at the Baltal Base Camp in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district ahead of the Yatra's commencement on July 3, LG Sinha lauded the coordinated efforts of the



Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), civil administration, J&K Police, security forces, and various | [More on P10](#)

SASB's Yatri Niwas At Pantha Chowk

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday inaugurated the Yatri Niwas of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar and dedicated the new facility to the pilgrims. The Yatri Niwas has been built through donation and it

will accommodate 1300 pilgrims. "This Yatri Niwas is a symbol of our dedication and commitment to provide better facilities for devotees of Baba Barfani and make their pilgrimage more comfortable and safer. | [More on P10](#)

THE NEW FACILITY HAS THE CAPACITY to accommodate 1,300 pilgrims, significantly enhancing lodging infrastructure for devotees.

'Reconnect Creators With Customers'

CM For Global Revival Of Kashmir's Artisan Market

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday inaugurated a buyer-seller meet here to empower local artisans and boost the economy.

"The Chief Minister inaugurated the Buyer-Seller Meet at SKICC today. The initiative aims to empower artisans and strengthen the local economy by creating direct market linkages and promoting local products. The meet is hosting 15 international and 30 national buyers," Omar posted on his



official X handle. Talking to reporters later, Omar said the effectiveness of the meet would only be known

by year end. "One buyer-seller meet would not solve the problems. We have six | [More on P10](#)

'Not Contesting Elections Since 2019'

J&K CEO Issues Notice To 3 Political Parties

Agencies

Srinagar: The office of the J&K Chief Electoral Officer has issued show cause notices to three registered political parties including All Jammu and Kashmir Republican Party, Indian People's Conference Party and Socialist Democratic Party, proposing to delist them from the list of registered parties.

The CEO's decision comes

after it was found that these parties have not contested any elections to the House of the People or State Legislative Assemblies for the past six years, since 2019. The parties' current addresses are also unknown, raising questions about their active existence.

The CEO has given the parties an opportunity to make a representation and show cause why they should not be delisted. | [More on P10](#)

New Political Front Formed In J&K

Sajad Lone Says It's 'People's Alliance For Change'

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference (JKPC), People's Democratic Front (PDF), and Jamaat-e-Islami-backed Justice and Development Front (JDF) on Monday announced the formation of People's Alliance for Change (PAC), with an aim "to raise the issues of common masses, including restoration of the constitutional position that existed before August 5, 2019".

The alliance formation was announced at JKPC president

State Child Rights Panel Soon, Govt Tells HC

M Ahmad

Srinagar: Not much time would be required to constitute the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, the government informed the High Court of J&K and Ladakh on Monday.

Hearing a Public Interest Litigation, a division bench of Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal adjourned the matter for four week after A.R. Malik, Senior Additional Advocate General, sought the same.



Malik submitted that the process as regards the scrutiny of the applications, received by authorities, was in progress and shall be concluded within four weeks. "Not much time would be required to constitute the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights," Malik submitted and urged the Division Bench to defer the proceedings by four weeks so as to apprise the Court of the further progress made in this regard. "Adjourned to 13.08.2025," the court said. | [More on P10](#)

NRPC Raises Alarm

J&K's Power Debt Hits Rs 150 Cr



Agencies

Srinagar: The Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) has raised a red flag over the whopping liabilities of Rs 150 crore against Jammu & Kashmir primarily on account of deviation charges and reactive energy charges.

The minutes of the meetings of 79th Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) and 54th Technical Co-ordination Committee

(TCC) of NRPC held on May 30 reveals that the issue of non-payment of liabilities by J&K, on account of these charges, was discussed threadbare.

According to the record note of the meeting, the committee expressed concern over non-payment, stating that it was affecting payment to receivable entities of the Northern region. "It is to be noted that non-receipt of payment from | [More on P10](#)

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'Women Face Higher Risk Of Cognitive Decline From Polluting Cooking Fuels'

Press Trust Of India

Women exposed to household air pollution from cooking fuels may be at a higher risk of cognitive impairment than men, a study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru has found. The study, published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal, analysed MRI brain scans of ageing adults in the rural town of Srinivasapura in Karnataka, revealing that women might be at a higher risk of experiencing adverse effects in the brain. A team, which also included researchers from the University of Chicago, US, explained that burning solid fuels for cooking, especially in poorly ventilated spaces, can release air pollutants, such as oxides

of carbon, nitrogen, sulphur and heavy metals, along with suspended particulate matter. The pollutants have been shown to affect the brain through varied mechanisms, primary ones being inflammation and oxidative stress, they said. The researchers analysed more than 4,100 adults aged 45 and above, who are participants of the ongoing Centre for Brain Research-Srinivasapura Aging, Neuro Senescence, and COgnition (CBR-SANSCO) study at IISc. MRI brain scans were taken for around a thousand of these participants. Cognitive impairment, they explained, affects memory, reasoning, and speech. It may precede conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's disease -- in which the affected person faces trouble performing daily routine activities.

The study's authors wrote, "Polluting cooking technology users may be at a higher risk for cognitive impairment. Rural females, who tend to be more exposed than males, could have greater vulnerability to (household air pollution's) adverse effects on the brain." Given the increasing burden of dementia -- an ageing-related disorder -- in India, the findings have significant implications for public health, providing insights on how household air pollution can influence dementia risk, the team said. "Policies promoting clean cooking fuel (or) technology adoption are imperative," they wrote. They added that the findings support those from previous studies which showed a lowered cognition and ability to process visual information in space among people using polluting cooking technology.

Further, upon analysing the MRI brain scans of women, the team found lower volumes of hippocampus -- a brain region critical for memory and known to be significantly impacted in Alzheimer's disease. Overall, the study broadens the understanding of how pollution-causing cooking fuel is related with poor cognition, the authors said. "Community-centred interventions to improve health literacy and clean cooking fuel adoption among rural Indians, could help reduce the substantial morbidities associated with polluting cooking fuel use, and reduce dementia risk," they said. The study is the only one to employ brain scanning techniques in a rural population to examine how household air pollution can adversely impact the brain structurally, the authors said.

'Training, Keeping Supply Chain Data Secure Behind Success Of Circular Startups'

Press Trust of India

New Delhi- Good training and mentoring, helpful government policies and keeping supply chain data secure are among key factors that help "circular startups" succeed, according to a report by Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow. Circular startups are businesses that are designed from the start to reduce waste, reuse materials, and make efficient use of natural resources, rather than the traditional "take-make-dispose" model. The research published in the Business Strategy and Environment journal offers insights into the key factors that help such startups succeed. According to Suresh Jakhar, Professor, Operations and Supply Chain Management, with rising global temperature and fast-depleting natural resources, this study offers insights into circular models that have become critically important. Projections show that global usage of natural resources is expected to double by 2050, posing serious environmental and economic risks. "The Circular Economy (CE) and Industry 4.0 (I4.0) have emerged as highly pertinent topics for both academic research and industrial practice in recent years. Given that many CE start-ups leverage I4.0 technologies, understanding their success factors is crucial," he told PTI. "The findings of this research offer a roadmap for entrepreneurs, managers, and policymakers, facilitating the development of successful I4.0-powered CE start-ups, added Jakhar. Krishna Chandra Balodi, Professor, Strategic Management, IIM Lucknow, explained that the circular economy emerges as a viable solution through its focus on reuse, recovery of resources and reduction in waste. "However, only 7.2 per cent of the global economy follows this model which indicates that it is imperative for companies to adopt sustainability



at the very beginning of their processes," said Balodi. With a particular focus on these kinds of startups, the IIM Lucknow research team studied Industry 4.0 startups which integrated cutting-edge technologies like smart sensors automation, real-time data processing and interconnection into their operations for enhanced circularity. To identify the factors that influence success of circular startups, the research team combined literature review, expert insights, and structured decision-making methods. The team identified 23 critical success factors and organised them into a practical framework that can help entrepreneurs, business leaders, and policymakers support the growth of these ventures. Some of the most important factors that founders can focus on to help their startups grow and be profitable include -- having a clear circular business model, building the right technical skills, keeping supply chain data secure and transparent, working with other businesses. "This study reveals the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for Circular Economy (CE) startups powered by Industry 4.0 (I4.0) technologies, offering a clear roadmap for success. "After identifying 23 key factors, we

ranked them by priority and found the top five to be-- Innovative Circular Business Models, I4.0-Related Technological Competency, Information Security, Privacy and Transparency, Inter-Supply Chain and Inter-Sector Eco-Friendly Partnerships, and Collaboration Across Various Functions," said research scholar Sagnika Dutta. In addition, the study also pointed to several external drivers that influence a startup's chances of long-term success. These include -- access to funding, good training and mentoring facilities, helpful government policies and demand for circular products. "By strengthening these external conditions, governments and industry leaders can create a more supportive environment for circular innovation in India," Dutta said. To help stakeholders prioritise their actions, the researchers ranked the success factors in order of importance and examined how different factors influence one another. "For instance, access to finance and physical infrastructure emerged as foundational drivers that enable progress in many other areas, such as skill development, collaboration and innovation," Dutta said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Azra Akhter, resident of HMT, Srinagar hereby inform that my name has been erroneously recorded as Azra Sarfaraz in my J&K Bank Savings Account at Govt Medical College Branch, Srinagar. My correct name, as per Aadhar and official records, is Azra Akhter. I am initiating the process to have the name corrected in the bank records accordingly. Objections, if any, may be communicated within 7 days.

Sd/-
Azra Akhter
Lane No 5
Rose Avenue, HMT, Srinagar-12
Date: 30/06/2025

ss

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 muhammad abu bakar s/o mahmood hussain lone r/o sherabad khore with verified date of birth 14/06/2022 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..

fko
NAIB TEHSILDAR PATTAN

PUBLIC NOTICE

The name of ward in his Adhaar card is Arham Ahmad Ganie which is incorrect. While his correct name is Arhan Ahmad Ganie. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concerned office within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Tawseef Ahmad Ganie, F/o: Arhan Ahmad Ganie, R/o: Reban Gund Behram Tehsil Zainapora and District Shopian

fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform all the intrested people that I had two sons namely Mr Muzafer Ahmad Pandith And Mr Aquib Ahmad Pandith. But unfortunately Mr Muzafer Ahmad Pandith died on whose name was the electricity connection no. 0206050015980. Now I want to change the name of consumer in the PDD department Narbal. Anyone having any objection may kindly submit his or her response to assistant executive engineer PDD division Narbal with in seven days after publishing of this notice.

Mohd Ramzan Pandith
Checki Kawoosa

bmj

از نیابت یوئی

عنوان:- درخواست منجانب محمد متبول تھار ولد غلام محمد الدین تھار ساکنہ سگی پورہ ہمداد عطا گنگی OBC تحت 176 SRO بحق پیر محمد ابراہیم

اشتہار ہر خاص وعام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست بغرض OBC سرٹیفکیٹ بذمہ منجاریش کی ہے جو کہ زیر کارروائی ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن واقعی منجارات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور ساکن سگی پورہ میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کبھی بھی تھار سکونت نہیں کی ہے ساکن کانینڈہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے محمد متبول تھار ولد غلام محمد الدین طاہرہ بیگم زوجہ محمد متبول محمد ابراہیم ولد محمد متبول زیدہ نعیم محمد یونس گنگانی متبول دختر۔۔۔ فیضان متبول پسر۔۔۔ ساکن مذکورہ OBC سرٹیفکیٹ حاصل کرنے کا خواہ ہے اور کیونکہ ہمداد مندی 6000 روپے تک ہے۔ سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی مڑر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ بعد مشتمہ اخبار سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنے مندر یا اعتراض عدالت حد کو دفتر میں اوقات کے دوران پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے میعاد کو بی قابل مندر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

فکو
نایب تحصیلدار

نمبر پلٹ کی گشدگی

یوئی گاڑی (Tata Sumo) زیر نمبر JK05-7258 کے نمبر پلٹ سامناٹاپ سے کراہ پورہ کپورہ تک نہیں ہو گئے۔ بہت ذمہ داری نہیں ملے۔ اگر کسی نے اٹھائی ہو تو وہ ہمارے آسانیت نیچے دے ہوئے نمبر پر فون کرے۔ بصورت دیگر آئی ڈی پلٹنگ کاغذی مطلوب ہے۔ اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر ARTO بارہ مولہ کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بعد از میعاد کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

غلام احمد شہر گوجری ولد ثناء اللہ شہر گوجری

ساکنہ بنگلو باغ بارہ مولہ کشمیر۔ فون۔ 9622811826

mcb

از نیابت پٹھان با جلاس نایب تحصیلدار پٹھان

درخواست از جانب علی محمد آو ولد مولی محمد آو ساکنہ ماگی پورہ تحصیل پٹن ہندو بھیم پیدائش بحق دختر Shazia Ali

اشتہار ہمداد آگاہی ہر خاص وعام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست ہمداد وصول اندراج کرنے پیم پیدائش بحق مندرجہ ذیل اشخاص جن کی پیم پیدائش مندرجہ ذیل ہیں۔ نام تاریخ پیدائش سکونت Shazia Ali 19-04-2009 ماگی پورہ لہذا اس بارے میں ہر خاص وعام مطلع کیا جاتا ہے اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو مطلوبہ سرٹیفکیٹ اجراء کرنے میں کوئی مندر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ چاروں کے اندر اندر دفتر بذیل پیش کریں۔ نایب تحصیلدار پٹھان fko

Office of the Naib Tehsildar, Pattan

Subject: Issuance of Registration Order for Delayed Birth PUBLIC NOTICE The Registrar of Births, EO Municipal Committee Pattan, has submitted a case file regarding the birth of Fatima uz Zehra, daughter of Mohd Saleem Malik, resident of Dandoora, Pattan, with the verified date of birth 02/10/2020, which occurred at SDH Pattan. In this connection, if anyone has any objection to the issuance of the said birth certificate, they may contact this office within 04 days from the date of this notice. No objections will be entertained after the expiry of this period.

Sd/-
Naib Tehsildar, Pattan
fko

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed to the General public that my name and my husband name in my Aadhar Card bearing Aadhar No:- 7932 3806 4815 has been wrongly mentioned as Jana Begum W/O, Ab Gaffar Lone instead of Jani W/O, Gaffar Loan Now I am applying for its Correction as per Election Card bearing No:- MRT 0229393 and pansion record . 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. Jani W/O, Gaffar Loan R/O :- Langate, Mohalla Shalpora .Tehsil :- Langate . Distt :- Kupwara .Pin Cod.193302



fko

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE BOMAI ZAINGEER

No: 186 /B&D/TZ/2025 Date: 30/6/2025

Subject: Issuance of registration orders in respect of delayed Birth & Death.

Public Notice

This office has received a written application from Mohammad Rafi Gojar, S/O, : Farooq Ahmad R/O: Zaloor, Tehsil Zaingeer for issuance of Birth & Death Certificate in favor of daughter namely Aiza Jan D/o Mohammad Rafi, who was Born on 26/02/2023, as per document evidence produced by the applicant. In this regard if any one has any objection He/She may file the same before the office under signed within 07 Days. After that no objection what so ever will be entertained by this office. Sd// Naib Tehsildar Zaingeer fko

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 Amanat Zehra D/o Mohd Rafiq Guroo R/o Palhallan Tehsil Pattan distt baramulla with verified date of birth 01/01/2021 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

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM

PUBLIC NOTICE

Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No.JK-0420150028503 issued in favour of SHAIR ALI KHAN Parentage MOHAMMAD ABDLLAH KHAN Whereas an application has been recieved by one SHAIR ALI KHAN Parentage MOHAMMAD ABDLLAH KHAN wherein he claimed that the Fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as MOHD ABDULLAH KHAN Which needs to be changed as MOHAMMAD ABDLLAH KHAN. Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir
mcb

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Parliamentary Panel Tours Dal Lake, Says Normalcy Returning To J&K

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, led by its Chairman and BJP MP Brij Lal, on Monday undertook a boat tour of the Dal Lake near SKICC as part of its 10-day study visit to Jammu and Kashmir.

The panel had earlier visited the famous tourist destination Gulmarg and is currently on a routine tour aimed at assessing public grievances, reviewing policy implementation, and observing tourism development in the Union Territory.

Speaking to reporters in Gulmarg, Brij Lal said the

committee is in Kashmir as part of its annual study visit and will be engaging with the J&K administration and various public sector bodies. "We will hold discussions with the government and officials on multiple issues, including public grievances and tourism," he said.

