



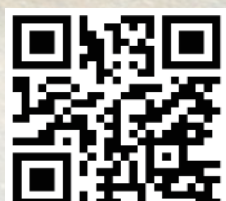
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DIPK-3210/25
DT: 02-07-2025

Encounter In Kishtwar Forests; Army Rushes In

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: A gunfight broke out between terrorists and security forces in a heavily forested area in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, officials said.

The encounter started when police assisted by the Army and CRPF launched a search and cordon operation in the Kuchal area of Chatroo around 7.45 pm following information about the presence of terrorists this evening, they said.

The officials said the terrorists opened fire on noticing the security search parties, leading to a gunfight which was continuing when last reports were received.

Reinforcements have been rushed to the area to maintain a tight cordon and neutralise the terrorists who are believed to be two to three in number and affiliated with Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, the officials said.

Army's Jammu-based White Knight Corps, in a post on X, said, "Based on specific intelligence a joint search operation was underway in Kanzal Mandu, Kishtwar. Contact has been established with the terrorists and operations are in progress." | [More on P10](#)

Amarnath Yatra 2025 Begins Under Tight Security

LG Flags Off First Batch Of Pilgrims From Jammu

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday flagged off the first batch of over 5,880 pilgrims for the annual Amarnath Yatra, marking the formal start of the 38-day spiritual journey to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in South Kashmir.

The convoy, comprising 5,892 pilgrims — including 1,115 women, 31 children, and 16 transgender individuals — left the heavily guarded Bhagwati Nagar base camp



in Jammu at 4.30 am amid multi-tier security cover. The pilgrimage will officially commence | [More on P10](#)

Kashmir Valley Extends Rousing Welcome

The Kashmir valley on Wednesday witnessed a vibrant and emotional reception for the first batch of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims, as they arrived to commence the sacred journey to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine. Flagged off from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, the convoy of 5,892 pilgrims entered the Valley through the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund, South Kashmir. At the tunnel's mouth, | [More on P10](#)

ISRO-DHSK Collaboration

Satellite Tech Brings Specialist Care To Pilgrims

In a historic first, high-altitude telemedicine services during the Shri Amarnath Yatra 2025 have been established and made fully operational at key Base Hospitals in Baltal and Panjtarni.

This innovative initiative results from a collaboration between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir (DHSK), aimed at enhancing real-time

specialist healthcare in the challenging mountainous terrain along the Yatra route.

For the first time in the pilgrimage's history, ground medical teams at these high-altitude camps can connect with expert doctors at tertiary healthcare centres via satellite-enabled systems. This technology facilitates timely diagnosis, advanced consultations, and remote management of critical cases, | [More on P10](#)

Helpline Set-Up For 'Victims Of Terrorism'

Agencies

Srinagar: Police on Wednesday said that in a significant initiative aimed at providing timely support and assistance to the families affected by terrorism, Police have established dedicated Grievance Cells/Helplines in Anantnag, Budgam, Baramulla and Sopore. This initiative is intended to facilitate the registration and resolution of grievances of terrorism affected families across the district.

In a statement, the police said that in Anantnag, a helpline has been established at the District Police Office Anantnag. Victims or their kin can approach the helpline number 01932-222870 to register grievances or seek assistance. In Budgam, the victims or their family members can reach out to the helpline number 9541902668 established at District Police Office Budgam, available from Monday to Saturday, between 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Meanwhile, in Baramulla, the helpline has been established at District Police Headquarter Baramulla. Affected individuals or their families can approach the helpline number 95419-40261 (voice call, SMS and WhatsApp) | [More on P10](#)

'First Line of Defence'

LG Hails Border Villagers' Grit During Op Sindoor

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday hailed the unwavering courage and resilience of residents living along the International Border, calling them the "first line of defence" during a visit to the border village of Changiya in Arnia sector of Jammu.

Addressing a public gathering and paying obeisance at the sacred Daati Maa Dev Sthan of the Mahajan Phagetra Biradari, the LG commended the role played by the border communities during Operation Sindoor, when Indian armed forces carried out retaliatory strikes against terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on May 7, following the Pahalgam terror attack.

"The people of border areas stood firm in the face of adversity during Operation Sindoor. Their resilience reflects the true spirit of patriotism. Border areas are not just geographical ends—they are the soul of our national security," Sinha said.

Reaffirming the Centre's commitment to inclusive development, the LG emphasized that the Vibrant Villages Programme would be extended to border villages in the region starting this year.

"We will ensure that the villages of this sector are taken up under the Vibrant Villages Programme from this year. Detailed instructions will be issued to prioritize the development of these areas," he announced.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Sinha noted that no | [More on P10](#)

Parched Fields, Dry Taps

Kashmir's Water Crisis Deepens Amid Heatwave



Observer News Service

Srinagar: As a relentless heat wave scorches the Kashmir

Valley, a deepening water crisis has engulfed both urban and rural areas—drying up taps in cities and | [More on P10](#)

Summer Vacations Extended In Colleges

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has extended the summer vacations in all Government Degree Colleges falling under the Winter Zone of Kashmir and Jammu Divisions till July 5, 2025 | [More on P10](#)

Rain Likely From July 5: MeT

As Jammu and Kashmir braces for light to moderate rainfall from July 5 onwards, several areas across the region experienced a slight drop in temperatures on Wednesday, offering relief from the intense heat wave that gripped the Valley over the past week. According to the Meteorological Department, Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a maximum temperature of 32.8°C, down from 34.2°C a day earlier. Qazigund recorded 29.2°C, while Pahalgam saw | [More on P10](#)

Trial Status Of MPs, MLAs

HC Grants Centre, J&K Govt 'Last Opportunity'

M Ahmad

Srinagar: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has granted centre and J&K governments "last Opportunity" for apprising it of the current status of trial of former members of the legislative assembly and sitting or ex-parliamentarians in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hearing a Suo Moto Public Interest Litigation, a bench of Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajnesh Oswal passed the order after counsel for the both centre and J&K government prayed to comply with the order dated April 21.

While ordering to list the matter on August 11, the Court said that if the status report

was not filed "appropriate order shall follow".

In September 2022, the court said that thirteen former members of the legislative assembly and sitting or ex-parliamentarians are facing trial in Jammu and Kashmir.

The petition was registered Suo Moto 2021 by the court in compliance to the directions of the Supreme Court, directing for monitoring the progress of the trial of cases pending against the sitting and former legislators (MPs or MLAs). On 20 September 2021, the court arrayed concerned officials from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh as respondents. Subsequently it directed them to submit information regarding | [More on P10](#)

'It's Not the Jab'

Studies Debunk Vaccine Link To Sudden Young Deaths

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Amid rising public concern and speculation over sudden deaths among young adults in India, two major studies by the country's top medical institutions have firmly ruled out any connection with COVID-19 vaccines.

The investigations—led by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi—have concluded that underlying health conditions, genetic factors, and lifestyle choices are the real drivers behind these incidents.