Commenting on the situation in the Valley, he noted that the large number of tourists reflects a changing atmosphere. "The normalcy I witnessed here, with the increasing tourist arrivals, is a sign that peace is returning to Jammu and Kashmir," he stated. The committee is also expected to meet a range of stakeholders during the course of its visit.

Speaking to reporters in Gulmarg, Brij Lal said the

Comm Secy H&UDD Reviews Muharram Arrangements

Inspects Yatra Transit Camp At Pantha Chowk

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a proactive move to ensure seamless and safe observance of Muharram-ul-Haram, Amarnath Yatra Mandeep Kaur (IAS), Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Housing & Urban Development Department, conducted a comprehensive inspection of key sites across Srinagar today. She was accompanied by Faz Lul Haseeb (IAS), Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, and senior officials from SMC and allied departments.

The visit included prominent Imam Bargahs in Zadibal and Hasanabad, where the Commissioner Secretary personally reviewed the arrangements being made for Muharram processions and religious gatherings. She interacted with members of the Shia community, listening to their suggestions and concerns to ensure a peaceful and dignified observance of the holy month.

The inspection focused on several essential services including sanitation, power supply, street lighting, drinking water, water tanker availability, drainage, and road conditions. Commissioner Secretary stressed the importance of coordinated efforts and timely action to address any issues that may arise during the period. She reassured community members of the government's full support and its commitment to public safety and well-being.

To uphold hygiene standards, she directed concerned officials to carry out thorough fumigation at all key religious sites, including Imam Bargahs, mosques, and shrines.

In addition to reviewing Mu-



LATER, SHE INSPECTED THE YATRA TRANSIT CAMP AT PANTHA CHOWK, taking stock of facilities and preparations being put in place for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

harram arrangements, she also visited the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Centre at Tengpora to assess its operations. Later, she inspected the Yatra Transit Camp at Pantha Chowk, taking stock of facilities and preparations being put in place for

the upcoming Amarnath Yatra.

This comprehensive field visit reflects the government's ongoing commitment in facilitating religious events with dignity and care, while ensuring public health, safety, and communal harmony remain top priorities.

Water Supply to Be Hit In Srinagar Today

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has issued an urgent public notice informing residents of Srinagar and its adjoining areas about a major disruption in potable water supply on July 1, 2025, owing to critical repair works on the Sindh Power Canal (PDC).

According to the Executive Engineer of the Water Works Division Srinagar, the raw water supply to Alusteng and Rangil Water Treatment Plants will be severely affected due to urgent maintenance being carried out by the CMD Ganderbal. This disruption is expected to impact water availability across a wide swathe of the city and its outskirts.

The affected areas include Zakoora, Gulab Bagh, Alusteng, Shuhama, Hadoora, Chatterhama, Khalmulla, Habak, Naseem Bagh, Busserbagh, Malla Bagh, Pandach, Buchpora, Soura, Anchar, Bohlohpura, Zoonimar, Nowshera, Bagh-i-Ali Mardan Khan, Zadibal,

Hawal, Alamgari Bazar, Rajouri Kadal, Nallahmar, Nawakadal, Bohri Kadal, Nowhatta, Lal Bazar, Hazratbal, Sadribal, parts of Rainawari, Nigeen, Saida Kadal, Karan Nagar, Chat-tabal, Kawdara, Eidgah, Mahrajgunj, Zaina Kadal, Saidpora, Bemina, Firdous Abad, parts of Batmaloo, Qamarwari, Zainakoot, Noorabad, Umer-

abad, and nearby

localities.

Residents have been advised to store adequate water in advance to avoid inconvenience during the supply outage.

For any complaints or grievances regarding the water shortage, the general public can contact the PHE Provincial Control Room, which operates 24x7. The helpline numbers are:

Landline: 0194-2477207, 0194-2452047
WhatsApp: 9419413914, 9419413915

The authorities have appealed for public cooperation and assured that efforts will be made to restore normal supply at the earliest.



Sakeena Itoo Visits SKIMS, Super Speciality Hospital



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo visited SKIMS Soura and Super Speciality Hospital Srinagar and took stock of medical care facilities available for the patients.

While visiting Super Speciality hospital Srinagar, the Minister toured several departments of the facility including Cardiology, Nephrology, Oncology and other Criti-

cal Care Units. She held direct interactions with patients and their attendants to understand their experiences and gather feedback regarding the quality of treatment and services available at the hospital.

Later, the Minister also visited SKIMS Soura and took stock of medical care facilities available at this prestigious institution. She inspected different sections of the hospital and took stock of medical care facilities available at the facility.

The Minister urged hospital au-

thorities to ensure timely treatment, streamlined processes and patient-centric care for the patients coming from different far flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

She also interacted with the patients and their attendants and took detailed feedback from them about the services available at this facility.

While interacting with them, the Minister assured them that the Government is focusing on increasing medical care facilities in rural areas so that they can get access near their vicinity.

SAD DEMISE

With profound sorrow, we announce the passing of our beloved father, Gulam Rasool Bhat who left this heavenly abode on Date 29-06-2025 (Sunday) He was a pillar of strength, love, and wisdom. His memory will forever remain in our hearts. May his soul rest in eternal peace. His Rasum Charum will be observed on 02-07-25 (Wednesday) at his Residence Gund Check Pora Bagati Kani Pora.



Deeply mourned by:
Family, and Friends

Ph. No # 9018747779, 9797898954

KM

انتقال پر ملال



بھروسہ ورئ یہ اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ جناب غلام احمد تیلی ولد غلام محمد تیلی ساکن چک صدر بل حضرت بل، سری نگر (متصل این آئی ٹی) اپنا تک اس دار فانی سے دارالبقا کی طرف رحلت فرما گئے۔ مرحوم ایک نیک سیرت، دیندار، ملسار اور بااخلاق شخصیت کے حامل تھے۔ ان کی وفات سے نہ صرف خاندان بلکہ پورا علاقہ ایک غمگین اور خدمت گزار فرد سے محروم ہو گیا۔ مرحوم کی فاتحہ خوانی مورخہ 6 محرم الحرام 1447ھ، مطابق بدھ، صبح 6 بجے ان کے آبائی قبرستان حسن آباد، سری نگر میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ اس کے بعد مرحوم کے دولت کدہ پر واقع چک صدر بل حضرت بل سری نگر میں دن بھر تعزیت پرستی کی مجلس جاری رہے گی، جس میں عزیز واقارب، احباب اور علاقہ کے معززین شرکت فرما کر ایصالِ ثواب کریں گے۔

سوگواران:
تمام پسماندگان، اعضاء و اقرباء

Ph. No # +91 70060 18842

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
8 WEEK FREE GROUP THERAPY

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

It's not just RECURRENT HANDWASHING AND CHECKING BUT UNSEEN PAIN, myths and stigma, distress associated with OCD

KASHMER / Kashmir American Society of Healthcare, Medical Education & Research in collaboration with HPVT (Help Poor Voluntary Trust) is initiating a free 8 weeks Group therapy for the individuals suffering with OCD by a team of counselling clinical psychologists led by leading consultant clinical psychologist of J&K.

If you or some one you know is experiencing symptoms of OCD, seeking professional help is crucial. You do not have to fight your battles alone. There is no need for referral, simply call us for registration.

Happy & Healthy minds Office, HPVT Building (first Floor), Daresh Kadal Chowk, Srinagar 9070806160

- 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
- PAMPOR: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



PRAYERS

FAJR	3:37
ZUHR	12:33
ASR	5:34
Magrib	7:50
ISHA	9:31

This Day In History

- 69 - Roman General Vespasian is first proclaimed Emperor by troops in Egypt, during year of the four emperors
- 251 - The Battle of Abritus is won by the Goths against the Romans. Roman Emperors Decius and Herennius Etruscus are killed
- 1097 - 1st Crusaders defeat Sultan Kilidj Arslan of Nicea
- 1200 - In China, sunglasses are invented
- 1253 - Battle at Westkapelle-Floris the Guardian beats Gwijde van Dampierre
- 1543 - England & Scotland sign Peace treaty of Greenwich
- 1674 - Spain, France & Netherlands form Triple Alliance
- 1690 - Army of Protestant King William III defeats deposed Roman Catholic King James II in Battle of Boyne in Ireland
- 1747 - Battle at Lafeld: France beat British/Dutch army
- USA
- 1776 - 1st vote on Declaration of Independence for Britain's North American colonies
- 1798 - Napoleon's fleet reaches Alexandria, Egypt
- 1810 - Louis Napoleon abdicates as king of the Netherlands
- 1839 - Abdul-Medjid succeeds Mahmud II as Sultan of Turkey
- 1862 - Battle of Malvern Hill (Poindexter's Farm), day 7 of 7 days battles, Union forces repel Confederate attack, Tactical Union victory (US Civil War)
- 1890 - Great Britain and Germany sign Zanzibar-Helgoland Treaty
- 1896 - Wilfrid Laurier sworn in as 1st French speaking Prime Minister of Canada
- 1905 - Albert Einstein introduces his theory of special relativity
- 1910 - Union of South Africa becomes a dominion
- 1913 - Serbia and Greece declare war on Bulgaria
- 1916 - First day of the Battle of the Somme: the British Army suffers its worst day, losing 19,240 men (WWI)
- 1921 - The Communist Party of China is founded and Chen Duxiu elected its leader
- 1930 - Great Britain signs accord for Independence of Iraq
- 1942 - German troops conquer Sebastopol
- 1945 - Allies troop land on Balikpapan
- 1950 - 1st 407 US soldiers flown to South Korea
- 1954 - Khalid Hasan, Pakistani cricket leg-spinner makes his Test debut against England at just 16 yrs 352 days, then world record
- 1956 - Ibrahim Hashiroe succeeds Said el-Moefti as premier of Jordan
- 1959 - Israeli Knesset agrees to weapon sales to West Germany
- 1960 - The independent Somali Democratic Republic, commonly known as Somalia, is formed out of former British and Italian territories
- 1960 - Ghana becomes a republic
- 1960- USSR shoots down US RB-47 reconnaissance plane
- 1962- Algeria votes for independence from France
- 1962- Burundi & Rwanda gain independence from Belgium (National Days)
- 1968- US, Britain, USSR & 58 nations sign Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
- 1968- USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1971- Britain and Argentina sign accord about Falkland Islands
- 1982- Kosmos 1383, 1st search & rescue satellite, launched
- 1992- Ali Kafi becomes president of Algeria
- 1993 Russian manned space craft TM-17, launches into orbit
- 1993- STS-57 (Endeavour) lands
- 1997- United Kingdom returns Hong Kong and the New Territories to the People's Republic of China
- 2002- The International Criminal Court is established to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression
- 2004 - Saturn Orbit insertion of Cassini-Huygens begins at 01:12 UTC and ends at 02:48 UTC.
- 2008- Denmark is the first European economy to confirm it is in recession since the global credit crunch began; its GDP shrinks 0.6% in the first quarter after a 0.2% contraction in the fourth quarter of 2007
- 2013- Croatia becomes the 28th member of the European Union

Israeli Raids Kill 60 in Gaza as Crisis Deepen

Associated Press

Jerusalem: At least 60 people were killed across Gaza by Israeli strikes, health workers said on Saturday, as Palestinians face a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ceasefire prospects inch closer.

The strikes began late on Friday and continued into Saturday morning, among others killing 12 people near the Palestine Stadium in Gaza City, which was sheltering displaced people, and eight more living in apartments, according to staff at Shifa Hospital, where the bodies were brought.

More than 20 bodies were taken to Nasser Hospital, according to health officials. A strike midday on Saturday killed 11 people on a street in eastern Gaza City, and their bodies were taken to Al-Ahli Hospital.

The strikes come as US President Donald Trump says there could be a ceasefire agreement within the next week.

Taking questions from reporters in the Oval Office on Friday, the President said, "We're working on Gaza and

trying to get it taken care of."

An official with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press that Israel's minister for strategic affairs Ron Dermer will arrive in Washington next week for talks on Gaza's ceasefire, Iran and other subjects. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Talks have been on again off again since Israel broke the latest ceasefire in March, continuing its military campaign in Gaza and furthering the Strip's dire humanitarian crisis.

Some 50 hostages remain in Gaza, fewer than half of them believed to still be alive. They were part of some 250 hostages taken when Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, sparking the 21-month-long war.

The war has killed over 56,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. It says more than half of the dead were women and children.

Dubai Conducts First Aerial Taxi Test Flight



Press Trust Of India

Dubai Dubai has successfully completed the first test flight of an aerial taxi, a fully electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, marking a major step in its efforts to introduce sustainable and next-generation urban transport.

The aerial taxi is designed to offer fast and zero-emission travel within cities, operating with minimal noise and requiring only a small landing footprint.

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, said the achievement reflects the city's commitment to placing the UAE at the forefront of transformative technologies that drive global progress.

"Further, the successful aerial taxi test flight demonstrates our determination to transform breakthrough technologies into practical solutions that enhance quality of life and set new benchmarks for urban development," he said.

Conducted by Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) in partnership with Joby Aviation, the Joby Aerial

Taxi flight took place at a designated site in the Dubai desert.

Mattar Al Tayer, director general, chairman of the board of executive directors of RTA, said the launch underscored Dubai's commitment to keeping pace with rapid global transformations and developing future-ready solutions to emerging mobility challenges.

The aircraft has a range of up to 160 kilometres and a top speed of 320 kilometres per hour, with flights such as Dubai International Airport to Palm Jumeirah expected to take just 12 minutes, compared to 45 minutes by car.

The first commercial aerial taxi flights are scheduled for 2026, with station operations launching near Dubai International Airport.

The project is part of a broader strategy under the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 to integrate advanced transport solutions and enhance quality of life.

"Dubai serves as a launchpad for a global revolution in mobility, and flying our aircraft here represents a pivotal step towards integrating Aerial Taxi services into the fabric of daily life around the world," said JoeBen Bevirt, founder and CEO of Joby Aviation.



Military Watch noted that Iran fired its missiles at a "modest" rate, well below its full capabilities, possibly to avoid escalation or preserve capacity in case of deeper US involvement. (File photo)

U.S. Spends Over \$1 Billion Defending Israel in 12-Day War

KO Web Desk

Srinagar:The United States has spent an estimated \$1 to \$1.2 billion defending Israel during a 12-day missile war with Iran earlier this month — a staggering figure that has reignited debate in Washington over the long-term costs of America's military commitments in the Middle East.

At the heart of the expenditure was the deployment of the U.S.'s elite THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) system, which fired between 60 and 80 interceptors to shield Israeli cities from Iranian ballistic missile attacks. According to Military Watch Magazine each interceptor costs between \$12 million and \$15 million, making this one of the most expensive defensive operations in recent U.S. history.

While the U.S. government has long supported Israeli defense through military aid and joint systems like Iron Dome and Arrow, this episode marked a rare instance where American-operated missile defenses were directly used in live combat to protect Israeli territory — at significant cost to U.S. taxpayers.

"The numbers are shocking," said a senior congressional aide familiar with defense appropriations. "We burned through over a billion dollars' worth of interceptors in less than two weeks. That kind of burn rate raises serious questions about sustainability and priorities."

Iran's response to the attacks on its nuclear and military sites came fast and heavy. Ghadr. Emad. Kheibar Shekan. Then the Fattah. Hypersonic, deadly and hard to stop. These were not random rockets. These were long-range and high-precision messages aimed at Israel's core.

While Israel's Arrow and Barak-8 systems played some roles in interception, the bulk of high-altitude defense fell to the U.S.-operated THAAD batteries, which had been quietly stationed in Israel since early 2024.

Military analysts warn that the asymmetric cost dynamic — where cheap offensive missiles force expensive defensive responses — poses a growing challenge for U.S. strategy. Iran's missile assault was described as "mod-

est" in scale compared to its full arsenal, yet it still forced the U.S. to use up 15-20% of its global THAAD stockpile.

With only 50-60 THAAD interceptors produced annually, the 12-day conflict effectively erased more than a year's worth of missile defense capacity — raising alarms about readiness elsewhere, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where tensions with China and North Korea are rising.

"There's no world where we can afford to spend a billion dollars every two weeks defending allies," said one former Pentagon official. "We need to seriously rethink how we structure and fund missile defense — or risk being caught unprepared in a far bigger conflict."

Despite the ceasefire announced by President Donald Trump on June 24, the financial and strategic aftershocks of the Israel-Iran war continue to ripple through Washington. With an eighth THAAD battery due online by late 2025, military planners face a critical question: Can America afford to keep using billion-dollar solutions against million-dollar threats?

Iranian Clergy's New Fatwa: Threats to Supreme Leader Constitute 'Moharebeh'

Trans Asia News

Tehran: Iran's top Shia clergy have issued strong religious decrees, warning that any attack or threat against the country's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, constitutes a red line for the Islamic world. Citing escalating threats from Israel and incendiary remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump, the clerics emphasized the religious, political, and symbolic centrality of the Supreme Leader's position.

In a fatwa issued Sunday, Grand Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi declared that any regime or individual threatening the leadership of the Islamic Republic is guilty of moharebeh—a grave Islamic offense meaning "waging war against God." The fatwa comes amid recent Israeli strikes on Iran, including targeted assassinations of Iranian commanders and scientists, and growing rhetoric from Western officials.

"The Supreme Leader of the Revolution stands as the guardian of Shi'ite identity—and indeed the entire Islamic Ummah," Ayatollah Shirazi stated. "His leadership is a central pillar of our belief. No righteous and free Muslim can remain silent in the face of threats against this sacred position."

Clerical Consensus on Defense of Leadership Another senior Marja in Qom, Ayatollah Hossein Nouri-Hamedani echoed the sentiment, stating that any insult to the Supreme Leader is a direct insult to Islam itself. He underscored the religious obligation to support Ayatollah Khamenei, especially at a time when "enemies of Islam, the Qur'an, and the Ahl al-Bayt have united."

"Weakening the Supreme Leader is forbidden," Ayatollah Nouri-Hamedani said. "Any individual, group, or government involved in such threats shares full responsibility before God and the Ummah."

Both Ayatollahs emphasized that defending the Supreme Leader is not merely a national issue, but one that resonates across the Islamic world. Any cooperation with hostile entities—or silence in the face of such threats—was declared religiously impermissible.

Pakistan, China, Bangladesh Eye New Bloc to Counter India

Trans Asia News

New Delhi: Islamabad, Beijing, and Dhaka are reportedly in talks to form a new regional alliance aimed at countering India's influence and replacing the largely defunct South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The proposed bloc, still in early stages, would focus on economic integration, infrastructure, and strategic cooperation — areas where SAARC has stagnated due to India-Pakistan tensions.

Media reports from Islamabad stated that discussions between Islamabad and Beijing on forming this new bloc are already at an advanced stage. The report also noted that Bangladesh participated in a recent meeting held in Kunming, China, on June 19 to explore the creation of the proposed group.

According to The Express Tribune, the primary goal of the Kunming meeting was to extend invitations to other South Asian nations, many of them former SAARC members, to join this emerging regional platform. The development follows a China-Pakistan-Afghanistan trilateral dialogue held in May, which focused on expanding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and deepening cooperation with Afghanistan's Taliban-led regime.

SAARC, established on December 8, 1985, in Dhaka, had originally included seven countries, with Afghanistan joining in 2007. The bloc has been largely inactive since 2016. While there hasn't been an official SAARC summit since 2014 in Kathmandu, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi did host a virtual SAARC leaders' conference in 2020 to propose a COVID-19 Emergency Fund, pledging \$10 million from India.

The 19th SAARC summit was scheduled for Islamabad in November 2016, but India withdrew following the Pakistan-sponsored terror attack in Uri that killed 17 Indian soldiers. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Bhutan also pulled out, citing terrorism and regional instability, leading to the summit's cancellation and an indefinite pause in SAARC activity.

The Express Tribune report claimed that both China and Pakistan believe a new regional framework is essential for enhancing integration and connectivity in South Asia. Countries such as Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Afghanistan are also expected to be included in the proposed bloc.

According to diplomatic sources cited in the report, India may be extended an invitation to join the new group. However, given New Delhi's strategic differences, its participation is considered unlikely.

What Killed Shefali Jariwala? Police Has a Theory

Press Trust Of India

the official added.

Mumbai: Actor Shefali Jariwala, who passed away on the night of June 27, was taking different types of medicines, including anti-ageing tablets, and her blood pressure had dropped possibly from consuming these on an empty stomach before she was rushed to hospital, police officials probing her death said on Monday.

Jariwala (42), who shot to fame with her breakout appearance in the remix track 'Kaanta Laga' and also appeared on several reality shows, was rushed to Bellevue Multispecialty Hospital in Andheri by her actor husband Parag Tyagi at 11.15 pm on Friday, where doctors declared her dead on arrival. Police was informed at 1 am on Saturday and her body was sent for post-mortem to Cooper Hospital.

She was fasting on Friday due to a puja at her home, and consuming various medicines on an empty stomach may have caused her blood pressure to drop, leading to her falling to the ground, a police official said.

She had taken an injection that afternoon, possibly for anti-ageing, and also had her usual dose of pills in the night,

"Her blood pressure dropped drastically and she began shivering, following which the family rushed her



to hospital," he added.

The Amboli police has so far recorded statements of 10 people, including her husband, parents as well as house-help, all of whom were present at home at the time, though nothing suspicious has been found so far, the official said.

As part of the probe, a police team along with forensic sciences experts had visited her house and collected samples of several items, including her medicines and the injection, he said.

'Will Wait for Najeeb Till My Last Breath,' Says Missing JNU Student's Mother

Press Trust Of India

"My wait for Najeeb will continue till my last breath," said Fatima Nafees, mother of first-year JNU student Najeeb Ahmed who went missing in 2016.

She said she would speak to her lawyers to explore a future course of action.

A Delhi court on Monday allowed the CBI to close Ahmed's case saying the agency "exhausted all options".

Ahmed went missing from the Mahi-Mandvi hostel of JNU, following a scuffle with some students allegedly affiliated with

the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad the previous night.

Talking to PTI over the phone, Nafees said, "I will talk to my lawyers. But my wait for Najeeb will continue till my last breath. I pray for him every day and I hope I will get justice one day."

She was involved in multiple protests demanding a fair probe into her son's case. She said she has not been keeping well.

The CBI in October 2018 closed its investigation into the case as the agency's efforts to trace Ahmed yielded no result.

The agency filed its closure report before the court in the case after getting permission from the Delhi High Court.

Nafees' counsel had previ-



Najeeb Ahmed. File photo

ously said it was a "political case" in which the "CBI has succumbed to the pressure of its masters".

The case was initially probed by Delhi Police but was later transferred to the CBI.

Additional chief judicial magistrate Jyoti Maheshwari also "earnestly hoped" Najeeb was traced soon.

"This court expresses its regret that while the proceedings in the present case end with this closure report, a closure for Najeeb's mother and other loved ones, still eludes us," the order said.

While it accepted the agency's closure report, the court granted liberty to the CBI to re-open the investigation on the receipt of any credible information on Ahmed's whereabouts and intimate the court accordingly.

Man Poses as IAS Officer, Travels in Car with 'GOI' Plate

Press Trust Of India

Police have arrested a 32-year-old man who allegedly posed as an IAS officer, stayed at a Customs' guest house in Mumbai and travelled in a car with the 'Government of India' name plate, an official said on Monday.

The accused, identified as Chandramohan Singh, hailing from Bihar, stayed at the Customs' facility by claiming to be an employee of the Ministry of Home Affairs, he said.

He used to move around in a car bearing the 'Government of India' name plate, the official said.

The man had been stopped by a traffic constable in Dadar for a road rule violation, but he managed to escape by claiming he was an Indian Administra-



tive Service (IAS) officer, the police said. Acting on a tip, the police tracked Singh down outside a hotel in Malad area in a car with a driver on Saturday.

He initially posed as an IAS officer and showed a fake identity card, but during the probe, he confessed the documents were forged, the official said.

The police also found another document in his possession which claimed the man was working with the Ministry of Defence, he said.



Jhelum Water Levels Dip Amid Kashmir Dry Spell

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As the prolonged dry spell continues to grip the Kashmir Valley, the Jhelum river and its tributaries have seen a noteworthy drop in water levels, raising concerns over irrigation and drinking water availability across the region.

According to data from the Irrigation and Flood Control Department on Monday morning, accessed by KNO, the water level at Sangam stood at just 0.57 ft, far below the flood alert mark of 21 ft. Other gauges also reported low readings: Munshi Bagh (2.47 ft), Asham (2.57 ft), and Pampore (-1.29 m).

Wular Lake was recorded at 1574.97 metres, significantly below its average level of 1578.00 metres, according to the data.

It says tributaries are also showing signs of stress, with Rambiyara Nallah at Wachi dipping to -0.43 m, Liddar Nallah at Batkoot at 0.30 m, and Sindh Nallah at Doderhama measuring 1.05 m.

Meanwhile, independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif Keng said that while the situation is not yet alarming, it could worsen if dry conditions persist through July.

"We have seen worse in past years, but if this dry spell continues, we may see shortages, espe-

cially in remote and agricultural areas. July is a long month, and we can only hope the monsoon arrives on time," he said.

Moreover, the Meteorological Department (MeT) Srinagar forecast "partly to generally cloudy" weather with brief spells of rain/thundershower at scattered places, with the possibility of moderate rain at a few places.

The MeT said that from July 01 to 05, there is a possibility of intermittent rain/thundershowers at scattered places, and from July 06 to 08, also a possibility of intermittent rain/thundershowers at many places.

People in many areas have started experiencing problems, saying the irrigation channel in their village is drying up. "Farmers are worried about their crops," said Ghulam Nabi, a resident of Pulwama.

Ishfaq, a local from Bemina, Srinagar, said they are getting very little water these days. "How long will we survive on tanker supply? The situation is getting worse," he said.

As already reported, Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Kashmir, Er Taj Mohammad Chowdhary, said the department is actively monitoring the situation and water tankers have been deployed in various urban areas.

DC Kulgam Inspects Progress On NH-444 Project

Observer News Service

KULGAM: District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, on Monday conducted an extensive inspection of on-going work on National Highway (NH)-444 project in the district.

He reviewed the progress made on the Kulgam By-Pass on NH 444 stretching from Pahlloo to Lirow including the 378-meter-long Brazloo bridge.

During his visit, the DDC was briefed by engineers on the

progress status of the NH-444 Pahlloo-Lirow ByPass.

The DC instructed the concerned to expedite work and ensure the timely completion of the NH-444 project in the district.

He also emphasized the need to prioritize the construction of the Brazloo Bridge which is coming up at an estimated cost of 56 Cr.

Accompanying the DC were Assistant Commissioner Revenue Reyaz Ahmad Shah, Tehsildar Kulgam/Pahlloo Executive Engineer NH444 Construction Division Sgr, AEE's and other Officers.

DC Pulwama Reviews JK Sehat App Registration Progress

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, chaired a comprehensive meeting at the Administrative Complex Pulwama to review the progress of registration under the JK Sehat Mobile Application across the district.

While reviewing the progress, DC stressed the need to expedite the registration process. He directed all Block Medical Officers (BMOs) to prepare a comprehensive plan to ensure timely and widespread registration under the app. He also instructed them to constitute teams and adopt a door-to-door campaigning strategy to maximise public awareness, registrations and effective use of the platform.

"Proper awareness should be created among the public through the use of IEC materials and by organizing health camps to inform people about the ben-

efits and long-term advantages of registering on the JK Sehat platform, he said.

JK Sehat App is a one-stop digital platform designed to provide a wide range of healthcare services and information to patients, healthcare professionals, medical students, and the general public.

During the meeting, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Pulwama, presented a detailed overview of the application, highlighting its key features, user benefits, and the current status of registrations across the district.

In addition, the Deputy Commissioner also issued directions to the concerned officers to ensure that adequate medical arrangements are in place across the district in view of the upcoming 10th Muharram.

The meeting was attended by Chief Medical Officer, Pulwama; District Health Officer, Pulwama; Block Medical Officers; and other concerned officers.

DAJGUA Campaign Continues Across Pulwama

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: As part of the ongoing "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DAJGUA)" campaign, District Administration Pulwama organised tribal outreach camps at Sangerwani and Karmulla Tral. The initiative aims to ensure last-mile delivery of essential government services and the saturation of welfare schemes across tribal areas through focused & coordinated outreach.

A wide array of departments, including Health, Social Welfare, ICDS, Rural Development,

Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Forest, and Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Fisheries established dedicated stalls at the venues to deliver on-the-spot services. These departments facilitated registrations under key schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission (Functional Household Tap Connections), MGNREGA Job Cards, PMAY-G, PM Ujjwala Yojana, Mudra Yojana, PM Vishwakarma among others. Eligible citizens were guided and assisted on-site to ensure timely and complete coverage under these schemes.

DGP Chairs Joint Security Review Meeting Ahead Of Amarnath Yatra-2025



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Director General of Police (DGP) Jammu and Kashmir, Nalin Prabhat on Monday chaired a high-level joint security review meeting at the Range Police Headquarters in Anantnag to assess the overall security situation in South Kashmir, with particular emphasis on the upcoming Shri Amarnath Yatra (SANJY) 2025.

Following the meeting, the DGP, accompanied by Special DGP Coordination SJM Gillani, IPS, IGP Security J&K Sujit Kumar, IPS, DIGP SKR and

other senior officers conducted an extensive field visit of key areas in and around Pahalgam along the Yatra route. DGP inspected the Base Yatra Camps at Nunwan and Chandanwari and conducted the security audit and reviewed deployments and arrangements at these camp locations, ensuring that all logistics, infrastructure, and personnel were in place to facilitate a smooth and secure pilgrimage.

Additionally, a detailed security review meeting was chaired by DGP at Pahalgam, which was attended by the Senior Officers of Police, Army, CRPF, BSF, ITBP and other agencies including in-

telligence agencies, CID, Traffic, SDRF, Telecommunication, Security, and Fire and Emergency Service.

During the meeting, the DGP J&K took stock of the current security posture and issued directions to strengthen preparedness against any potential threats, emphasizing law and order management along the Pahalgam axis.

In his concluding remarks, the DGP J&K urged all officers and concerned agencies to work in close synergy and co-ordination to ensure a peaceful, smooth, and secure conduct of Amarnath Yatra 2025.

ADDITIONALLY, A DETAILED SECURITY REVIEW MEETING WAS CHAIRED BY DGP AT PAHALGAM, which was attended by the Senior Officers of Police, Army, CRPF, BSF, ITBP and other agencies including intelligence agencies, CID, Traffic, SDRF, Telecommunication, Security, and Fire and Emergency Service.

Sakeena Itoo Reviews Progress On Health Projects



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat to assess the status of ongoing works being executed under health infrastructure projects across Kashmir Division.

The meeting was attended by MD J&K Housing Board, MD Police Housing Corporation, Chief Engineer R&B North Kashmir, Director Health Services Kashmir, representatives of mechanical and hospital engineering department and other officers of the concerned departments and project executing agencies.

While reviewing the district-wise progress on each project, the Minister underscored the importance of adhering to deadlines, particularly in far-flung and snow-prone areas. "Timely completion of these projects is crucially important for saving

precious human lives. We cannot afford delays that could hamper rural healthcare delivery during harsh winters," she stated.

The Minister issued clear directions to all the executing agencies to ensure that all the ongoing projects, ranging from new health centres to upgradation of existing facilities, are completed in time as Kashmir has less working season.

Highlighting the importance of these projects for rural healthcare services, the Minister underlined that once completed, these projects will significantly strengthen the healthcare network in rural and underserved areas of Kash-

mir division. "Government's goal is to make quality healthcare accessible at the grass-roots level. These infrastructure upgrades are a crucial step towards achieving healthcare equity", asserted the Minister.

During the meeting, the Minister stressed upon the officers of the health department and executing agencies to conduct regular check-ups of ongoing construction works so that the buildings are constructed as per the approved works. She also asked them to consult every stakeholder in DPR formulation, ensuring that all necessary basic facilities are incorporated.

DC Baramulla Reviews Progress Of Works

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: To ensure the efficient utilization of the District Mineral Fund (DMF) for the development of mining-affected areas, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa chaired a review meeting at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting was attended by the Joint Director Planning, Superintending Engineer R&B, District Programme Officer (ICDS), Chief Medical Officer, District Mineral Officer and other concerned Officers.