Triggered by a surge in media reports and social media chatter, the Government of India initiated a thorough probe into unexplained deaths in the 18-45 age group. Two comprehensive studies were commissioned to explore any potential links to vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first, titled "Factors Associated with Unexplained Sudden Deaths Among Adults Aged 18-45 Years in India", was conducted by ICMR's National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE). Spanning from May to August 2023 and involving 47 tertiary care hospitals across 19 states and union territories, the study focused on individuals who died suddenly between October 2021 and March 2023.

The findings were unequivocal: COVID-19 vaccination did not increase the risk of sudden death in healthy adults.

The second study—an ongoing prospective investigation by AIIMS in | [More on P10](#)

Rs 100 Cr Aqua Park On The Cards For J&K

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In a major boost to Jammu and Kashmir's aquaculture sector, the Union Government is considering a ₹100 crore proposal to establish an Integrated Aqua Park under Phase-II of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The announcement was made by Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, during an event at the Shalimar Convention Centre, SKUAST-Kashmir.

Highlighting the cold-water fisheries potential of the region, the Minister said the proposed Aqua Park would serve

as a model for holistic cold-water aquaculture development, focusing on infrastructure, innovation, and sustainable livelihoods.

In a significant move, the Ministry has also formally designated Anantnag as a Cold-Water Fisheries Cluster, with Kulgam and Shopian identified as partner districts. The initiative will promote integrated value-chain development, including hatcheries, feed mills, processing units, and market linkages.

"Over ₹120 crore in private investment has already been mobilized under the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), and we are | [More on P10](#)

CM Seeks More Coaches, Better Timings For Vande Bharat

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has written to Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, requesting an enhancement of Vande Bharat train services in the Union Territory. The demands include increasing the frequency of the trains, augmenting coach capacity, rescheduling timings for better public convenience, and providing onboard internet connectivity.

In a letter sent last week, Omar Abdullah welcomed the recent launch of the Vande Bharat Express between Katra

and Srinagar, describing it as a "landmark initiative" that has brought modern, comfortable, and time-efficient travel to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, citing feedback from commuters, stakeholders, and his personal experience travelling on the train, Omar flagged several key concerns that he said merit urgent attention.

Demand for More Coaches Omar said the current coach configuration of the Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express is "proving insufficient" to meet the growing passenger demand—especially | [More on P10](#)

How A Kashmir Firm Became India's Top SIP Performer

The Srinagar-based venture beats over 4,000 outlets nationwide to lead new mutual fund investments.

Ansar Hussain Dar

At a glittering Mumbai award show this June, few imagined the spotlight would turn to Srinagar.

But when the numbers were revealed, it wasn't a market giant that led the pack. It was M I Securities, a small Kashmiri firm that outpaced over 4,000 contenders to become India's top performer in new SIP business.

Systematic Investment Plans, or SIPs, are one of the

most popular ways for ordinary people to invest in mutual funds.

Instead of investing a lump sum, people contribute small, fixed amounts regularly, often monthly. SIPs make it easier to build wealth over time, without taking big financial risks.

The applause that night wasn't just for the win. It was for where it came from—not a big office in Mumbai, but a small one in Srinagar, built on trust.

"This isn't about numbers,"



M I Securities founder Irshad Mushtaq receiving the award in Mumbai recently.

says Irshad Mushtaq, the founder. "It's about people."

Sitting among worn-out ledgers and files, he adds: "Clients stayed because we stayed honest. This is a story of slow, steady trust."

When Irshad founded the firm in 2004, the financial world in Kashmir was largely closed off to everyday people.

Stocks and mutual funds were seen as complicated, often mistrusted. People preferred to keep their savings in gold, real estate, or bank accounts.

Stockbroking firms operated with limited transparency.

"There were many barriers," Irshad recalls. "People didn't understand investments. Many didn't even trust the process."

He named his company "Mushtaq's International" after his late father, Mushtaq Ahmad, who died in a road accident when Irshad was a teenager. The business was both a tribute and a mission to build something his father would have been proud of.

In those early | [More on P10](#)

Anil Ambani: From World's 6th Richest to 'Fraud' Label by State Bank

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: Industrialist Anil Ambani's lawyers have written to State Bank of India protesting against classification of loan accounts of bankrupt Reliance Communications as fraudulent, saying the move violated RBI guidelines as



well as court directions.

In the July 2 letter, the counsel said the SBI's order was shocking and has been passed ex-parte, and in violation of the principles of natural justice.

SBI's order is in direct contravention of various judgments of the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court, as well as RBI guidelines, the counsel said.

RCom in a filing to stock exchanges on Wednesday said that SBI is classifying its loan account as fraudulent, citing alleged diversion of funds in a case dating back to 2016.

The counsel in the letter said SBI has not even responded to Ambani's communication about the invalidity of

the show cause notice (SCN) for almost a year, and has not even provided the information forming the basis of their decision despite being repeatedly requested to enable him to respond to the SCN.

SBI, the counsel said, has also not allowed Ambani an opportunity of personal hearing to make submissions against its allegations.

SBI has withdrawn the show cause notice to other non-executive and independent directors of RCom. Ambani was also a non-executive director and not involved in the day-to-day affairs of RCom, and has been wrongly so categorized, the counsel said, adding Ambani is pursuing the matter as legally advised.

"The Bank's SCN dated December 20, 2023 had been issued prior to the revised RBI Master Directions dated July 15, 2024 which completely superseded the directions under which the SCN had been issued (and which are no longer in existence), the Bank would need to withdraw the said SCN.

"Given the extended silence of almost one year on behalf of the Bank to this communication, our Client (Ambani) was under the bonafide belief that Bank has accepted our Client's position in respect and did not intend to precipitate the matter," it said.

Window Frame Of Goa-Pune SpiceJet Flight Dislodges Mid-Air

Press Trust Of India

Mumbai: A window frame of Spice Jet's aircraft operating its flight to Pune from Goa was found dislodged mid-air but there was no impact on passengers' safety, the airline said on Wednesday.

The frame was fixed once the aircraft landed at the next (Pune) airport, in accordance

structural trim component, fitted onto the window for the purpose of shade, and did not compromise the safety or integrity of the aircraft in any way.

The Q400 aircraft is equipped with multiple layers of window panes, including a robust, pressure-bearing outer pane, ensuring that passenger safety is never at risk, even in the unlikely event of



with standard maintenance procedures, the airline said in a statement.