At the outset, the DC conducted a comprehensive review of each developmental activity undertaken in the district using the District Mineral Fund for the financial year 2024-25.

The DC directed the concerned officers that all works approved under the previous financial year 2024-25 must be financially completed, and all associated liabilities should be cleared so that benefit of the works percolate the target population.

For the current financial year, the DC further emphasized the need to prioritize and take up more impactful and community-oriented works aimed at improving the living conditions in mining-affected areas.

Minga Sherpa underscored that main focus should be on repair and upgradation of critical road infrastructure, provisioning dedicated ambulances to enhance emergency healthcare access and deploying water tankers to ensure regular and adequate water supply for the affected communities.



Tourist Rush Increases In Pahalgam

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As the Amarnath Yatra draws near, Pahalgam witnessed an even larger tourist influx this weekend, with thousands thronging the scenic valley. The rush, mainly comprising local tourists, led to massive traffic jams that lasted for hours on the Pahalgam routes on Sunday.

The growing buzz is seen as a promising sign for the valley's tourism sector, still recovering from the shadow of a 22 April Pahalgam terror attack that had initially sparked fear and cancellations.

Traffic snarls were reported from multiple stretches between Anantnag and Pahalgam, with vehicles crawling for miles. Despite the inconvenience, the atmosphere remained festive, as families, trekkers, and nature lovers took advantage of the weekend to visit the lush green meadows, riversides, and famous parks like Betaab Valley.

"This is the second consecutive weekend where we've seen a huge footfall," said Fayaz Ahmad, a hotelier in Pahalgam, told KNO. "Occupancy touched 80 per cent by Sunday evening. It feels like the season is picking up pace again, and we're hopeful the upcoming Yatra will boost things even more."

Local businesses, which had been reeling under uncertainty after the attack, are slowly regaining confidence. "The fear was there, but people have started coming back. The market was lively again, and we've

had good sales after a long gap," said Asma Jan, a handicrafts vendor near Liddar Park.

Tourism department officials said the steady rise in visitor numbers is a positive indicator. "We've been working to ensure safety and coordination across all departments. The weekend rush shows that people are regaining trust in Pahalgam as a safe tourist destination," an official said.

Security has been tightened in view of the upcoming Yatra, with additional personnel deployed along key routes. The traffic department and Pahalgam Development Authority were on the ground, managing the crowd and ensuring that the rush didn't spiral into chaos.

"The traffic was heavy but manageable. With proper planning and more deployment during the Yatra, we hope to streamline the flow better," said a traffic official.

Photos and videos of the bustling Pahalgam along with jams went viral across social media, drawing praise and raising further hopes for a revival of tourism.

Stakeholders believe that if the current momentum continues, the season may still turn around. "With school vacations going on and Yatra, we hope the flow to further increase. If peace prevails, we're looking at a near-normal season," said Mohammad Yousuf, who operates a pony service.

Stakeholders said that there are still three months of peak season, and if they will go good, they will be able to earn their livelihood despite the dent caused by the attack.

Border Villages Bloom As Tourist Footfall Rises

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: After a pause of a couple of months due to tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), the Gurez Valley and other border areas of Jammu and Kashmir are now gradually witnessing a rise in tourist footfall.

As temperatures soar in the plains, many people are moving toward the cooler climes of Gurez, seeking relief from the heat wave and to enjoy the region's natural environment.

Officials told KNO that tourist activity has resumed, with an increasing number of visitors coming from Kashmir and other parts of the country. The scenic villages of Gurez, located close to the LoC, have once again become popular among trekkers and nature enthusiasts.

Notably, these border tourist destinations remained closed following 'Operation Sindoor' and subsequent shelling by Pakistan targeting civilian areas along the LoC. However, with the heat wave intensifying in the plains, tourist footfall in Gurez, Tulail, and nearby areas has now started gradually increasing with each passing day.

Locals said tourists have started returning to Gurez Valley and other areas near the LoC, calling it a positive development for border residents. They expressed hope that more

visitors will continue to arrive, helping to revive and promote these regions once again.

Ishfaq Ahmad, a local resident, said the valley has seen a good number of tourists over the past few weeks, with locals actively engaging with them and offering guidance. "We urge everyone to help promote these areas and appeal to the government to develop better infrastructure here," he said.

Gulam Muhammad, another resident, said the government should focus more on developing infrastructure in the area and ensure the safety of civilians during any untoward incidents, including shelling.

Many tourists expressed that Gurez Valley holds strong potential for tourism, comparable to or even better than other well-known destinations.

Adnan Ahmad, a visitor said, "Gurez has everything needed to attract more tourists, but it requires better government support to develop infrastructure and facilities."

"This place is a good destination for those seeking calm and nature. More people should be encouraged to visit," he said.

Several tourists also appreciated the warmth of the local people, noting that the hospitality made their stay comfortable and memorable.

Javid Dar Inaugurates JKRTC Bus Service

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Cooperative Election, Javid Ahmad Dar inaugurated a new Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) bus service from Zaloora to Srinagar.

This long-awaited service fulfills a persistent demand of the local residents, offering them a much-needed transportation link and improved regional connectivity. The bus service will cater to areas of Zaloora, Harwan, Tujjar Sharif and Sopore for travel to Srinagar city.

Speaking on the occasion, Javid Dar said that the launch of

this service reflects the commitment of the Omar Abdullah-led government towards ensuring enhanced basic facilities for the people, especially in far-flung and underserved areas. He emphasized that improving public transportation is a key step towards enhancing daily mobility, boosting local economic activities and connecting communities.

The Minister assured that the government would continue to strengthen the road connectivity, upgrade transport infrastructure and enhance the public amenities across the region.

Later, Javid Dar, visited Gori-pora, Rafiabab, to participate in the Muharram commemoration.

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KO VIEW

Break HIV Stigma

When Health Minister Sakina Itoo flagged off two mobile HIV testing vans in Srinagar, it signaled an important step forward. But beneath this measure lies an unsavoury truth: HIV/AIDS in Kashmir is still wrapped in silence, fear, and deep-rooted stigma. And unless we confront that stigma head-on, no number of mobile vans will be enough.

The numbers tell one story: just over 4,000 confirmed HIV-positive cases in the region, but health experts caution that the reality is likely far worse. This is because, many don't visit health institutions for getting tested for fear of judgment, social exclusion, and even discrimination by medical staff. This silence is dangerous. People are being diagnosed late, when their immune systems have already deteriorated and are beyond treatment. What's more. They are also threat to the society as they can infect their partners, and may be others also.

So, the mobile testing vans are a good initiative. Equipped with kits and counselors, they bring services to people who would never walk into a clinic out of fear of being seen. But it is not so simple also: In conservative, close-knit society like ours, even being spotted near a testing vehicle can trigger gossip and social isolation. The real fight, therefore, must be against the stigma itself.

Kashmir is not alone in this. Globally, HIV-related stigma is among the leading barriers to prevention and care. But here, it's intensified by silence from families, from community leaders, and often from healthcare institutions. While we talk freely about diabetes and cancer, we strictly avoid discussing HIV. And this silence only feeds the fear.

One of the major routes of transmission is the drug addiction, the rise in injectable drug use, especially among the youth. So addiction support should be an essential part of HIV care services. But this is hardly the case right. We are staring at a dual crisis: untreated addiction and undiagnosed HIV.

The problem is much bigger and the provision of the testing vans is a small step in this direction. Our focus should be on a targeted public awareness campaigns that reach rural areas, schools, and religious platforms. Also important is training the healthcare workers to treat HIV-positive patients with dignity. That said, it is not easy to break the break the stigma. Much more so, in a deeply conservative society like ours. This is why, addressing is not just the job of the government, the community leaders also need to play an important role.

Financial Fix

Kashmir's Risky Rush

The valley's early stock market dreams crashed before they steadied.

Irshad Mushtaq

Kashmir arrived late to the stock market, but when it did in the early 2000s, it arrived in a rush. Online trading pulled in a wave of first-time investors who jumped in fast and heavy. Many bet big without understanding what they were buying.

People threw in ten lakh rupees to control stocks worth a crore, chasing tiny profits. They played close to the edge, where even small market dips could burn them. And often, they did.

The valley's first brush with the market was driven more by instinct than by skill. Greed and fear traded places every day. Investors watched global events—wars, oil prices, elections—move their fortunes in ways they couldn't predict. Some panicked and sold at losses. Some held on and lost more.

Those who lasted began to see what the market really was: a cycle, not a straight line. Stocks rise and fall, but they don't stay down forever. Still, they learned this the hard way.

The smartest ones stopped betting everything on stocks. They turned to gold, international funds, government bonds—anything that could steady the ride. They built safer, slower portfolios. It wasn't just strategy; it was survival.

But the hardest fight was never with the market. It was with themselves. Holding steady when prices crash, walking away from greed, waiting through the slow days are skills the valley's investors had to learn on their own.

Kashmir's market story is not about overnight success. It's about the cost of impatience and the slow making of discipline. The early rush has settled, but the lessons linger.

Wealth, the valley is starting to see, is not found in the sprint. It's built in the long, steady walk.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The New Apple Game

High-density apple farming is transforming lives in Kashmir, but without proper checks, the dream risks turning sour.

Dr. Willayat Bashir

Something remarkable is unfolding in Kashmir's orchards. In a land where patience was once the price of survival, apple farmers are finally witnessing a shift that promises faster returns, better produce, and a real escape from decades of low profits.

This change is called high-density apple farming, and it is reshaping the economic future of the valley.

But like every new promise in Kashmir, this one comes with its own set of risks. And if we are not careful, the very thing lifting our farmers today could harm them tomorrow.

I have spent over a decade in apple farming, moving from the old world of traditional orchards to the faster, sharper world of high-density planting. I have lived both stories. I know what it feels like to wait more than ten years for a tree to bear fruit, only to find the apples small, pale, and difficult to sell.

Traditional apple trees in Kashmir are giants, stretching high into the sky, but they take far too long to produce anything meaningful. Many of us poured money into pesticides and sprays, only to walk away with shrinking profits.

The numbers were against us. Each kanal of land under the old system could only support 20 to 25 trees. Add to that the problem of alternate bearing, one good year, one bad year, and the weight of uncertainty became too much to carry. Farming families who had stuck with apples for generations found themselves trapped in a losing game.

High-density farming broke that cycle.

These new apple plants, grown on imported dwarf rootstocks like M9, remain short, easy to manage, and start bearing fruit in the first or second year.

One kanal can now hold 150 trees. The turnaround is rapid, and the rewards are clear. Most of the apples grown in these orchards are now grade-one, the best you can get in the market.

The size, the colour, the taste has improved. I have seen this shift with my own eyes.

Today, a single kanal of high-density apples can earn a farmer 1.5 lakh a year, even after paying for labour and chemicals. For people like us, that is not just profit, it is survival.

The change has been dramatic. More young people are stepping into apple farming, seeing it as a modern profession with real earning potential. In a region like ours, where unemployment casts a long shadow, this is no small thing. For the first time in years, apple farming is drawing people back to the land instead of pushing them away.

The government has played an important role. Through schemes that support high-density planting and by encouraging partnerships with private suppliers, they have helped spread this movement across the valley.

European apple varieties like Gala, Schinico, Red Velox, and Jeromine have settled well into Kashmir's climate. Farmers who once feared the long wait are now planting with confidence.

But this success story has a dangerous blind spot. The rapid import of apple plants has flooded our markets with unchecked material. Many of these plants have arrived without proper inspection and have brought new diseases with them, like crown rot, collar rot, and other infections that were once rare in Kashmir.

If we ignore these warning signs, we could face an outbreak that would tear through our orchards and destroy the very gains we are now celebrating.

Seven lakh families in Kashmir depend on the apple economy. It is not a side story. It is the backbone of life here. And yet, the rules meant to protect this industry seem alarmingly loose.

Imported plants are slipping through the cracks without serious quarantine, while healthy, disease-free plants grown in local nurseries are often overlooked. This is not just bad policy. It is a direct threat to the future of our apple industry.

We should not have to choose between faster profits and long-term safety. We need stricter checks at the entry points. Every imported plant should be properly quarantined and cleared before it reaches farmers.

Local nurseries, like the ones I run, have the capacity to produce high-quality, disease-free plants. Yet they remain underused, even though they offer safer, sustainable options.

The truth is that high-density apple farming has already proven it can bring faster growth, better jobs, and real income to Kashmir's farmers.

It is building stronger families, stronger markets, and a stronger connection to the land. But if this progress is to last, we need to be smarter about what we allow into our soil.

Our apple revolution deserves more than fast solutions. It deserves protection. It deserves policies that put farmers first. It deserves to grow safely, for the long haul.

The author is an apple grower and founder of Wilayti Bros. Nursery in Kashmir.

The Caste We Pretend Doesn't Exist in Kashmir

We celebrate beauty, culture, and faith, yet we allow caste and class to shape our lives. The cost is deeper than we admit.

Barkat Ul Sultan Handoo

Kashmiris like to believe they're beyond caste, that their society is free of such divisions.

But the truth is that caste and class discrimination are alive in Kashmir, shaping marriages, friendships, and social networks. We just don't admit it.

This prejudice is not loud. It does not always come with slurs or public humiliation. It is soft, folded into polite rejections and measured silences.

It happens in family meetings where a potential match is dismissed because the person is from a rural village. It happens when a girl's proposal is turned down because her father doesn't hold a government job. It happens when a boy is seen as "unsuitable" because his family does not carry the right surname, even if his character shines.

The tragedy is not just that this happens. It's that it happens, and people pretend it doesn't.

Many Kashmiris wear the mask of progress. We praise education. We quote verses about equality. We claim that our society has outgrown the shadows of caste. But these are words. Behind closed doors, decisions are still made based on caste and class, even when they are dressed in new language.

people are born with inherently "good qualities," that virtue runs in families like blood.

It is a dangerous idea that turns away decent, kind, capable people simply because they do not come from the "right" family. It gives caste and class an invisible power. It says to people: No matter what you achieve, no matter who you are, you can never really belong.

This belief plays out most sharply in marriage decisions.

In Kashmiri homes, marriage is often less about love, compatibility, or faith, and more about family background. A girl from a village, no matter how educated or virtuous, is often rejected. A boy without a prestigious job is quickly deemed inadequate. Parents talk of social status, family "standard," and community image. They say they want the best for their children, but what they really want is to preserve their standing.

Marriage becomes a kind of business negotiation, a transaction where human worth is weighed against material and social measures. The result is painful. People are reduced to checklists. Relationships are shaped not by the goodness of hearts, but by the size of houses and the reach of surnames.

And yet, if you ask around, many people will tell you that caste

discrimination is not a problem here. They will say that Islam has no caste. They will say that Kashmiris have moved beyond this. But the gap between what people say and what people do is wide.

It is easier to deny casteism when it happens in subtle ways. There are no protests in the street when a marriage proposal is turned down because someone comes from the "wrong" village. There are no social penalties when families quietly reinforce these lines. And because there is no open fight, many pretend there is no problem.

But the silence itself is the problem. When people deny caste and class discrimination while practicing it in their daily lives, the prejudice is able to thrive unchecked.

This is not just a social issue. It is a moral one. Islam came to Kashmir with a message that could not be clearer: human beings are equal in the eyes of God. The Quran tells us that we were made into nations and tribes so we may know one another, not so we may judge each other.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) broke every wall of social superiority. He married across tribes. He raised the status of the poor and the marginalized. He chose his companions from all backgrounds.

The Prophet did not ask, "What is your caste?" He asked, "Who has taqwa?" — who has sincerity, goodness, and inner faith.

And yet many Kashmiris hold on tightly to their caste and class pride, as if it is a badge of honour. They claim to follow the Prophet while defending the very divisions he spent his life trying to erase. This is not just a contradiction. It is a betrayal.

It is building stronger families, stronger markets, and a stronger connection to the land. But if this progress is to last, we need to be smarter about what we allow into our soil.

Our apple revolution deserves more than fast solutions. It deserves protection. It deserves policies that put farmers first. It deserves to grow safely, for the long haul.

We cannot continue to talk about unity while building invisible walls. We cannot speak of brotherhood while preserving social ladders. If we truly want to live the values we preach, we must make real choices. We must reject caste and class as measures of human worth. We must see people as people, not as labels, not as family names, not as income brackets.

Change will not come from slogans. It will come from the decisions families make at their dining tables, from the choices young people make when they challenge their elders, from the courage to value kindness over khandaan, and character over class.

Our community leaders, scholars and teachers must speak about this, directly and without hesitation. Our young people must refuse the social inheritance that says who they can and cannot marry, who they can and cannot befriend, who they can and cannot become.

Kashmir stands at a turning point. We can choose to stay trapped in a social script written long before us, or we can write something new. If we do not, we will carry these old chains into a future that deserves better.

It is time to set them down.

Hailing from Soura 90 Feet, the author is a qualified teacher with B.Ed, M.Ed, MA in Teacher Education, MA in English, and CTET certification.

Letter to Editor

In Kashmir's Rush to Succeed, a Pause Is Missing

The pressure on Kashmiri kids rarely speaks its name. It shows up in the drooping shoulders, the restless eyes, the growing silence inside our classrooms.

I see it every day as a school teacher. Our students sit still for long hours, carrying more than just books. They carry invisible weight. The fear of falling behind, the stress of constant comparison, and the ache of not knowing how to slow down.

The pace of school life in Kashmir has quickened. Between academic pressure, social expectations, and the creeping pull of digital screens, our students are left with little room to move, to pause, or to simply breathe.

They spend their days running toward the next exam, the next mark, the next competition, and somewhere along the way, they begin to drift from their own well-being.

I believe yoga can offer them something they have lost: a space to return to themselves.

Yoga, in its simplest form, fits into the slow, thoughtful rhythm of Kashmir. It is not a race. It does not demand that some children win while others lose. It welcomes every child, whether they are athletic or not, whether they are confident or still finding their place.

Yoga helps students move gently, stretch with purpose, and begin to notice their own breath again.

But its greatest offering is not just physical strength. It is emotional steadiness.

Kashmiri children grow up learning to hold many things inside - fear, anger, frustration. Yoga gives them a soft, steady way to meet these feelings without being overwhelmed.

I have seen students become more patient, not only with others but with themselves. I have seen them sit through their worries with a little more courage, and return to their studies with a calmer mind.

This matters in a place like ours, where life can shift suddenly, and where uncertainty often lingers in the background.

There is also growing evidence to

support what teachers in Kashmir are witnessing: students who practice yoga regularly tend to focus better, attend school more consistently, and show genuine curiosity in their learning.

Yoga is not a complete answer to all the pressures our children face. But it can be a simple, steady tool - a soulful space they can carry with them, wherever life takes them.

If we want our classrooms to build not just bright minds but balanced hearts, perhaps it is time we make room for this.

Sincerely,
Abrar Ul Islam
Teacher, BMS Nathipora.

In Muharram's Heat, Kashmir Offers Water and Remembrance

Across Kashmir, the centuries-old tradition of Sabeel-e-Hussain continues to unite communities, offering water and compassion in memory of sacrifice.

Shaista Mir

As Muharram begins, the streets of Kashmir come alive with a familiar sight: wooden stalls, steel tubs, plastic glasses stacked in rows, and young volunteers calling out to passersby to stop for a drink.

These are Sabeel-e-Hussain, the water stalls that appear each year as symbols of service and remembrance.

The tradition runs deep. It honours Imam Hussain (A.S.) and his companions, who faced unbearable thirst under the blazing sun of Karbala.

In Kashmir, where Muharram often arrives with days of relentless heat, sometimes crossing 35°C, the Sabeels offer more than water. They offer belonging.

In downtown Srinagar, near the old Imambaras, teenage boys in black kurtas scoop sherbet into glasses and offer them to strangers passing by. Women bring out cold water and juice from their homes. Little children carry buckets to refill the stalls. The rhythm is steady. No one is turned away.

The sound of Noha Khwani, the sorrowful chants of Karbala, rises from processions that move through the city, sometimes lasting 12 hours a day.

Amid the slow steps of mourners, the Sabeels stand firm. People stop, drink, rest, and walk again.

What makes this tradition stir the heart is its open door. There are no divisions here. In the lanes of Zadibal, in the alleys of Budgam, people from all walks of life step forward to



IN A PLACE WHERE DIFFERENCES SOMETIMES RUN DEEP, Muharram brings a different kind of pulse to the valley. It is a time when serving water becomes an act of devotion, when offering food becomes a way to heal.

contribute. Sunni Muslims donate supplies, help with

logistics, and serve at Langars, where free meals of rice and lentils are shared without

question. The walls that often divide the community seem to dissolve at these stalls.

In a place where differences sometimes run deep, Muharram brings a different kind of pulse to the valley. It is a time when serving water becomes an act of devotion, when offering food becomes a way to heal.

The Sabeel is not just a Kashmiri custom. It is tied to the earliest lessons of Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) called the offering of water a sacred duty. For centuries, people built wells for travellers and handed glasses to the thirsty.

Over time, the Sabeel-e-Hussain became a way to remember not just the pain of Karbala, but the responsibility to care for one another.

In today's Kashmir, where modern life often races ahead and old ties can feel strained, these water stalls still draw people back to something essential.

In the simple act of passing a glass, something larger is preserved: a history, a faith, a shared humanity.

Each year, as the crescent moon marks the arrival of Muharram, the valley prepares itself. The black flags go up. The mourners gather. And the Sabeels rise, one after another, across towns and villages, holding steady in the heat.

In the end, the story of these stalls is not just about loss. It is about what survives. It is about the spirit that moves a teenager to pour water for a stranger, that brings neighbours together over a pot of rice, that holds communities firm in their grief and their giving.

The author is a scribe and can be reached at shaistazehra95@gmail.com

The Right to Switch Jobs Shouldn't Be Up for Debate

A recent ruling challenges a growing global trend: companies using contracts to trap workers.



Sanjeev Sirohi

Across the world, employers are tightening their grip on workers. In the United States, non-compete agreements have come under fire for limiting job mobility and suppressing wages. In Europe, courts are questioning whether companies can enforce long-term restrictions on where employees can work after they leave. And now, in India, a landmark judgment has added its voice to this growing pushback against employment contracts that trap people.

The Delhi High Court has ruled decisively: workers cannot be forced to choose between returning to their old jobs or staying unemployed.

The case involved Varun Tyagi, a software engineer who had worked on India's critical POSHAN Tracker—a government project aimed at improving child nutrition. After finishing his notice period with Daffodil Software, Tyagi joined the government agency that owned the project. But his former employer quickly took him to court, citing a contract clause that barred him from working with any of their business partners for three years.

A lower court initially blocked Tyagi from continuing his new job. But the Delhi High Court stepped in and struck down that decision.

Justice Tejas Karia made it clear: contracts that lock employees out of future jobs, especially when no trade secrets or proprietary assets are involved, cannot stand. "An employee cannot be confronted with the situation where he has to either work for the previous employer or remain idle," the court said.

The ruling is a significant step not just for

India, but for the global fight against overreaching employment contracts. Around the world, workers are being squeezed by clauses that limit their future choices.

In the U.S., non-compete agreements are so widespread that even low-wage workers in fast food and retail have been restricted from moving to competing businesses. The Federal Trade Commission recently proposed a ban on such agreements, recognizing the damage they do to economic freedom.

The Delhi case taps into the same concern. It reinforces the idea that a company's desire to protect its business cannot come at the cost of a worker's right to earn a living.

Tyagi wasn't taking any sensitive information with him. The government already owned the project he had worked on. Daffodil Software's attempt to block him wasn't about protecting trade secrets. It was about controlling where he could go next.

Employment contracts that try to chain workers to their former employers aren't just a legal issue. They are a question of fairness and dignity. They decide whether people are free to grow in their careers, or whether they can be boxed in by fine print.

This judgment sends an important message: restrictive job contracts that limit where people can work after they leave are not acceptable.

In an era of fast-changing industries, where skills and opportunities move quickly, employees must have the freedom to move too.

The right to switch jobs should not be a privilege. It is, and must remain, a right.

The author is a legal analyst and advocate based in Meerut, with a focus on employment law and workers' rights.

The Lost Songs of Kashmir Villages

From poisoned streams to shrinking farmlands, the story of Kashmir villages is one of beauty slipping into memory.

Mushtaq Hurra

Kashmir villages bear bewitching and seductive looks when the sizzling summers embrace the mother earth in luxuriantly verdant vestures to tranquilize the jaded hearts and the bleary eyes.

Beauty and villages are almost synonymous, nature reaches the zenith of beauty in villages.

I believe, if God had to choose an abode for Himself on the planet earth, He (SWT) would have chosen villages because villages are purer and simpler, and both of these are the attributes of God.

Away from the pace and ostentatiousness of urban dazzle and glare, villages balm bruised bosoms, bring buds to bloom and calm sweltering hearts.

Villages and hamlets exhibit astounding and prodigious scenes of natural beauty during the summers. Carpets of greenery wrap everything in the velvety lap.

Mesmerizing meadows hypnotize human souls. A burbling brook passing through lush green cedar and pine woods produces symphonic warbles of saccharin melody which soothes the knackered ears.

Raw and unripe fruits, veggies and other crops add volumes of optimism to innocuous peasants who anticipate a bumper crop of their toil and hardwork.

Crooning of unfledged young ones of ring-doves in their nests woven on the bowing branches of pomegranate shrubs laden with scarlet fruits-to-be, mesmerise the peaceful environs of bourgs.

Sight of blood-rich bunches of cherries, hanging from the branches of cone-shaped trees, remove boredom and fainant feelings.

Marsh mellow juicy and fleshy apricots entice hearts and seduce souls to remove yellowish tinge from the faces of ailing people.

Vastly expanding paddy fields announce the mercy and benevolence of God because the sun-lit grand farmlands are the guarantors of food for the entire creation of God.

Children taking dips in the shallow canals and sparkling streams containing the cool clear-crystal waters to beat the heat of scorching weather, enthral a tired traveller.

Corn silk tufts on the tips of corn cobs lures children and adults adroitly because the dry-brown hair on the tip of the cob proclaims about its ripening and maturity. Raw-sour pendulous bunches of grapes hanging from a vine adds new lease of life to dead taste buds.

Fruit trees are festooned with different kinds of apples, pears and peaches spread delicious aroma in the surroundings. Long hot days and short pleasant nights of the summer let hardworking villagers to spend adequate hours in their farms to ensure sufficient food grains for the slaves of Allah.

Though urbanisation, industrialization and modernization has plundered and ravaged the aesthetics of our villages and hamlets, but, verdure, vegetation and leafage is still the repository of natural prettiness of our villages.

Our villages have gone through im-



mense transformation during the last three decades which is quite appreciable and pleasant, but, some obnoxious and unscrupulous alterations have devoid us of a precious treasure-trove.

Even farming techniques and tools have gone through eventful changes. Oxen pulling a wooden plough is scarcely seen in our farm-fields. Excessive usage of pesticides, fungicides and chemical fertilizers has sounded alarm bells for our future generations because the chemicals can turn these lands barren for ever.

With the advent of machines, we have abandoned many beautiful ancestral and traditional ways of farming.

Thank God, paddy transplantation is yet to be mechanised in our villages, otherwise, we would have forgotten the centuries old legacy.

Now, children have ceased to take bath in the seasonal and perennial streams because the so-called educated and intelligent man buries his trash in the water bodies to turn them filthy and mucky.

Empty food wrappers, polythene bags, used diapers and other garbage is embosomed in the hearts of these sources of Adams ale.

Our villages are loosing their sheen and decor very rapidly. Deforestation is taking away the charm and allurements of our villages.

The story has other face as well which is quite uglier and darker.

Deforestation and different environmental pollutions have caused drastic climatic changes in our villages. Extreme weather events like frequent cloudbursts, hailstorms, excessive or scanty rainfalls and scorching heatwaves have brought extensive damage to our environment which has subsequently effected the lives and the livelihoods of common masses.

Harum-scarum and reckless campaigns in the name of development and advancement have axed our own feet.

Horticultural and agricultural lands are rapidly shrinking. Unlike yesteryears, Kashmir villagers are seen circumambulating food grain stores to purchase their staple food viz rice for their families.

Unplanned urbanisation and the rash erection of houses on paddy and apple lands has drastically reduced the production, and has consequently effected our economy.

The so-called development and pros-

perity has landed us into trouble.

We have jeopardized our existence and survival. We may face catastrophic times ahead if the crop yielding farmlands are not preserved entirety for the purpose of cultivation. People at the helm must take cognizance of the issue, and take stringent measures to nip the evil in the bud.

Some marvels of our past have vanished to modernization. Long wooden pestles, big rocky mortars, brown earthen vessels, light wicker creels and traditional spinning wheels are alien to our young people.

Broods of hen picking grains in courtyards of houses are gone. Quacks of dabbling ducks in the seasonal ponds and nearby streams are no more heard. Coops and cowsheds have evaporated. Only a few households domesticate cows. We attribute the rearing of backyard poultry and other domestic animals against our false awe and status. We too have begun to consume the packaged milk.

Closure of Jammu-Srinagar national highway blackens our teas and starves our toddlers because we have abandoned our ancestral legacies.

Village dwellers were rich in values, virtues, ethics and morals.

But now, greed, avarice, jealousy, malice, hatred, animosity, rancour and anger have made us savages and beasts.

Compassion, sympathy and empathy have run miles away from us. We neither lend a bowl of flour to our neighbours nor they visit our ailing people.

We no more weep, cry, repent and regret in our prostrations because boasting and bragging is ruling our hearts.

Now, a votive candle or a votive thread in a shrine bear no fruit to us because our faith and trust has hollowed.

Beggars and paupers often return empty handed from the thresholds of our houses because we have become callous and insensitive.

I wonder, if we live in the same villages where our fathers and forefathers used to live like true human beings.

I doubt, if these simple souls, these village dwellers continue to preserve our heritage and legacy.

The writer is a teacher and a regular columnist. He can be reached at mushtaqhurra143@gmail.com

How Do People Get Started In The Gym, Here’s What The Research Says

The Conversation

So you’ve never been to a gym and are keen to start, but something’s holding you back. Perhaps you don’t know what to actually do in there or feel like you’ll just look stupid in front of everyone. Maybe you’re worried about injuring yourself.

It’s OK. Everyone starts somewhere. I did, too.

Resistance exercise (such as weight lifting) is really good for your health. Benefits include a reduced risk of osteoporosis-related fractures, reduced risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes, better sleep, improved mental health and, of course, stronger and bigger muscles.

So, how do people get started in the gym? Here’s what you need to know, and what the research says.

Worried about injury?

Don’t be. It’s probably less risky than lots of other forms of exercise you might already do or did in the past.

Team sports such as rugby and soccer, and strength-based sports such as powerlifting, weightlifting, and cross fit all have similar injury rates. They’re all in the vicinity of three to four injuries per 1,000 hours of participation.

Going to the gym has almost half this rate of injuries, at about 1.8 per 1,000 hours.

Let’s put that into context.

If you go to the gym three times per week for a one-hour session – and you do that every week of the year – you achieve approximately 156 hours of resistance training exercise a year.

So if the injury rate is about 1.8 injuries per 1,000 hours, that means that you could exercise for years in the gym without even a little niggle! Some groups, such as young men under 40, may be at a greater risk of injury in the gym. So if that’s you, you may want to be a little more conscious about how fast you progress, and the types of exercises you do in the gym.

Compare these injury risk stats to the known risks of sedentary lifestyles, and the worry should go out the door.

In short, it’s a lot more dangerous to be sedentary than it is to go to the gym.



OK, how do I get started?

It’s fine to begin with what you feel most comfortable with. You don’t have to go straight to a ridiculously complex or challenging program.

However, that doesn’t mean you don’t need to put in the effort!

Most gyms can start you off by designing a workout program for you (you might have to pay for a personal training session). If you have a medical condition, find an accredited exercise physiologist. They’re trained to help you exercise safely.

It’s OK to start with gym machines, which are designed to make it easier to keep your movements consistent.

But keep your mind open about trying the free weights section (where the dumbbells, barbells and mirrors are). Benefits from this type of training may vary from what you get via machines.

That’s because a lot of the moves you do with free weights are what’s called compound exercises, meaning they work a lot of muscles and joints together at the same time. They’re really good for you. Examples of compound exercises include: squats, lunges, deadlifts, bench presses, hip thrusts, kettle bell swings.

How much should I do in the gym?

Standard government physical activity recommendations state you should do muscle strengthening twice per week.

If you are new to the gym, you can make progress with a minimalist approach. For example, you may choose to only lift once or twice per week, compared with many seasoned gym-goers who might lift four or five times per week.