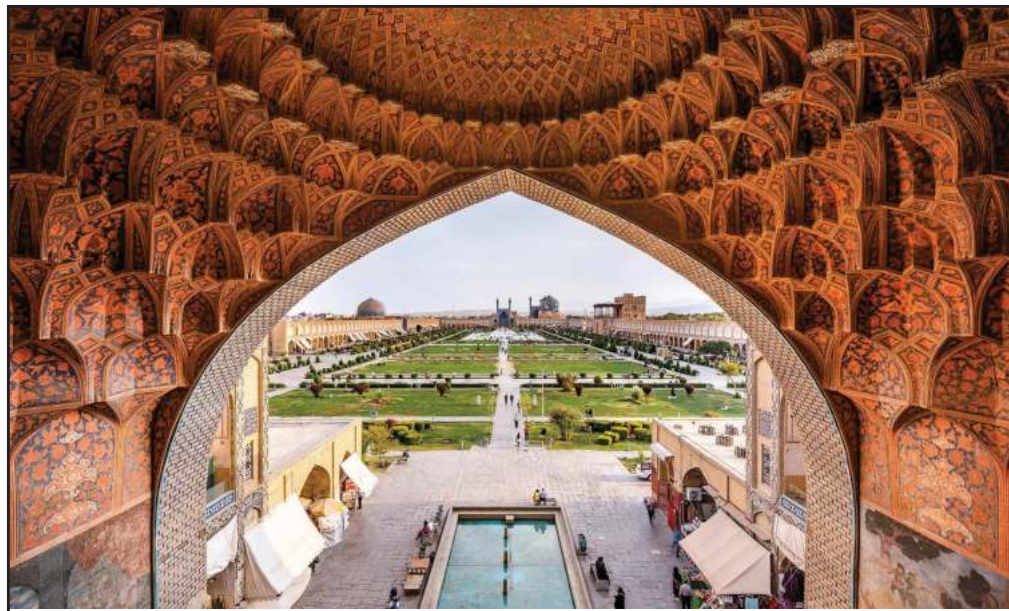
SpiceJet, however, did not share other details.

"A cosmetic (interior) window frame on one of the Q400 Aircraft became loose during flight and was found dislodged," the airline said in a statement.

SpiceJet also said that cabin pressurisation remained normal throughout the flight, and there was no impact on passenger safety, adding that the dislodged part was a non-

a superficial or cosmetic component coming loose," SpiceJet added. Questioning the airworthiness of the aircraft, a passenger posted a video of the dislodged window on social media platform X.

"#SpiceJet from Goa to Pune today. The whole interior window assembly just fell off mid flight. And this flight is now supposed to take off and head to Jaipur. Wonder if it's air worthy..." the passenger stated, while tagging the aviation safety regulator DGCA in the post.



The Iranian minister of cultural heritage & tourism has written to the UNESCO director general urging him to warn Israel against targeting Iran's cultural and natural heritage sites.

Iran President Orders Suspension of Cooperation with IAEA

Associated Press

Dubai: Iran's president on Wednesday reportedly ordered the country to suspend its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency after American airstrikes hit its most-important nuclear facilities.

The state media online reported the decision by President Masoud Pezeshkian.

It follows a law passed by Iran's parliament to suspend that cooperation. It also already received the OK of a constitutional watchdog as well.

It wasn't immediately clear what that would mean for the IAEA, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog.

The Vienna-based IAEA has long monitored Iran's nuclear programme. The agency didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

After the law's passage,

Iran's Supreme National Security Council was to oversee the bill and implementation. While the council itself hasn't said anything publicly, Pezeshkian is the head of the council, so his reported order signals that the bill would be implemented.

However, under Iran's theocratic government, there is room for the council to implement the bill as they see fit. That means that everything lawmakers asked for might not be done.

Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, negotiated under then US President Barack Obama, allowed Iran to enrich uranium to 3.67 per cent — enough to fuel a nuclear power plant, but far below the threshold of 90 per cent needed for weapons-grade uranium. It also drastically reduced Iran's stockpile of uranium, limited its use of centrifuges and relied on

the IAEA to oversee Tehran's compliance through additional oversight.

But US President Donald Trump, in his first term in 2018, unilaterally withdrew Washington from the accord, insisting it wasn't tough enough and didn't address Iran's missile programme or its support for militant groups in the wider Middle East. That set in motion years of tensions, including attacks at sea and on land.

Iran had been enriching up to 60 per cent, a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels. It also has enough of a stockpile to build multiple nuclear bombs, should it choose to do so. Iran has long insisted its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, but the IAEA, Western intelligence agencies and others say Tehran had an organised weapons programme up until 2003.

Trump: Israel Agrees to 60-Day Gaza Truce, Urges Hamas to Accept

Associated Press

Washington: US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Israel has agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and warned Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen.

Trump announced the development as he prepares to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for talks at the White House on Monday.

The US leader has been increasing pressure on the Israeli government and Hamas to broker a ceasefire and hostage agreement and bring about an end to the war in Gaza.

"My Representatives had a long and productive meeting with the Israelis today on Gaza. Israel has agreed to the necessary conditions to finalize the 60 Day CEASEFIRE, during which time we will work with all parties to end the War," Trump wrote, saying the Qatari and Egyptians would deliver the final proposal.

"I hope, for the good of the Middle East, that Hamas takes this Deal, because it will not get better -- IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE," he said.

Trump's promise that it was his best and final offer may find a skeptical audience with Hamas.

Even before the expiration of the war's longest ceasefire in March, Trump has repeatedly issued dramatic ultimatums to pressure Hamas to agree to longer pauses in the fighting that would see the release of more hostages and a return of more aid to Gaza's civilian populace.

Still, Trump views the current moment as a potential turning point in the brutal conflict that has left more than 56,000 dead in the Palestinian territory.

The Gaza Health Ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its death count.

Hamas is still capable of landing fatal blows to Israeli forces. But US officials believe the group's been significantly diminished as its centralised command and control capabilities have deteriorated over the course of

the nearly 21-month conflict. Meanwhile, Hamas' chief backer Iran was badly battered last month by 12 days of strikes by Israel and the United States on Tehran's key nuclear facilities.

Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs, Ron Dermer, was in Washington on Tuesday for talks with senior administration officials to discuss a potential Gaza ceasefire, Iran and other matters. Dermer was expected to meet with Vice President J D Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and special envoy Steve Witkoff.

Earlier Tuesday, Trump repeated his hope for forging an Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal next week.

Asked if it's time to put pressure on Netanyahu to get a ceasefire deal done, Trump said the Israeli prime minister was ready to come to an agreement.

"He wants to," Trump said of Netanyahu in an exchange with reporters while visiting a new immigration detention facility in Florida.

Fake Judges, Court Hearings

UP Man Duped of 1 Crore in Fake Digital Arrest Scam

Press Trust Of India

Shahjahanpur (UP): Uttar Pradesh Police on Wednesday arrested seven men who allegedly impersonated officials from the ED and the CBI to "digitally arrest" a Shahjahanpur resident and swindle more than Rs one crore through a fabricated online court proceeding, an official said.

The gang's modus operandi involved convincing the victim, 60-year-old Sharad Chand, that he was under investigation for an alleged illegal transaction of Rs 2.8 crore, the officer said.

The fraudsters allegedly first contacted him via phone on May 6, posing as ED and CBI officers. Then they escalated the deception by impersonating a judge and conducting fake virtual hearings through WhatsApp for almost a month, according to the police.

Digital arrest is a term used in cyber frauds where victims are falsely told they are under surveillance or legal custody through digital means. They are often isolated via continuous video or call surveillance by fraudsters posing as officials, and manipulated into following instructions without alerting others - often leading to extortion or fraud.

Shahjahanpur Superintendent of Police Rajesh

Dwivedi told PTI that during these "virtual hearings", fake lawyers and judges allegedly intimidated Chand, ultimately coercing him into transferring Rs 1.04 crore across 40 bank accounts belonging to nine alleged "advocates." The victim, associated with an NGO, did not inform anyone at the time of the "digital arrest" but reported the matter to the police once he realised that he had been conned.

During the investigation, police discovered suspicious transactions of Rs nine crore in a bank account linked to the case. That account is also under scrutiny, Dwivedi said.