Recent research shows even those people already consistently lifting in a gym can maintain or slowly improve by doing just two sessions per week, in which each exercise is only performed for one set and the whole session lasts just 30 minutes or so.

so if you can stick to one hour per week (made up of two challenging half-hour sessions) then you will still be making progress.

How do I make my habit stick?

Sticking to the habit after the novelty has worn off is where many come unstuck.

Some research suggests it takes six weeks to form a gym habit, and that the more frequent the attendance in those first six weeks, the more likely the habit will stick.

At the one-year mark, the biggest predictor of regular attendance (defined as twice per week) was enjoyment. This was followed closely by the concept of self-efficacy (believing in yourself and your ability to stick to it), and social support.

China's Humanoid Robots Generate More Soccer Excitement Than Human Counterparts

Associated Press

While China’s men’s soccer team hasn’t generated much excitement in recent years, humanoid robot teams have won over fans in Beijing based more on the AI technology involved than any athletic prowess shown.

Four teams of humanoid robots faced off in fully autonomous 3-on-3 soccer matches powered entirely by artificial intelligence on Saturday night in China’s capital in what was touted as a first in China and a preview for the upcoming World Humanoid Robot Games, set to take place in Beijing.

According to the organisers, a key aspect of the match was that all the participating robots operated fully autonomously using AI-driven strategies without any human intervention or supervision.

Equipped with advanced visual sensors, the robots were able to identify the ball and navigate the field with agility.

They were also designed to stand up on their own after falling. However, during the match several still had to be carried off the field on stretchers by staff, adding to the realism of the experience.

China is stepping up efforts to develop AI-powered humanoid robots, using sports competitions like marathons, boxing, and football as a real-world proving ground.

Cheng Hao, founder and CEO of Booster Robotics, the company that supplied the robot players, said sports competitions offer the ideal testing ground for humanoid robots, helping to accelerate the development of both algorithms and integrated hardware-software systems.

He also emphasised safety as a core concern in the application of humanoid robots.

“In the future, we may arrange for robots to play football with humans. That means we must ensure the robots are completely safe,” Cheng said. “For example, a robot and a human could play a match where winning doesn’t matter, but real offensive and defensive interactions take place. That would help audiences build trust and understand that robots are safe.”

Booster Robotics provided the hardware for all four university teams, while each school’s research team developed and embedded their own algorithms for perception, decision-making, player formations, and passing strategies—including variables such as speed, force, and direction, according to Cheng.

In the final match, Tsinghua University’s THU Robotics defeated the China Agricultural University’s Mountain Sea team with a score of 5-3 to win the championship.

Mr. Wu, a supporter of Tsinghua, celebrated their victory while also praising the competition. “They (THU) did really well,” he said. “But the Mountain Sea team (of Agricultural University) was also impressive. They brought a lot of surprises.”

China’s men have made only one World Cup appearance and have already been knocked out of next years’ competition in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Showkat Ahmad Ganai, S/o Gh. Hassan Ganai, R/o Lalad Sopore, hereby inform the general public that I am seeking a correction in the Date of Birth of my son, namely Abdul Manan.

If anyone has any objection to this correction, they may contact me at 7006422804 within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no objections will be entertained.

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J&K Bank Bids Farewell To Two Of Its Top Officers



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- J&K Bank Monday gave a warm send-off to two of its senior-most officers, Sushil Kumar Gupta and Syed Shujaat Hussain Andrabi, who superannuated as General Managers after serving the institution with distinction for over 35 years.

Executive Director Sudhir Gupta chaired the farewell function held at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters. The event was attended by General Managers and other senior functionaries of the Bank.

Speaking on the occasion, Executive Director Sudhir Gupta said, "Both Mr. Gupta and Mr. Andrabi have been valuable pillars of strength for the Bank. Their leadership, deep institutional knowledge, and humane approach have left an indelible impact on our organisation and people."

Managing Director & CEO Amitava Chatterjee also hosted a farewell dinner for the retiring officers over the weekend, which was attended by the Directors on the Bank's Board.

Speaking at the gathering, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee commended the commitment of both retiring officers. He said, "Contributing richly to the Bank's growth journey for more than 35 years, Mr Sushil Kumar Gupta brought depth, diligence, and deliberation to every task whether during his time in operations within J&K and beyond or his role as GM Human Resources, Business Support Di-

vision or more recently as GM Finance. A soft-spoken gentleman in the truest sense, Mr. Gupta carries a quiet grace and a creative spirit — qualities that we all admire."

In his remarks on Syed Shujaat Hussain Andrabi's journey, MD & CEO said, "Mr. Andrabi has served this institution with remarkable dedication for over 35 years, holding a wide range of critical positions — from key operational roles and controlling offices to his long and trusted stint as Private Secretary to the then Chairman & CEO, and more recently as General Manager Human Resources. Known for his sharp administrative acumen and a friendly public demeanour, he has led with clarity and confidence."

The MD & CEO acknowledged both officers as part of a generation of leadership that helped shape the culture of J&K Bank. He wished both the officers a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life ahead.

Expressing his sentiments, Sushil Kumar Gupta said, "It has been a long and deeply enriching journey with J&K Bank. I feel immensely proud to have been a part of this institution's growth story and will always carry forward the values and relationships built over the years."

Sharing his thoughts, Syed Shujaat Hussain Andrabi remarked, "Serving J&K Bank has been both an honour and a privilege. I am grateful for the opportunities, the trust placed in me, and most importantly, the friendships I take with me into this next chapter."

The event concluded with the presentation of mementos and emotional exchanges of memories and good wishes from colleagues and peers.

Govt Keeps Interest Rates On Small Savings Schemes Unchanged For Q2



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The government on Monday left interest rates unchanged for various small savings schemes, including PPF and NSC, for the sixth straight quarter beginning July 1, 2025.

"The rates of interest on various Small Savings Schemes for the second quarter of FY 2025-26 starting from 1st July, 2025 and ending on 30th September, 2025 shall remain unchanged from those notified for the first quarter (1st April, 2025 to 30th June, 2025) of FY 2025-26," the finance ministry said in a notification.

As per the notification, deposits under the Sukanya Samriddhi scheme will attract an interest rate of 8.2 per cent, while the rate on a three-year term deposit remains at 7.1 per cent prevailing in the current quarter.

The interest rates for popular Public Provident Fund (PPF) and post office savings deposit schemes, too, have been retained at 7.1 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively.

The interest rate on the Kisan Vikas Patra will be 7.5 per cent, and the investments will mature in 115 months.

The interest rate on the National Savings Certificate

(NSC) will remain at 7.7 per cent for the July-September 2025 period.

Like the current quarter, the monthly income scheme will earn 7.4 per cent for investors during the second quarter of the current fiscal year.

With this, the interest rates on small savings schemes, majorly operated by post offices and banks, have been left unchanged for the sixth consecutive quarter. The government had last made changes in some schemes for the fourth quarter of 2023-24.

The government notifies interest rates on small savings schemes every quarter.



THE INTEREST RATE ON THE KISAN VIKAS PATRA will be 7.5 per cent, and the investments will mature in 115 months.

Gross GST Collections Double In 5 Years To Record Rs 22.08 Lakh Cr in FY25



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gross GST collections doubled in five years to reach an all-time high of Rs 22.08 lakh crore in the 2024-25 fiscal year, from Rs 11.37 lakh crore in FY21, government data showed on Monday.

The gross goods and services tax (GST) collections touched its highest-ever level of Rs 22.08 lakh crore in 2024-25, registering a 9.4 per cent growth over the previous fiscal year.

The average monthly collection stood at Rs 1.84 lakh crore in FY25, up from Rs 1.68 lakh crore in FY24 and Rs 1.51 lakh crore in FY22.

In eight years, the number of registered taxpayers under GST has risen from 65 lakh in 2017 to over 1.51 crore.

"Since its rollout, the goods and services tax has shown strong growth in revenue collection and tax base expansion. It has steadily strengthened India's fiscal po-

sition and made indirect taxation more efficient and transparent," a government statement on eight years of GST said.

In 2024-25, GST recorded its highest-ever gross collections of Rs 22.08 lakh crore, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 9.4 per cent. In 2023-24 and 2022-23, GST collections were Rs 20.18 lakh crore and Rs 18.08 lakh crore in 2022-23. In 2021-22, total gross GST collections were Rs 11.37 lakh crore, and the average monthly collection was Rs 95,000 crore.

GST, which was launched on July 1, 2017, completes eight years on Monday.

GST subsumed about 17 local taxes and 13 cesses into a five-tier structure, simplifying the tax regime. Monthly GST collection had touched a record high of Rs 2.37 lakh crore in April 2025. In May 2025, it was at Rs 2.01 lakh crore. The numbers for June will be released on Tuesday.

Bank GNPA's Decline To Multi-Decadal Low Of 2.3% In March, May Inch Up By March 2027: RBI Report

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of the banking system declined to a multi-decadal low of 2.3 per cent in March 2025, the Reserve Bank said on Monday.

The GNPA level for all the scheduled commercial banks had stood at 2.8 per cent in the year-ago period and 2.6 per cent in September 2024.

In the half-yearly The Reserve Financial Stability Report, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said the GNPA's for 46 banks accounting for 98 per cent of the total assets of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs), may rise to 2.6 per cent by March 2027.

It can be noted that dud assets have been one of the most challenging part for the banking system for a large part of the latter part of last decade especially due to stress among corporate segment, but the system has been improving on the key ratios ever since.

Given the prevalent tendencies among banks to evergreen loans or not recognise NPAs at all, the Reserve Bank had to step in and force lenders to recognise certain loans as non-performing through the asset quality review.

As the state-run lenders had



to be capitalised using public money as a result of the same.

The level of the GNPA's at shadow banks, or NBFCs, was at 3 per cent across types in March 2025, the FSR said, adding that for a sample set of lenders commanding a major share of assets under management, the same will go up to 3.3 per cent in March 2026 from 2.9 per cent in March 2025.

The FSR said loan write-offs, including the technical write-offs which can be recovered in the future, were one of the prime reasons for the reduction in GNPA's at banks over the last five years.

As per the FSR, write-offs to GNPA ratio for SCBs moved up to 31.8 per cent in FY25 from

29.5 per cent in the previous year, led by private sector lenders and foreign banks, and added that write-offs by PSBs exhibited a marginal decline.

The half-yearly slippage ratio, measuring new accretions to NPAs as a share of standard advances at the beginning of the half-year, remained stable at 0.7 per cent.

From a sectoral perspective, the agricultural sector had the highest contribution to GNPA's at 6.1 per cent, while it was broadly stable on the personal loans side at 1.2 per cent.

However, public sector banks' GNPA's from the credit card segment moved up to 14.3 per cent as against 2.1 per cent in the case of the private sector rivals.



CS Sets The Tone For Transforming Rural Women Into Successful Entrepreneurs

Reviews the progress & performance of JKRLM

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- In a move to empower rural women and foster self-reliance, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo Monday chaired a meeting to review the performance of the Jammu & Kashmir National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) here with the prime objective of transforming women registered with NRLM across the UT's rural areas into successful entrepreneurs.

On this occasion Dulloo emphasized the immense potential of this tremendous human resource of around 7 lakh women calling for their intensified social mobilization and capacity building efforts to ignite a powerful movement of self-reliance among them.

The Chief Secretary further issued a slew of directives aimed at bolstering the economic independence of women Self-Help Group (SHG) members. He directed the registration of Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) with the Co-operative Department under the Cooperative Societies Act, strengthening their organizational framework.

Dulloo also enjoined upon the NRLM to aggressively enhance credit linkage for SHGs, aiming to reach at least 75,000 linkages by the end of October this year. The Chief Secretary stressed the need to bridge the existing gap of 16,000 linkages through focused efforts and active support from financial institutions.

Recognizing the substantial number of literate SHG members (around 3 lakh), Chief

Secretary Dulloo directed the MD, NRLM, to ensure they are skilled and trained. This will be achieved by linking them with the online Daksh Kisan Courses offered by the Agriculture Production Department, thereby increasing their chances of sustainable livelihoods.

In order to create successful entrepreneurs, he directed the organisation to link the members with the HADP of the Agriculture Production Department or with Mission YUVA of the Skill Development Department to achieve the set objective successfully.

On this occasion the Chief Secretary highlighted that mere formation of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) is not enough; their credit linkage and production must be the primary focus to ensure they become successful enterprises.

He emphasized optimal utilization and establishment of Community Managed Training Centres (CMTCs) across all 20 districts of the UT. Assistance from J&K Bank, NABARD, and other institutions, along with agreements with OMPLIS, shall be sought for comprehensive training of registered SHG members, he emphasized.

Dulloo also advised the Finance Department to prioritize the enrolment of all SHG members under social security schemes like PMSBY and PM-JBY. Furthermore, this 7 lakh strong human resource should be leveraged by the Finance Department to raise awareness about these schemes during an upcoming 3-month long campaign across the UT, he added.

Indian Economy Remains Key Driver Of Global Growth: RBI Report

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Indian economy remains a key driver of global growth on the back of sound macroeconomic fundamentals and prudent policies, the Reserve Bank said on Monday.

In its bi-annual Financial Stability Report (FSR), the central bank also said elevated economic and trade policy uncertainties are testing the resilience of the global economy and the financial system.

"Financial markets remain volatile, especially core government bond markets, driven by shifting policy and geopolitical environment. Alongside, existing vulnerabilities such as soaring public debt levels and elevated asset valuations have the potential to amplify fresh shocks," the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said.

Despite an uncertain and challenging global economic backdrop, it said the Indian economy remains a key driver of global growth, "underpinned

by sound macroeconomic fundamentals and prudent macroeconomic policies".

"The domestic financial system is exhibiting resilience fortified by healthy balance sheets of banks and non-banks. Financial conditions have eased supported by accommodative monetary policy and low volatility in financial markets. The strength of the corporate balance sheets also lends support to overall macroeconomic stability," the RBI said.

According to the report, the soundness and resilience of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) are bolstered by robust capital buffers, multi-decadal low non-performing loans ratio and strong earnings.

Results of macro stress tests affirm that most SCBs have adequate capital buffers relative to the regulatory minimum even under adverse stress scenarios. Stress tests also validate the resilience of mutual funds and clearing corporations, it added.

Fiscal Deficit Slips To 0.8% Of Full-Year Target At May-End 2025: CGA Data

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The central government's fiscal deficit fell to 0.8 per cent of the full-year target at the end of May, mainly due to a whopping Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend received from the Reserve Bank of India.

The fiscal deficit, or gap between the government's expenditure and revenue, had touched 11.9 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) for 2025-26 or Rs 1.86 lakh crore in April.

Following the RBI's dividend payout, the Centre's fiscal deficit was reduced to 0.8 per cent of BE of 2025-26 or Rs 13,163 crore, the data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) showed.

The Centre estimates the fiscal deficit during 2025-26 at 4.4 per cent of the GDP or Rs 15.69 lakh crore.

It stood at 3.1 per cent of BE of 2024-25 in the first two months of the previous financial year.

According to the CGA, the amount the government received under the head 'dividends and profits' was Rs 2.78 lakh crore or 86 per cent of the BE.

The data on monthly accounts showed that the Government of India received Rs 7.32 lakh crore, 21 per cent of corresponding BE 2025-26 of total receipts, up to May 2025.

SKUAST-K Holds Workshop In Gurez To Promote Revival Of Heritage Crops

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA- The Dryland Agriculture Research Station (DARS) Rangreth of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), in collaboration with the Mountain Agriculture Research & Extension Station (MAR&ES) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Gurez, organized a one-day mega workshop at Iz-marg, Gurez under the AICRP on potential crops.

The programme, organised to promote the revival of heritage and potential crops among tribal farmers, was attended by officials from various departments as well as 43 progressive tribal farmers.

On the occasion, Dr. Ajaz Ahmad Lone, Professor and Principal Investigator, AICRP on Pulses, highlighted the importance of potential crops like Buckwheat in addressing nutritional needs, generating income, and promoting sustainable agriculture. He expressed concern over the declining interest in such crops and emphasized the need to sensitize farmers through quality seed distribution, scientific training, and extension literature. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Bahar, Chief Scientist, DARS Rangreth, spoke about the efforts of the scientific community at SKUAST-K to revive orphan crops tied to the cultural heritage of Gurez.