Those arrested have been identified as Sachin, Prashant, Gautam Singh, Sandeep Kumar, Syed Saif, Aryan Sharma, and Pawan Yadav - all aged between 20 and 28 years.

They have been booked under sections 318 (cheating), 319 (cheating by impersonation), 204 (impersonating a government official) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and sections 66(c) and 66(d) of the IT Act. All have been sent to jail, the police added.

Uttar Pradesh Police has cautioned citizens against cyber frauds like digital arrest and asked them to report any such experiences to their nearest police station or on the dedicated helpline number 1530.

11 River Sites Across India Breach Flood Warning Levels

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Water levels at 11 river monitoring stations across India have breached the warning level, but none have reached the danger or

flood situations, where water levels have crossed the warning threshold but remain below danger levels.

In Assam, the Kushiya River in Karimganj and the Brahmaputra at Neamatighat



extreme flood thresholds, the Central Water Commission (CWC) said on Wednesday.

This alert is part of the commission's daily flood bulletin released by the Central Flood Control Room.

The bulletin indicates there are currently no sites in the "severe" or "extreme" flood situation categories, meaning that no location has reached or surpassed its danger mark or highest historical flood level.

However, 12 sites in Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh were flagged for "above-normal"

in Jorhat are among those nearing concern levels.

Bihar remains under observation, with elevated water levels in the Kosi at Balcara, Bagmati at Benibad, and Gandak at Dumariaghat.

Uttar Pradesh is closely monitoring four sites, including the Ganga at Fatehgarh and Kachhla Bridge, Ghagra at Elginbridge, and Gandak at Khadda, which touched the warning level at 95 metres.

Odisha reported above-normal levels at Mathani Road Bridge and Rajghat on the Subarnarekha, both in Baleswar district.

NEWS MAKERS

Indian Pacer Shami Ordered To Pay Rs 4 Lakh Monthly Alimony To Estranged Wife, Daughter

Press Trust Of India

Kolkata : Calcutta High Court directed Indian pacer Mohammed Shami to pay his estranged wife, Hasin Jahan, and daughter a monthly alimony of Rs 4 lakh as maintenance during the ongoing legal battle with his spouse.

Jahan had moved the high court against a district sessions court's order directing the cricketer to pay Rs 50,000 to his wife and Rs 80,000 to her daughter in 2023.

"In my considered opinion, a sum of Rs 1,50,000 per month to the petitioner no.1 (wife) and Rs 2,50,000 to her daughter would be just fair and reasonable to ensure financial stability for both the petitioners, till disposal of the main application," the order passed by Justice Ajay Kumar Mukherjee on

Tuesday stated.

"However as regards petitioner's child the husband /opposite party No 2 will always be at liberty to voluntarily assist her with educational and/or other reasonable expenses, over and above the aforesaid amount," the order added.

Jahan had lodged an FIR at the Jadavpur police station against Shami and his family in March 2018, four years after their marriage in April 2014, alleging "enormous physical and mental torture" under Section 12 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violation (PWDV) Act, 2005 and "sustained indifference and neglect" of her minor daughter.

Besides domestic violence, she also accused Shami of dowry harassment and match-fixing while alleging that Shami had stopped shouldering financial responsibility for running her family expenses.

She had prayed for monetary



relief, including an interim monetary relief of Rs 7 lakh per month for herself and an additional Rs 3 lakh for her daughter.

The magistrate, while disposing

ing of her application, had initially rejected her prayer for monetary relief and directed the pacer a monthly payment of Rs 80,000 towards his minor daughter.

“However as regards petitioner's child the husband / opposite party No 2 will always be at liberty to voluntarily assist her with educational and/or other reasonable expenses, over and above the aforesaid amount

On appeal, the order was later modified, directing Shami to a monthly payment of Rs 50,000 to his wife and Rs 80,000 to his daughter.

"In view of materials placed before me and considering the elements for the determination of the quantum of maintenance as held in the salutary judgments, I am of the view that the quantum of interim monetary relief as fixed by the court below requires revision," the high court order stated.

"The opposite party/husband's income, financial disclosure and earnings established that he is in a position to pay a higher amount. The petitioner's wife, who has remained unmarried and is living independently with the child, is entitled to a levelled maintenance that she enjoyed during her continuance of marriage and which reasonably secures her future as well as the future of the child," it went on to add.

Youth Use Summer Break To Explore Muharram Traditions

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: While most children and teenagers spend their summer vacations indoors escaping the sweltering heat, a small but passionate group of Gen Z youth in Kashmir is stepping out for a unique learning experience — rediscovering the socio-religious and cultural legacy of Muharram through Dar'ke Azadari Photo Heritage Walks.

In the heart of Srinagar's Old City, known for its spiritual and historical depth, a group of school and college students are not just braving the sun, but walking lanes steeped in centuries-old tradition, guided by the stories of Karbala and the Kashmiri expressions of mourning.

"These walks are not just about taking pictures," says 16-year-old Muneeb Fatima, a Class 11 student participating in the initiative. "It's about understanding who we are, where we come from, and why Azadari (mourning for Imam Hussain a.s) in Kashmir is so different — and so soulful."

The initiative, led by Iliyas Rizvi — a heritage consultant and founder of EdRAAK — is designed to engage the young minds during their summer break in a deeper, more meaningful way. "We started this journey in 2013 with a simple photo exhibi-

tion. Today, it has evolved into interactive heritage walks, storytelling sessions, poetry workshops, and even calligraphy circles — all centred around Muharram," Rizvi says.

Each walk is carefully curated and limited to 15 participants to maintain the intimacy and depth of discussion. The routes take students to lesser-known but spiritually significant sites of Azadari in Srinagar — including spaces where Marsiya (elegiac poetry) is recited, some nearly forgotten over time.

The students are encouraged not just to observe, but to respond creatively. At the end of each session, they produce a piece — be it a story, a poem, a photograph, or an artwork — reflecting their understanding of the tradition. "This is the kind of learning you won't find in textbooks," remarks Mahira Hussain, a college student from Nowhatta. "I didn't even know Kashmiri Marsiya existed before this. And to realise it's not even taught in our schools or universities — it's heartbreaking."

Beyond tradition, the walks also intersect with contemporary realities. One such stop is the Zaidib Craft Bazar, which comes alive during Muharram with handcrafted art from across the Shia world — from the calligraphic fineness of Iran and Iraq to the embroidered rituals of Lucknow and Rajasthan.

Man Convicted In Land Fraud Case For Cheque Bounce

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A local court in Srinagar has convicted a man in a cheque bounce and land fraud case, sentencing him to one year of imprisonment and imposing a fine of Rs 13.5 lakh. The case pertains to a fraudulent land deal in which the victim was sold a plot unfit for construction, and later issued a cheque that bounced due to insufficient funds.

The 2nd Additional Munsiff Court (Judicial Magistrate 1st Class), Srinagar, presided over by Judge Vikas Bhardwaj, passed the judgment in a case filed by Dr. Baby Summuna, a resident of Karan Nagar, Srinagar. The complainant had accused Mohammad Ashraf Sheikh of Palhipora Safapora, presently residing in Khanyar, of duping her by showing and selling her a piece of land at Azad Colony, Bata-

pora. The land, it turned out, fell under a high-tension electric line and was unfit for construction as per the Electricity Act.