Markets Snap 4-Day Rally; Sensex Ends 452 Points Lower As Banking Stocks Drag

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled on Monday after a four-day rally amid emergence of profit-taking, mainly in bank stocks.

After staying in the negative territory throughout the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex later dropped 452.44 points or 0.54 per cent to settle at 83,606.46. During the day, it tanked 576.77 points or 0.68 per cent to 83,482.13.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 120.75 points or 0.47 per cent to 25,517.05.

From the Sensex firms, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards.

However, Trent, State Bank of India, Bharat Electronics, Titan and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.81 per cent and midcap index went up by 0.67 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, realty dropped 0.87 per cent, bankex (0.59 per cent), auto (0.49 per cent), metal (0.49 per cent), oil & gas (0.19 per cent) and financial services (0.17 per cent).

Industrial Output Growth Slows To 9-Month Low Of 1.2% In May

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India's industrial production growth slowed to a nine-month low of 1.2 per cent in May 2025 due to poor performance of manufacturing, mining and power sectors caused by the early onset of Monsoon, according to official data released on Monday.

The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), had expanded by 6.3 per cent in May 2024.

The National Statistics Office also revised downward the industrial production growth for April to 2.6 per cent from the earlier estimate of 2.7 per cent released last month.

The previous low was observed in August 2024 when IIP remained unchanged.

The NSO data showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth decelerated to 2.6 per cent in May 2025 from 5.1 per cent in the year-ago month.

Mining production contracted by 0.1 per cent against a growth of 6.6 per cent a year ago. Power production declined by 5.8 per cent in May 2025 against 13.7 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

During the April-May period of FY26, industrial production grew by 1.8 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent a year ago.

Over 2.3 Million Users Shielded From Online Fraud In J&K In Just 47 Days: Airtel

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Bharti Airtel on Monday said it has successfully safeguarded more than 2.3 million users in Jammu and Kashmir within just 47 days of launching its AI-powered fraud detection system as part of a nationwide rollout.

The advanced system, which is automatically enabled for all Airtel mobile and broadband customers, scans and filters links across SMS, WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Instagram, email and other browsers.

Leveraging real-time threat intelligence, it examines over one billion URLs daily and blocks access to harmful sites in under 100 milliseconds, the telecom major said in a statement.

"In the last 47 days of the launch, Airtel has blocked 2,01,146 malicious links and shielded 11.7 crore users across



the country, including 23 lakh in Jammu and Kashmir," it said.

Bharti Airtel's Chief Operating Officer for Jammu and Kashmir, Dibyendu Aich, said safeguarding customers from digital fraud remains a top priority for the company.

"We are proud to bring our AI-powered fraud detection solution to J-K, offering it completely free of charge. This initiative ensures real-time protection, allowing our customers to experience the digital world with

greater confidence and peace of mind," Aich said.

In a strategic interaction aimed at enhancing cyber security efforts in the region, Aich met Inspector General of Police, Crime Branch (J-K), Sunil Gupta to explore avenues for collaboration in tackling cybercrime and strengthening the digital safety ecosystem.

The statement noted that with Jammu and Kashmir ranked among the most digitally advanced regions in the country, the threat of online fraud has increased across both urban and rural areas.

Fraudsters are increasingly targeting users through phishing links, fake delivery messages and spurious banking alerts, it said, adding that cities like Jammu and Srinagar, and towns such as Baramulla and Samba, have seen a spike in such

fraudulent attempts.

Airtel's solution acts as a statewide digital shield, protecting families, senior citizens, homemakers, students and first-time smartphone users, the statement added.

The AI-driven platform delivers fraud alerts in the user's preferred language, including Urdu and Hindi, making it especially effective in districts with low digital literacy or limited English usage.

The system operates silently in the background, requires no installation, and is offered free of cost, the company said.

With increasing digital adoption in the Union Territory — from online banking to government e-services — Airtel's initiative plays a critical role in ensuring a safer digital ecosystem across Jammu and Kashmir, it added.

Drones Can Safely Deliver Blood In Tough Terrains: ICMR Study

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: An Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study has confirmed that drones can safely transport blood without compromising its quality, offering a promising solution for remote and hard-to-reach areas.

In the trial, a drone covered 36 km in just 8 minutes—significantly faster than a van, which took 55 minutes for the same distance. The study found that key blood parameters and temperature remained stable during drone transport, proving it comparable to traditional delivery methods.

Titled "Adopting drone technology for blood delivery", the study emphasized the critical need for cold-chain integrity in blood transportation. Blood, if exposed to unsuitable



temperatures, can undergo hemolysis or bacterial contamination, both of which can be fatal.

Conducted between May and July 2023—when ambient temperatures ranged between 30–40°C—the study documented the operational and logistical challenges encountered while ensuring biochemical stability in real-world conditions.

The research aligns with global findings from Rwanda,

Italy, and parts of Southeast Asia, where drones have helped overcome logistical hurdles in healthcare delivery, especially during emergencies.

With proper planning, drones could soon be used to deliver emergency drugs, vaccines, and other time-sensitive medical supplies, the study noted. However, it also called for further studies to address operational challenges and regulatory aspects before widespread adoption.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Big Financial

deadline approaches.

Credit Card Transaction Revisions

Several major banks are revising their credit card terms and charges:

SBI is discontinuing its air accident insurance on selected premium cards, including SBI Elite, Miles Elite, and Miles Prime, when used for air ticket purchases. The bank is also expected to introduce a new Minimum Amount Due (MAD) calculation for monthly bills.

HDFC Bank will implement new transaction fees. A one percent transaction fee, capped at ₹4,999 per transaction, will apply if you use your card to pay rent or spend over ₹10,000 on online skill-based games. The same fee will also be levied on utility payments exceeding ₹50,000 monthly, with insurance transactions being an exception. Additionally, loading over ₹10,000 into a digital wallet in a single transaction will incur a one percent fee, also capped at ₹4,999.

ICICI Bank is revising various service charges, including those for ATM transactions. The first five transactions at ICICI Bank ATMs remain free, after which cash withdrawals will cost ₹23 per transaction. For non-bank ATMs, the free transaction limit is three for Metro cities and five for smaller cities; beyond this, charges of ₹23 and ₹8.5 per transaction, respectively, apply. International ATM cash withdrawals will be charged at ₹125, non-financial transactions at ₹25, plus a 3.5% currency conversion fee. Charges for online transfers via IMPS have also been revised sharply, ranging from ₹2.5 to ₹15 depending on the amount transferred. Furthermore, customers will get three free cash transactions per month at Cash Recycler Machines (CRMs), after which a ₹150 fee per transaction will apply. Cash deposits exceeding ₹1 lakh a month will incur a fee of ₹150, or ₹3.50 per ₹1,000 (whichever is higher), with the third-party cash deposit limit remaining ₹25,000 per transaction.

Train Tickets

The fares of suburban trains and monthly season tickets have remained unchanged in the interest of daily commuters.

The ordinary second-class fare has not been increased for up to 500 km and for distances beyond that, there is an increase in the ticket prices by half a paisa per km.

The passengers of ordinary sleeper class and first class will also have to pay half a paisa more per km more from July 1.

"The fare revision also applies to premier and special train services, such as Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto, Vande Bharat, Tejas, Humsafar, Amrit Bharat, Mahamana, Gatimaan, Antyodaya, Jan Shatabdi, Yuva Express, AC Vistadome coaches, Anubhuti coaches and ordinary non-suburban services, in accordance with the revised class-wise fare structure," the ministry said in a press note.

"Revised fares will apply to tickets booked on or after 01.07.2025. Tickets issued before this date will remain valid at the existing fare without any fare adjustment. PRS, UTS and manual ticketing systems are being updated accordingly," it added.

According to the ministry, there is no change in ancillary charges. For instance, the reservation fees, superfast surcharges and other charges have remained unchanged.

Similarly, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will continue to be charged in accordance with the applicable rules and the fare-rounding principles will remain as per the existing norms. (PTI)

This Year's Yatra

departments in ensuring a safe and smooth pilgrimage.

"I have closely observed the last four pilgrimages and I can confidently say

that this year, the level of arrangements and preparedness by the administration is far superior," LG Sinha told the media after an on-ground inspection and a high-level review meeting.

He added, "Significant upgradation has been done to the overall Yatra arrangements. Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, administration, J&K Police, security forces, service providers, and all stakeholders have diligently implemented pilgrim-centric measures to ensure the pilgrimage is peaceful, safe, and hassle-free for devotees."

At Baltal, the LG interacted with camp officials and took stock of arrangements related to healthcare, power supply, communication, water, sanitation, food, lodging, weather forecasting, traffic management, track maintenance, surveillance, and emergency response systems.

The Lieutenant Governor directed officials to ensure round-the-clock availability of all basic amenities with sufficient manpower to assist pilgrims.

He also inspected the Disaster Management Centre and the Yatri Niwas Complex under development by the Shrine Board. Later, he visited the Baltal hospital, reviewed the healthcare facilities available for yatriss, and inaugurated a dedicated training ward for medical staff.

Chairing a high-level meeting during the visit, LG Sinha reviewed inter-agency coordination and preparedness plans. He expressed satisfaction over the seamless cooperation between civil and security agencies and hoped that this year's Yatra would be "smoother and more successful than ever before."

"I'm confident that pilgrims coming from across the country will return with a memorable experience," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor was accompanied by senior officials including K.N. Rai, Member SASB; Dr. Mandeep K. Bhandari, CEO SASB and Principal Secretary to LG; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri; IGP Kashmir Shri V.K. Birdi; Secretary Science & Technology Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary; Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Shri Jatinder Kishore; and top officials from police, security forces, and stakeholder departments.

Trinetra App, Green

sustainable practices, address sanitation issues, share verified information, and engage Yatriss through feedback along the Baltal and Pahalgam axis, with the goal of achieving a Zero Landfill Yatra.

The campaign website www.shriamarnathjiyatra.com and an MIS portal will serve as the central hub for all information, updates, and resources, while the browser-based mobile application www.zerowasteyatra.app will provide real-time information and support to the Pilgrims.

Pamphlet & Yatra Guidelines, designed for Langar organizers, shopkeepers, and service providers along the Yatra route are focused on ensuring waste minimization, discourage single-use plastics, and implement SBM-G norms.

Trinetra App will significantly enhance the pilgrim experience through sanitation facilities, safety alerts and making them aware of the values of cleanliness during their pilgrimage.

Ms. Anoo Malhotra, Director General, Rural Sanitation briefed the Lieutenant Governor on dedicated measures taken by the department to make the yatra more sustainable.

It was informed that the Department has installed a total of 5613 toilets / bathing units, on both the axis, of which 2920 are on the Pahalgam axis and 2693 are on the Baltal axis. Further, 7361 sanitation workers are deployed to ensure cleanliness of these sanitation units. The department has also established 15 Processing Facilities for Solid Waste Management on both the

axis.

SASB's Yatri Niwas

The construction of the second phase of Yatri Niwas will begin soon. It symbolises devotion to selfless service. Let us pray to Baba Amarnath to bless our land with peace, happiness and prosperity," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG expressed his gratitude to Shri Mukesh Garg, Member, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, his team members and Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board for their invaluable contribution in building the Yatri Niwas for the pilgrims.

Interacting with the media persons, Sinha said that the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board is making continuous efforts to improve facilities for the pilgrims.

"A wave of enthusiasm is sweeping across Jammu and Kashmir. This Yatra is deeply rooted in the spirit of Jammu and Kashmir, drawing full support and cooperation from its people," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also unveiled a painting on Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, by Shri KK Gandhi.

The Five floors of the Yatri Niwas building dedicated to the Yatriss are comprised of total 75 rooms having a bed capacity of 225, and 43 dorm rooms.

K.N.Rai and Shri Mukesh Garg - Members of Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor and CEO SASB; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; VK Birdi, IGP Kashmir; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; senior officials of SASB, Police and Civil Administration were present at the inaugural ceremony.

MeT Sees No

intermittent rain and thundershowers at scattered places till July 5, with an increased likelihood of such activity at many places from July 6 to July 8.

Despite the rainfall forecast, there is no indication of any major weather system capable of significantly altering the prevailing heatwave conditions in the Valley.

"The temperatures will remain on the higher side, and the rain activity will be mild and scattered. People should take necessary precautions against heat-related issues," Dr. Ahmad added.

State Child Rights

On the previous date of hearing, the court had granted the government last opportunity regarding the constitution of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, in terms of Section 44 of the Protection of the Child from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. Subsequently, the court had requested the Secretary to the Government, Social Welfare Department, to appear before it. Subsequently he joined the proceedings virtually.

The court had interacted with him at length, and he fairly admitted that although the advertisement to select and appoint the members, as also the Chairperson of the Commission, was issued way back in June 2023, the process of selection was still at the nascent stage. However, considering the sensitivity of the matter, as also that a considerable time has already elapsed, the Secretary SWD had prayed for a short accommodation to furnish a specific affidavit, indicating the precise time that was required to complete the selection process.

CM For Global

buyer-seller meets and six reverse buyer-seller meets. This was just the first one...the effectiveness of these events can be known only after we hold the remaining 11 buyer-seller meets," he said.

Responding to a question on the timing of the event, Omar said the buyer-seller meets are not meant for tourists.

"Tourists usually buy stuff from shops. This kind of event is held where bulk orders are placed. Even if one artisan gets a large order, the event will be successful," he added.

The meet witnessed participation from over 100 sellers and more than 45 national and international buyers, representing seven countries and seven Indian states. Over 100 high-quality wool and woollen products were showcased during the event.

Reflecting on the significance of the meet, the Chief Minister said that there was a time when such Buyer-Seller Meets were not needed. "Tourists from across the globe would come to Kashmir and naturally become buyers. Today, through initiatives like this, we are trying to revive that connection—to bring the buyers back and reestablish the relationship between creators and customers."

He emphasized that the event is not a one-off showcase.

"Under the scheme, we are committed to organizing six regular Buyer-Seller Meets and six reverse meets. These will ensure sustained engagement and provide deeper market access for our artisans and entrepreneurs," he said.

Underscoring the importance of inclusivity, the Chief Minister urged the Industries Department to prioritise artisans and entrepreneurs who have not yet had the opportunity to participate in such platforms, particularly those with limited financial means. "They have the skill and the product, but lack exposure. If we bring them into the fold, we can address many challenges related to marketing and reach," he said.

He further stressed that the real benefits of such initiatives must directly reach the artisans themselves.

"We must ensure that no one else takes credit or benefit for the work done by our craftspeople. The recognition and rewards must go to the actual creators," CM Omar said.

Calling for innovation and adaptation, the Chief Minister said that artisans need to modernise—not just in design and product development, but in processes and infrastructure as well. "Consumer tastes are constantly evolving, and if we remain rigid, we risk falling behind. The government is ready to extend every possible support—be it raw material banks, colour banks, or design innovation centres—to help our artisans compete effectively in international markets," he said.

Appreciating the participation of buyers and dignitaries, he said: "Your presence here is deeply encouraging—not only for us in the government but also for the artisans, entrepreneurs, and all others participating in this event. It gives us confidence and reaffirms that the direction we have taken is the right one."

Reflecting on the journey and continued challenges, he added that while the past few years seem to have passed in the blink of an eye, many of our issues remain unresolved. "Our artisans have magic in their hands, and I urge all visitors to witness it at the exhibition stalls."

He noted that many of the exhibits are the result of years of dedicated craftsmanship.

"One piece I saw today took over three years to complete. Some stalls reflect the rich heritage we have inherited, while others showcase modern interpretations of our traditional crafts. This fusion of the old and new is essential."

In his concluding remarks, the Chief Minister invited visiting buyers to explore the scenic beauty and rich culture of Kashmir.

"I urge you to travel to Srinagar and beyond to experience the essence of Kashmir. Take back with you not just world-class products, but unforgettable memories."

Earlier, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar

Choudhary, inspected the stalls set up by the sellers. He interacted with both buyers and sellers and appreciated their participation and efforts.

Devotees Defy

of casting a shadow, the tragedy appears to have ignited a deeper resolve among pilgrims.

At the Jammu registration centre near the railway station, chants of "Bam Bam Bole" and "Jai Baba Barfani" echoed as long queues formed. Many pilgrims insisted on taking the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route, despite it being longer and more arduous than the Baltal track, to honour those killed in the attack.