According to KNT, after the complainant demanded a refund, the accused issued a post-dated cheque for Rs 9,20,000. However, the cheque was dishonoured due to insufficient funds. Despite the service of a legal notice, the accused failed to repay the amount, leading to proceedings under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881.

In the detailed judgment, the court observed that the cheque was not issued as security but rather as a voluntary repayment of an acknowledged debt. It ruled that the complainant had successfully proved all necessary elements of the offence under the NI Act and that the accused failed to rebut the presumption under Section 139 of the Act.

Transport Commissioner Inspects Driving Test Centre

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Transport Commissioner, Vishesh Paul Mahajan conducted a comprehensive visit to Regional Transport Office (RTO) Kashmir, here at Bemina.

The Commissioner interacted with the citizens waiting in queues, raising awareness about the Transport Department's online and faceless services. He encouraged them to leverage these digital platforms to streamline their transactions and minimize visits to the RTO office.

He instructed the ARTO Headquarters to prominently display the signboards and informational material, highlighting the availability and advantages of online ser-

vices, so as to raise awareness among the general public. He reiterated the department's commitment towards minimizing the footfall at the RTO office by promoting digital access and ensuring ease of service delivery through faceless platforms.

Earlier, the Transport Commissioner inspected the trial ground located at Bemina and monitored the driving tests being conducted there. Interacting with the youngsters, he urged them to be careful while driving besides strictly abiding by the traffic laws.

He directed the staff to ensure that those who appear for the driving test are guided properly. He also asked them that the test results should be uploaded online within 24 hours.



Srinagar Welcomes First Batch Of Amarnath Yatris With Devotion

DDC Chairperson, DC & SSP Welcome Pilgrims At Pantha Chowk

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a warm gesture of hospitality, the Srinagar district administration led by DDC Chairperson, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo along with Senior Superintendent of Police Sundeeep Chakravathy on Wednesday warmly welcomed the first batch of Amarnath Yatra pilgrims as they arrived at Pantha Chowk in Srinagar.

This followed the formal commencement of the annual yatra which was flagged from Jammu by LG Manoj Sinha, as part of the significant spiritual journey undertaken by the devotees every year to the holy Amarnath cave.

Deputy Commissioner & SSP

“Amarnath Yatra is a significant spiritual journey and we are committed to ensure smooth conduct of the pilgrimage with safety and comfort of all pilgrims.”

personally received the pilgrims and extended greetings besides ensuring all arrangements are in place for their comfort and safety.

DDC Chairperson, DC, SSP & Officials from the District Administration Srinagar, along with senior Officers from SMC and Police Department were present at the reception site to assist and guide the

pilgrims. The administration has reiterated its commitment to ensuring a smooth and secure yatra experience for all devotees.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC stated that the Amarnath Yatra is a significant spiritual journey and we are committed to ensure smooth conduct of the pilgrimage with safety and comfort of all pilgrims. He added that the District Administration Srinagar along with Srinagar Police has put in place comprehensive arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the annual Yatra and cater to the needs of the pilgrims.

Officials along with locals welcomed the Pilgrims and prayed for smooth, safe and peaceful conduct of Amarnath Yatra.

Committee On Estimates Convenes Meeting In City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The House Committee on Estimates convened a meeting at the Assembly Complex in Srinagar to review the functioning and fund utilization of the Public Works Department (PWD).

The meeting was chaired by the Committee Chairperson, Shamim Firdous and attended by members Abdul Majid Bhat (Larmi), Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din

Mir, Pawan Kumar Gupta, Professor Gharu Ram Bhagat, Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani, Chander Prakash Ganga and Pyare Lal Sharma.

Senior officers including Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Santosh D Vaidya; Secretary PWD, Bhupinder Kumar; Director General, Accounts and Treasuries, Fayaz A Lone; Director Finance; Director Planning; Chief Engineer, PWD; Financial Commissioner, JKPC and other

officials from the concerned departments also participated in the meeting.

The Chairperson emphasized the need for strict monitoring, efficient fund allocation and effective utilization to accelerate developmental projects and works under PWD across Jammu and Kashmir. She called for timely completion of all the ongoing and languishing projects for public convenience at the earliest.

*Aye The Hum Misr-e-Bulbul Sair-e-Gulshan Kar Chale,
Ley Loo Maali Baagh Apna Hum To Apne Ghar Chale....*

SAD DEMISE

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Mrs Mehbooba W/o Late Ghulam Nabi Wani** R/o Shah Mohalla, Nawa Bazar, Srinagar who left for heavenly abode on July 02, 2025 after a prolonged illness.

May Almighty Allah grant highest Place in Jannatul Firdous to the departed soul. Ameen

The taziyat will be only for three days and **Fateha Khawani** will be held on Friday, July 04, 2025 at the ancestral graveyard at Qalandar Sahib, Zampa Kadal, Srinagar, Kashmir.

Breaved Family
Ladies are requested not to bring any kind of fruits, etc

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311




RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

 HIJRI CALENDAR 07 Muharram 1447	PRAYERS	
	FAJR	3: 39
	ZUHR	12:34
	ASR	5: 35
	Magrib	7:50
	ISHA	9: 30

This Day In History

- 324- Battle of Adrianople: Roman Emperor Constantine I defeats his co-emperor Licinius, who flees to Byzantium
- 1187- Battle of Horns of Hattin: Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, destroys Jerusalem's crusader army.
- 1250- Louis IX of France is captured by Baibars' Mamluk army at the Battle of Fariskur while he is in Egypt conducting the Seventh Crusade; he later has to ransom himself.
- 1428 -Treaty of Delft between Jacoba of Bavaria & Philip the Good of Burgundy
- 1608 - Samuel de Champlain founds city of Quebec
- 1630 - Emperor Ferdinand II opens German Parliament
- 1661- Portugal gives Tangier & Bombay to English King Charles II
- 1720 - Sweden and Denmark sign peace treaty
- 1754- George Washington surrenders to French, Fort Necessity (7 Years' War)
- 1767 - Pitcairn Island is discovered by Midshipman Robert Pitcairn on an expeditionary voyage commanded by Philip Carteret
- 1767 - Norway's oldest newspaper still in print, Adresseavisen, is founded (first edition published this date)
- 1775 George Washington takes command of Continental Army at Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 1778- Prussia declares war on Austria
- 1876- Montenegro declares war on Turkey
- 1900- The British evacuate Rustenburg and occupy Commando Nek and Silkaatsnek in the Anglo-Boer war
- 1942- German troops march into Sebastopol, Crimea
- 1947- Soviet Union doesn't participate in Marshall Plan
- 1950- 1st time US & North Korean forces clash in Korean War
- 1962- Algerian Revolution against French rule ends (Algeria gains independence on 5th July)
- 1965- USSR & Persia sign dam building & economic aid pact

From KO Archives

Cabinet Okays Shahtoosh Trade Ban

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The cabinet today approved in principle the proposal to ban Shahtoosh trade in view of the ban on it at national and international level and in pursuance of government policy on wildlife protection .