"This time, the yatra is more than just a pilgrimage—it's a message to terrorists that we are not afraid," said Mumta Deshmukh, who had traveled overnight to be part of the first batch.

The 38-day Yatra to the 3,880-metre-high Amarnath cave shrine will officially begin on July 3 via the twin tracks—Nunwan-Pahalgam in Anantnag and Baltal in Ganderbal. The first batch will depart from the Jammu-based Bhagwati Nagar base camp on July 2.

Authorities have made elaborate security arrangements along both routes. Yet for many yatriss, especially those arriving from states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Assam, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh, the emotional weight of choosing Pahalgam is overriding any concern about safety.

"This will be our tribute to the martyrs of April 22," said Sarita Ghosh from Kolkata, part of a 95-member group. "By walking through Pahalgam, we are reclaiming the space from fear."

Nirohotum Kumar from Assam said, "What happened in Pahalgam was tragic, but we are here with full faith. No one can instill fear of death in us."

Some pilgrims, however, expressed frustration over the limited daily quota of 2,000 tokens for on-the-spot registration. Many had queued for hours, only to be turned away.

"The government should consider issuing tokens for the next day too, so people don't have to go through this daily struggle," said Joginder Singh from Uttar Pradesh, who waited over four hours with his group of eight but couldn't get a token.

Scuffles broke out between disappointed pilgrims and police as tempers flared. Authorities have now announced that three more offline registration centres—Vaishnavi Dham, Panchayat Bhawan, and Mahajan Hall—will begin functioning from Tuesday. (inputs from PTI)

J&K CEO Issues

They are required to submit their written representation, accompanied by an affidavit and supporting documents, by July 7, 2025. A hearing has also been scheduled for July 11, 2025.

If the parties fail to respond, the CEO office will presume that they have nothing to say and pass appropriate orders without further reference.

This significant move has been initiated to ensure that the registered political parties are active and functional and that the electoral process is streamlined.

New Political

alliance of those who have suffered. How would Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah know what is victimhood? They only know how to inflict oppression. This is a people's alliance for change. It is not a third front and everyone can join us," Lone, a former minister in the PDP-BJP coalition government, told reporters.

"We want reconciliation in Jammu and Kashmir in the true democratic sense. The issue of (incarceration of) Shabir Shah and Jamaat members like Hamid Fayaz have come up. If the government is claiming that everything is fine here now, then give compassion and magnanimity a chance. You cannot keep people in jail forever. It

has not worked for the past 78 years. Enough is enough," he said.

Lone said reservation was another major issue in Jammu and Kashmir that no political party wanted to mention.

"We have earlier said that it is a regional issue. No merit list has more than 30 per cent Kashmiris now. Does any political party raise its voice? They would not, as it is about votes," he said.

Lone said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah cannot play the victim card anymore.

"The victim card will not work. As far as I know, dissolution of assembly is not a prerequisite for granting statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Whoever says it, is lying. Even the chief minister knows it," Lone said.

Referring to Abdullah's recent statement that he was ready to make way for a BJP chief minister if that ensures statehood restoration, Lone said the principal opposition party in the Union Territory "already has its man as the chief minister".

"As far as the BJP chief minister goes, there is already one -- Omar Abdullah. How many do they want? He goes everyday there to pay his respects," the former minister added.

Lone said that while statehood is necessary, the alliance will always work for reinstatement of the August 4, 2019 position.

"We will always strive for reinstatement of the pre-August 5, 2019 position. Statehood is absolutely necessary, we can go forward after that," he said.

Lone said the Centre will have to initiate the restoration of J&K's statehood.

"We have only three members in Parliament. At the end of the day, the ruling party (at the Centre) has to set the ball rolling and give back the statehood. Then we can follow it with what we had on August 4, 2019. But I hope that statehood is restored at the earliest because you are totally in danger until then," he said.

Asked if going to court for statehood was an option, he said, "It is not easy to move court, since the court has not given any verdict in your favour so far. Either you will get statehood from the court or you are going to the court under some conspiracy to close the chapter forever."

J&K's Power

J&K leads to non-payment to the receivable entities of Northern Region," reads minutes of the meeting.

The issue of non-payment of these liabilities was repeatedly raised by the Northern Regional Load Despatch Centre (NRLDC) with J&K. "In this regard, NRLDC has already sent various communications to J&K. This agenda was also raised in special meeting with J&K on 06 Feb 2025 but there is no update about the payment. J&K representatives kindly update the status and share the firm commitment date of the payment," the document states.

NRLDC is operating and maintaining the "Northern Region Pool Account" for deviation charges, reactive energy charges and congestion charges in accordance with provisions under various CERC Regulations. As per Regulations, the concerned utilities are required to pay the indicated amounts within 10 days of issue of weekly energy account by NRPC secretariat.

However, J&K's dues on account of deviation and reactive energy charges have remained pending for a prolonged period, with the last payment from Jammu & Kashmir Power Corporation Limited (JKPCL) received on February 9, 2024, the documents states.

In the meeting chairman NRPC, who happens to be J&K PDD's Principal Secretary- assured the forum that efforts are being made to expedite the payment of DSM and reactive energy charges by J&K.

The Forum asked all constituents to clear their pending dues at the earliest.(KNO)

2ND TEST

Call On Bumrah Soon But Two Spinners Will Play

Press Trust of India

BIRMINGHAM: A call on premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah playing the second Test will be taken in the next 24 hours but India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate is pretty sure that his team will take the field with two spinners at Edgbaston.

There is a growing clamour to include wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav in the playing eleven but to maintain the batting depth, Washington Sundar is also in the mix to start alongside Ravindra Jadeja.

All three spinners bowled in the nets on Monday.

Bumrah, who would be playing three out of five Tests in the series as part of workload management, held a two coloured ball (red and white) at the start of the training session before picking up the Dukes ball to bowl only towards the end of the session.

He bowled roughly three overs, unlike teammates Mohammed Siraj, Akash Deep and Prasidh Krishna, who bowled a lot upfront.

With 0-1 down, India find themselves in a conundrum over picking Bumrah's three Tests.

"He's available for the game obviously. We know from the start he's only going to play three out of the five. He's had eight days to recover from the



last test," said Doeschate

"But given conditions and workload and how we think we can best manage for the next four games, we haven't made a call on that. We're going to see what the other guys are with their workload as well.

"If we feel like there's value in playing him in this Test, we'll make that call at the very last minute. But I'm talking about weather, how the pitch is going to play. Are we better off holding

him back for Lord's and maybe Manchester or the Oval? So it's all those factors."

Is it tempting to include Bumrah given India are trailing in the series?

"It is, but we also feel we can go 1-1 or keep the score at 1-0 without Jasprit. Again, that's putting the eggs in the back end of the series. We're going to need him at some stage as well. You've got to decide when you're going to play your strongest suit.

"We came pretty close without Jasprit in the second half (at Leeds). He didn't get any wickets. But you can't win the Test series with just one bowler in any case. Sorry, I can't give you a more firm answer. But we'll work out in the next 24 hours how."

Pretty Sure Two Spinners Will Play Here

The Leeds wicket was full of runs and considering the hot weather, expectations are that

the pitch will again be good for batting, bringing the spinners into play.

India missed the service of a second spinner in the series-opener and Doeschate said the team is likely to change its strategy for the game beginning on Wednesday.

Doeschate did not reveal much on that but came -close to confirming that two spinners will be part of the playing eleven.

Dhoni Seeks Trademark For Sobriquet 'Captain Cool'

Former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has filed a trademark application for the phrase 'CAPTAIN COOL', a sobriquet widely associated with his calm on-field demeanour.



According to the Trade Marks Registry portal, the application's status is 'accepted and advertised'. It was published in the official trademark journal on June 16. The application was filed on June 5.

The proposed trademark is registered under the category for sports training, providing sports training facilities, sports coaching and services.

No comments could immediately be obtained from Dhoni.

Interestingly, another company, Prabha Skill Sports (OPC) Pvt Ltd, had earlier filed a similar application for the phrase. However, that application's status is showing as 'rectification filed'.

Earlier this month, Dhoni was inducted into the ICC's Hall of Fame for the year 2025 along with seven cricketers, including Australian great Matthew Hayden and South Africa's Hashim Amla.

The ICC hailed Dhoni as a player who excelled not just in numbers but also in "extraordinary consistency, fitness and longevity". (PTI)

Yashasvi Jaiswal To Continue Playing For Mumbai

Indian Test opener Yashasvi Jaiswal will continue to play for domestic giants Mumbai after the state cricket body on Monday approved the withdrawal of his earlier request for a No Objection Certificate (NOC).

The 23-year-old Jaiswal had surprised one and all in April by writing to the MCA, seeking NOC to represent a different state.

Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) had initially accepted his request for the NOC. Jaiswal was headed to Goa and was even set to become their captain in domestic competitions.

However in May, Jaiswal wrote to the MCA seeking the withdrawal of his request to be issued the NOC.

On Monday, the apex council of the MCA approved Jaiswal's request to withdraw the NOC.

"The Apex Council has approved the withdrawal of the No Objection Certificate (NOC) that had been earlier requested by Yashasvi Jaiswal to represent another state. He will continue to be available for Mumbai," the MCA said.

A few days ago, another India player from Mumbai, Prithvi Shaw had written to the MCA seeking their approval to move to another state and his request was approved. (PTI)

Azhar Mahmood Named Pakistan Red-Ball Coach

Former all-rounder Azhar Mahmood was on Monday elevated to the post of Pakistan's acting red-ball head coach until the conclusion of his current contract, which runs until April next year.

Mahmood had signed a two-year contract with the Pakistan Cricket Board in April last year as assistant coach across formats along with Australia's Jason Gillespie (Tests) and South Africa's Gary Kirsten (limited overs), who have both moved on.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board today announces Azhar Mahmood as the acting red-ball head coach of the Pakistan men's team. Azhar will serve in this role until the conclusion of his current contract," the PCB said in a statement.

"A seasoned cricketing mind, Azhar Mahmood steps into the role with an impressive portfolio of experience. Having served as the assistant head coach of the national side, Azhar has long been a pivotal part of the team's strategic core.

"His deep knowledge of the game, combined with hands-on international exposure and proven success in the English county circuit, make him exceptionally well-suited for this position," the PCB added.

PCB highlighted Mahmood's achievements in winning County Championship titles for Surrey as their assistant coach. (PTI)

South Africa Set Zimbabwe 537 To Win

South Africa set Zimbabwe 537 runs to win the first test after Wiaan Mulder's career-best 147 on Monday.

Zimbabwe was 32-1 at stumps on day three, trailing by 505 runs with two days to go and without concussed opener Brian Bennett. His replacement, Prince Masvaure, was 5 not out.

A solid start by Zimbabwe was spoiled by opener Takudzwanashe Kaitano edging Corbin Bosch to second slip on what turned out to be the last ball of the day.

Zimbabwe has six 500-plus scores in test cricket, most recently last December against Afghanistan at the same Queens Sports Club. But its highest fourth-innings total was 331 in a 2001 loss to New Zealand, also in Bulawayo.

Considering Zimbabwe was out for 251 in the first innings, South Africa already began the day in charge from leading by 216 at 49-1 in the second innings with Mulder 25 not out.

South Africa was reduced to 155-5 in the morning session but Mulder stood firm and his partnership with Kyle Verreynne, worth 104 in 131 balls into the afternoon, diminished Zimbabwe hopes.

Mulder reached his second test century before lunch, the 100 coming from 149 balls. (AP)

Indian Pacers Use 2-Coloured Ball To Shed IPL Habits

Press Trust of India

BIRMINGHAM: The Indian pace attack, practising with two-coloured balls to shed the "filthy" habits of white-ball cricket, drew plenty of attention at the penultimate net session ahead of the second Test against England at Edgbaston.

Jasprit Bumrah was seen holding a red and white ball at the start of the session and so were the other members of the Indian pace battery.

It is common practice to use multi coloured balls and to be specific, the Indian pacers have been using them since the start of the English summer.

One reason for it is that the fast bowlers arrived in England after a lengthy white-ball stint, including the Champions Trophy and the subsequent Indian Premier League.

India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate said training with the two-coloured balls helps in eliminating white ball tendencies from the red ball game.



"It's not a new thing. All the ball manufacturers make those balls. We talk about detoxing the bowlers, just getting the very basics right. And that's the easiest way to give you an indication. Guys have come out of a long IPL season and the filthy habits of that cricket.

"We don't want that creeping into Test cricket. So Morne (Morkel) and the bowlers just use that tool just to make sure the basic fundamentals are in place. We've been using it for the last two weeks," said Doeschate.

MOEEN ALI CHECKS IN AT ENGLAND TRAINING

Former England all-rounder Moeen Ali made a surprise visit to the host's net session at his home ground here on Monday.

England are banking on Ali's knowledge of Edgbaston where the pitch is expected to be full of runs and aid spinners day three onwards. Head coach Brendon McCullum and spin bowling coach Jeetan Patel were seen having a long conversation with Ali.

England Name Unchanged Playing XI; Archer Misses Training



Press Trust of India

BIRMINGHAM: England have named an unchanged playing XI for the second Test against India even as fast bowler Jofra Archer missed Monday's training session at Edgbaston due to a family emergency.

While Archer is expected to rejoin the squad on Tuesday on the eve of the second Test beginning Wednesday, England have stuck with the side that secured a five-wicket win in the series opener at Headingley.

Archer, who had missed the opening Test, was added to the England squad for the five-match series last week but will have to wait for his chance.

"Men's fast bowler Jofra Archer will not be joining the England Test squad

for today's training session at Edgbaston, Monday 30 June, due to a family emergency. He is expected to rejoin the squad tomorrow, Tuesday," the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) said on Monday.

Archer, who has struggled with elbow-related injury to his bowling arm over the last several years, last played in a Test more than four years ago against India in Ahmedabad.

The second Test is scheduled to begin here from Wednesday. England lead the series 1-0.

ENGLAND TEAM FOR 2ND TEST:

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

Protesters Urge Wimbledon To Cut Ties With Barclays Over Israel

Associated Press

LONDON: Pro-Palestinian protesters urged Wimbledon to drop Barclays as a sponsor Monday because of the British bank's business dealings with Israel.

About two dozen protesters from Palestine Solidarity Campaign demonstrated by the main entrance of the All England Club as thousands of fans arrived for Day 1 of the tournament.

"They're the bank for the arms companies that are obviously supplying weapons to Israel," protester Khalid Zalmay told The Associated Press. "We should not be arming Israel, we should not be allowing anybody to facilitate arming them, and I think ties should be cut with Israel, the same way that ties were cut with Russia." One protester held a sign that said Barclays is a "sponsor of Wimbledon and genocide."

Hamas-led militants killed



some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 people in the Oct. 7, 2023 attack that sparked the Israel-Hamas war.

Israel's military response has led to the death of 56,000 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between

civilians and combatants. It says more than half of the dead were women and children. Wimbledon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Barclays said it is "proud of our partnership with Wimbledon" and defended its business practices.

"We provide a range of financial services and products to companies supplying defense products to the UK, NATO and its allies," the company statement said. "As NATO, the EU and UK seek to increase their defense capabilities in response to increasing geopolitical threats, the provision of financial products and services to the defense sector is becoming increasingly important."

WIMBLEDON HIT BY RECORD-BREAKING DAY 1 TEMPERATURES

Wimbledon players and spectators were hit by record-breaking Day 1 heat as the temperature rose to 91 degrees Fahrenheit — 33 Celsius — at the oldest Grand Slam tournament on Monday.

"For sure, you feel like the sun is getting closer and closer every minute that passes by," said Adrian Mannarino, a 37-year-old Frenchman who frequently sprayed his shaved head with sunscreen at changeovers

during his first-round victory. "I was struggling a little more than usual."

The 2001 fortnight had the previous hottest opening day at the All England Club, reaching 85 degrees F (29.3 degrees C).

"I feel like everyone is kind of struggling with the heat right now," Germany's Eva Lys said after winning her match Monday.

Some sweat-soaked athletes sought help from ice-filled towels wrapped around their necks while they sat on sideline chairs.

Others said it actually wasn't all that unbearable, especially given that the weather was not extraordinary compared to what often occurs during the local summers when the Australian Open is held in Melbourne in January or the U.S. Open is in New York in August and September. At those events, temperatures regularly get to 90 degrees F (32 degrees C) and can top 100 degrees F (38 degrees C).

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