However, it was decided, be-fore the ban comes into force, the state /government would re-quest the Centre to provide one-time exception for sale of Shahtoosh stocks available with the traders in the state.

Announcing the decisions, the chief secretary said the trad-ers would be asked to declare their stocks and handover these to a nominated authority for all India auction to get competitive rates. The traders would indi-cate the reserve price for their produce and any return over and above that would go to a fund to be created for wildlife protection. The traders will get reserve price.

Jaitly said that at the same time private owners of Shahtoosh shawls in the state may also be permitted on the basis of one-time exception to declare their stocks as there has been no ban in Jammu and Kashmir. This they will have to do before the ban comes into force.

The cabinet asked the indus-try minister to invite Shahtoosh traders for discussion regarding modalities on implementing this policy.

(Kashmir Observer, July 3, 2000)

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KO VIEW

Thank you
Spaaanderman

For the past five years, a 69-year-old woman from the Netherlands has quietly done what thousands of us have failed to: care for Dal Lake, not just as a scenic postcard, but as a living, breathing part of Kashmir's ecosystem. Ellis Hubertina Spaaanderman, who first visited the Valley 25 years ago, has returned not to relax but to clean. Day after day, she rows her modest boat across the Dal, collecting floating plastic bottles, wrappers, and other trash. She does this alone, without fanfare, and without expecting anything in return.

There's something deeply humbling, even uncomfortable, about her solitary mission. Here is a foreigner, older in age, with no local ties, yet doing the hard, thankless work that we, as residents, ignore or shrug off as someone else's job. She isn't cleaning Dal Lake for selfies or social media likes. She does it because she believes that nature deserves care, and that action—no matter how small—is better than complaint.

It's not that Kashmiris don't love their lake. Dal is part of our collective identity—etched into our culture, our art, our economy. But somewhere along the way, we've grown indifferent. We enjoy its beauty, but we overlook the filth. We take boat rides and click photos, but seldom ask where our plastic bottles or food wrappers end up. Spaaanderman's quiet labour should serve as a mirror—and a call to action.

Her effort teaches us a simple but powerful lesson: change begins with one person, and that example can ripple outward. As she rightly said, people have started helping her, joining in during their walks, or simply stopping to thank her. A few local officials are even seeking her guidance on how to involve schools and children. That's how movements begin, not through grand announcements, but through small, sustained gestures.

It is time for Kashmiris, especially the youth, to take inspiration from her and reclaim ownership of our water bodies. The government's de-weeding drives and anti-encroachment efforts are necessary, but they can't succeed unless backed by everyday public participation. We need citizen volunteers, school awareness campaigns, lakeside dustbins, and a cultural shift that sees littering not as an act of convenience but one of dishonour.

Dal Lake is more than a tourist spot. It is a livelihood for boatmen, a heritage for Kashmiris, and a symbol of natural grace. If a visitor from Holland can spend her golden years cleaning it, surely those of us who call this place home can do more than just watch. Let this Dutch woman's mission be our wake-up call

Financial Fix

The Timeless
Game of Investing

Gold, stocks, and real estate in Kashmir
show why time is the real investment hero.

Irshad Mushtaq

In the buzzing conversations about money in Kashmir's tea shops, one question often comes up: where should I put my savings?

The answers are rarely simple. The story of investments, whether in gold, stocks, or the real estate markets of Srinagar, is a story of time, patience, and knowing that no single asset is a permanent winner.

Take gold. For years, people in Kashmir have trusted it. Not just as jewellery for weddings, but as a safety net. Yet, the last decade shows that gold does not always shine. There were long stretches when its value barely moved. And then, almost suddenly in the past two years, gold surged, rewarding those who waited.

Stocks tell a similar story. Markets go through tough seasons, sometimes offering little or nothing in return. Crashes can shake investors as shares lose years of gains in days. But when the recovery comes, those who stay invested often see life-changing returns. It's a reminder that markets have their own pace, and timing them perfectly is nearly impossible.

Closer to home, real estate in places like Srinagar has seen ups and downs too. Growth has often followed local factors, like tourism, new infrastructure, and changing demand. In recent years, selective pockets have gained value, but not all areas have performed the same.

Hence, spreading your investments across gold, property, stocks, and even international funds is the safer path. Chasing quick profits rarely works. It's the patient, steady investors, the ones who think in decades, not days, who tend to succeed. In Kashmir, as everywhere else, good things in finance take time.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Iran is Not Syria

Unlike Syria or Libya, Iran's power structure is deeply entrenched, resilient, and resistant to collapse from external pressure or internal unrest.

Manish Rai

The question of regime change in Iran has recently resurfaced after the killing of Iran's top military commanders following the Israeli airstrikes. However, Israel's short-term goal was to damage Iran's nuclear facilities to severely diminish its weapons program. But the Israeli Prime Minister mentioned during his speeches that the war with Iran "could certainly" lead to regime change in the Islamic Republic.

It is not the first time that foreign (Western) powers have imagined Iran as a crumbling house, one that only needs a gentle push, or a series of airstrikes, before it falls into new hands. This was the fantasy in 1953, when the CIA and the British intelligence overthrew Mohammad Mossadegh, Iran's democratically elected prime minister and pushed Iran into Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's autocratic rule. And this was also the dream in the 1980s, when Saddam Hussein invaded Iran with military and economic support from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Israel, who believed the newly established Islamic Republic would collapse in months.

Founded in 1979 after the Iranian Revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran has democratic, theocratic, and authoritarian elements in its governance system, which makes it a hybrid. The founding figure of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, envisioned a democratic state with an oversight of a Supreme Islamic Jurist to ensure all policies adhered to Islamic law.

Before the revolution, Iran was a constitutional monarchy. Afterward, theocratic elements were effectively grafted onto the existing republican structures, such as the parliament, executive, and judiciary. Iran has a unicameral legislature (a single-house parliament) called the Majles, as well as a president. Regular elections are held for both. However, while democratic elements exist within the system, in practice it operates as a "closed loop" that preserves the power of the ruling elite and prevents any serious challenge to the Supreme Leader. A clear hierarchy exists, with the Supreme Leader at the top. This complex system of governance makes the Islamic Republic unique in the Middle East.

Iran is not Syria, Libya, or Iraq—countries where regime change has occurred in the recent past. U.S. policymakers often underestimate the strength of the Iranian state, which is deliberately structured for survival. The following features and dynamics contribute to the regime's resilience and make it difficult to replace.

Multi-Dimensional Military Forces
The Iranian military has a dual architecture designed to resist coups and invasions: Artesh, the regular armed forces of around 420,000 men across ground, naval, air, and air-defense troops, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), an elite, ideologically driven military with roughly 190,000 personnel across ground, naval, and air branches. Beyond them is the Basij, a vast paramilitary network with hundreds of thousands of members embedded in every corner of Iranian society—in the streets, in neighbourhoods, in schools, and mosques. They aren't just loyalists of the Ayatollah but woven into a deeper idea of the state and committed to the core ideology of the Islamic Republic.

Despite Israel's extensive and largely successful campaign of assassinations targeting senior IRGC commanders, the core of the group has not been hollowed out but rather hardened. A younger generation of more ideologically rigid commanders has emerged—battle-hardened through close-quarters combat in Syria and well-versed in how wars of state collapse unfold. While bombing and air campaigns could significantly damage Iran's military and civilian infrastructure, replacing the Islamic Republic would require President Trump to confront not just a standing army, but a deeply entrenched system with decades of experience in asymmetric warfare.

Not Dependent on Individual Leader
Iran is not governed by a single man or clique that can simply be removed. It is a competitive authoritarian system with institutions that have evolved over the course of a century. Even in times of crisis, the system is capable of



Flag-draped coffins of military personnel and some other people who were killed in Israeli strikes are carried on a truck during their funeral ceremony in the northeastern city of Mashhad, Iran. (AP)

generating new leaders, factions, and centers of power. The deaths of influential figures would not collapse the system; rather, it would adapt and renew itself.

Iran is not merely a conventional state—it is founded on a revolutionary, theocratic ideology. Its current structure is more than just a government; it is part of an ideological movement rooted in the principles of revolution and resistance. To believe that an external military attack or intervention could dismantle this structure is naive. Historically, when faced with external threats, Iranian citizens have often rallied under nationalist sentiment, which in turn strengthens the system.

Fragmented Opposition
More than 46 years after the Iranian Revolution, there is still talk—both inside the country and among the diaspora—that the regime's end is near. However this prospect will remain extremely difficult unless and until large segments of the military, police, and intelligence forces begin to defect. Interestingly in every protest movement since the 1979 revolution, such defections have not occurred.



Iranian opposition groups may receive attention in Western media, but the hard reality is that they have no meaningful presence on the ground inside Iran. Monarchists and the former Mojahedin (now the NCRI) are widely disliked by much of the Iranian diaspora and lack grassroots support. Moreover, there is no unity among opposition groups—nor is there consensus on even the basic principles of democratic governance. The opposition remains fragmented, paralyzed, and ill-prepared to assume power if the regime were to collapse, posing no significant threat to the current system.

Iranians have shown extraordinary courage in a series of uprisings ranging from the 2009 Green Movement, to the 2017–2019 economic protests, to the 2022 "Women, Life, Freedom" movement. But none shook the foundations of the Islamic republic.

Iranian opposition groups may receive attention in Western media, but the hard reality is that they have no meaningful presence on the ground inside Iran. Monarchists and the former Mojahedin (now the NCRI) are widely disliked by much of the Iranian diaspora and lack grassroots support. Moreover, there is no unity among opposition groups—nor is there consensus on even the basic principles of democratic governance. The opposition remains fragmented, paralyzed, and ill-prepared to assume power if the regime were to collapse, posing no significant threat to the current system.

Relative Ethnic Harmony
Iran is a multi-ethnic society apart from Persian, other ethnic groups like Kurds, Balochis, and Azeris also exist in significant numbers. But contrary to its neighbours like Iraq or Afghanistan, Iran enjoys relative ethnic harmony. It is worth noting that Iran's current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is of Azerbaijani descent. Azerbaijanis, the largest ethnic group in Iran after Persians, are a Turkic-speaking people. Khamenei's Azerbaijani heritage has never been a source of controversy, highlighting the relative harmony between Iran's Persian majority and its Azerbaijani population. This illustrates that there are no major ethnic fault lines that can be used to bring down the regime.

Iran is the Middle East's second-largest country by population and a major influence on the Muslim world. Iranian domestic political equations also must be considered before reaching any conclusion about the Iranian threat. In the current political dynamics of Iran still the liberal and moderate elements exist, which want engagement with the rest of the world. If we want a moderate and responsible Iran, we must strengthen and empower these moderate elements in Iran. Any isolation and military action on Iran will only strengthen the hardliners in Tehran. It's a hard reality that Iran—freed of an international coalition arrayed against it and led by Tehran hard-liners empowered by the American sanctions would have no reason not to race to a nuclear bomb and subsequently become a rogue country like North Korea and then it will be hard for international community to deal with them. The only way to make Iran a responsible state actor is by getting it integrated into the world order and its economy open for everyone so that Iranians always know the cost of their misadventures.

The author is a columnist and geopolitical analyst for Middle-East and can be reached at manishraiva@gmail.com. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Letter to Editor

Warwan Valley Deserves Better Than Our Trash

I come from Dasbal, a small village in Warwan Valley, Kishtwar. In recent years, this remote corner of Jammu and Kashmir has started drawing more tourists. They come for the meadows, the rivers, the fresh air. They come to walk the trails we've known since childhood. But many of them leave behind something else: trash.

Plastic bottles, snack wrappers, tin cans scatter along the same paths they come to admire. The beauty that brings them here is slowly being buried under waste.

This is not just about a few careless visitors. It is about what happens when tourism grows faster than our ability to manage it. Warwan does not have proper dustbins. There are

no waste collection points. Camps spring up in the meadows without regulation, and when the tents come down, the garbage stays behind. Over time, it seeps into our rivers and soils.

The damage isn't always easy to see, but it's happening. The animals that live in our forests are at risk. The streams we drink from are becoming unsafe. And the worst part is that many people, including some in our own community, don't realize how serious this is.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can protect Warwan if we all do our part.

Tourists must stop thinking of this valley as a picnic ground. If you bring something here, take it back with you. If you can carry a plastic

bottle full, you can carry it out empty. Use fewer disposable items. Follow marked trails. Respect the land you are walking on.

The local administration also has a responsibility. We need basic infrastructure. Dustbins, regular waste collection, and strong rules against single-use plastics would make a big difference. Camping needs to be monitored and allowed only in places that can handle it. Schools and village meetings should talk about this issue, not just during tourist season but all year round.

And we, the people of Warwan, must become guardians of our own valley. We can form small village groups to keep our homes and trails clean. We can train homestay own-

ers and local guides to promote eco-friendly tourism. We have lived close to nature for generations, let's use both our traditions and modern solutions to protect what we have.

It is not a far-fetched dream. Warwan can become a place where visitors come and leave no harm behind. A place where rivers stay clean, mountains stay green, and people, locals and tourists, work together to protect it.

This is our valley. This is our home. It is worth keeping clean.

Sincerely,
Ishfaq Hussain Wani
Dasbal, Warwan Kishtwar.

The Echo That Crossed the Mountains

Kashmir carries the dust of Karbala in its stories, its silences, its small daily acts of living.

Tabish Hassan

Some stories do not stay where they happened. They slip beneath doorways, settle in the folds of shawls, ride the wind like stray embers. Karbala is one of those stories. It did not end when the swords were lowered. It did not rest beneath the sand. It crossed mountains and rivers and arrived in places like Kashmir, where people know what it means to wait, to carry sorrow silently, to stand without a crowd behind them.

Here, Karbala is not a date on the calendar. It is a feeling stitched into life, like the faint scent of smoke that never leaves the walls of an old house.

Imam Hussain (A.S.) did not set out to win. He set out to not surrender. There is a difference.

In Madina, he could have stayed, wrapped in comfort, cradled by gardens. But some comforts are too heavy to carry.

When the crown passed like a family heirloom, when the seat of justice cracked beneath the weight of greed, he stepped away from the soft ground and walked towards the storm.

He left the safety of home for a plain of dust, where thirst hung in the air like a shadow. And yet, even in that place where the sky refused mercy, he did not bend.

It was not an ordinary refusal. It was the kind that cuts softly, like a stream shaping stone. Hussain's stand did not need to roar. It held its weight in the silence that came after.

In Kashmir, where winters

leave cuts and summers barely cover them, Karbala is not far. It moves like breath, slipping through streets, resting with those



THE DUST OF KARBALA DOES NOT RISE in storms anymore. It walks. It gathers in placid places. It slips into the call to prayer, the turn of the rosary beads, the steady hands of those who will not cheat the weighing scale.

who carry unseen weights. It follows the milkman, trails the poet chasing lost lines, stays with the mother counting nameless days. It walks with the child learning how to stand in rooms that ask him to mold.

We see it in small things: a shopkeeper giving back the extra rupee, a teacher daring to speak what must not be said, a neighbour who chooses the harder kindness. These are not grand rebellions. But neither was Karbala, if one counts only in numbers.

The prophet's grandson did not bring armies. He brought a simple truth: that power without justice is no crown at all. That the right to choose your own path, your own leader, your own voice, is not a gift from rulers. It is the air we all deserve to breathe.

Some thrones are made of wood. Others are built from silence.

Hussain's stand cracked the wooden thrones, and his silence burned through the other kind. He lost the battle, yes. But he unsettled something that has never quite settled since.

The dust of Karbala does not rise in storms anymore. It walks. It gathers in placid places. It slips into the call to prayer, the turn of the rosary beads, the steady hands of those who will not cheat the weighing scale.

Kashmiris have learned to listen for that dust. It moves softly, but it never stops moving.

Karbala was not a call to rage. It was a call to remember. To remember that there is something more valuable than winning: standing.

Hussain stood, not because he could win, but because some stands are too sacred to leave behind.

Here, under the tall chinars and the low skies, that dust still walks with us. It lingers in the stories we whisper to our children. It hangs in the spaces where truth still dares to stand, even when the world tells it to kneel.

The story did not end.

It simply changed its footsteps. And they still walk beside us.

The author is a Srinagar-based scholar.

The Seventh Day of Muharram in Kashmir

Across towns and villages, Kashmir marks the seventh of Muharram with processions and remembrance that reach beyond time.

Basit Hussain

When the seventh day of Muharram arrives, Kashmir begins to carry itself differently.

The streets soften. The voices lower. Even the rivers seem to move a little slower, as if listening.

This is not a day of public spectacle. It is a day that sinks deep into the bones of the valley.

For the people of Kashmir, the story of Karbala is not a distant tale. It does not sit locked in history books. It lives in their breath, their prayers, their everyday silences.

On the seventh day, the memory sharpens. It is the day when the army of Yazid blocked access to the Euphrates river, cutting off water to Imam Hussain (A.S.) and his small camp.

The day when thirst became more than a physical need. It became a weight, a boundary, a final cruelty.

Kashmir carries that thirst carefully. It is not just about the absence of water. It is about the presence of choice. The choice to stand, even in deprivation, even in sorrow. That is the lesson that the valley holds close.

In Zadibal, in Budgam, in the far villages of Kargil, the mourners walk. They walk not because it is required, but because something in them moves toward the story, year after year.

The processions are not loud. They do not need to be. The rhythm of the chests striking in unison speaks loudly enough. The mourners' palms fall against their hearts, steady and deliberate. They do not rush. They carry each step with

care, as if the ground itself is part of the remembrance.

The young ones walk beside their elders, watching, learning, falling into the rhythm. Sometimes they



IN ZADIBAL, IN BUDGAM, IN THE FAR VILLAGES OF KARGIL, THE MOURNERS WALK. They walk not because it is required, but because something in them moves toward the story, year after year.

ask questions that do not need answers: Why was the water denied? Why did they not surrender?

The elders answer with small words: Because Hussain chose to remain Hussain.

On this day, it is not just about grief. It is about holding the shape of dignity. About standing with those who stood for something greater than life.

In Kashmir, this has meaning that cuts deeper. It touches the parts of the valley that have lived with loss, with waiting, with stories that are always unfinished.

The poets rise along the proces-

sion routes. Their voices are steady, their words carefully carried through the crowd. They recite the story of Hussain, but their verses do not stay in the sands of Karbala. They float across the valley, linking the thirst of Hussain's camp to Kashmir's own search for a fair life. The connection is never forced. It is natural. The people listening already feel it.

In valley villages, the day pulls people together. Sunni and Shia, neighbour and friend. The story does not belong to one sect here. It belongs to those who have carried it in their hearts, through winters, through silence, through years where walking itself became a question.

On this day, the boundaries soften.

Even when processions have been halted by restrictions, the people have found their way to the story. In smaller circles, in home gatherings, in whispered elegies that pass from room to room.

The day does not depend on size. It holds its power in presence.

The seventh of Muharram teaches the valley, year after year, that standing with the thirsty, standing with those who were denied, is not simply a ritual. It is a way to carry memory. A way to live gently but firmly in the world.

For the people of Kashmir, the seventh muharram is not about the past. It is about what remains. It is about the thirst that still speaks. The dignity that does not bend. The steps that continue, even when no one is watching.

The author is a Pulwama-based teacher.

On the Margins: J&K's Tribals Still Fighting for Space

Big budgets and powerful schemes can't help Jammu and Kashmir's tribals if there's no one to defend their rights on the ground.

Dr. Raja Muzaffar Bhat

I've seen tribal welfare grow into one of the Modi government's biggest national stories.

Over the last ten years, the numbers have spoken loudly. In 2014, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs was working with a budget of ₹4,295 crore. By 2024, that figure had more than doubled.

This year, the budget stands at nearly ₹15,000 crore. The investments are growing faster than in most other sectors.

New schemes now carry enormous weight. The Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan was launched with an ₹80,000 crore outlay across five years. Across India, the government is talking about tribal welfare not as a side plan but as a centrepiece of development.

In Jammu and Kashmir, I've seen the campaigns reach remote areas. I visited community drives in Anantnag, where Gujjar, Bakerwal, and Pahadi families came together in villages like Hiller Shahbad, Dachnipora, Larnoo, Chittergul, and Bijbehara. I saw similar gatherings in Budgam, Baramulla, Bandipora, and Kupwara.

There were queues for Aadhaar cards, PMJAY health cards, domicile papers, and caste certificates. Officials had set up service points in open spaces. Tribals were coming forward in large numbers. They wanted their documents. They wanted their rights. They wanted a way in.

The interest was genuine. The people were ready. But the system they are being pulled into is not built for them.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the structure to protect tribal communities does not exist. The Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006, which was extended to J&K after the region's special status was revoked in 2019, is not being implemented the way it should be.

Across the rest of India, the Tribal Affairs Ministry handles this law. But in J&K, it has been left with the Forest Department, the very department that is often the opponent in these disputes.

The Forest Department is re-



sponsible for evictions. It is frequently in conflict with those seeking land and grazing rights. They cannot be expected to judge fairly when they are part of the problem.

What troubles me is not just this misplacement. It is the absence of a working Tribal Affairs Department on the ground.

In other parts of the country, there are officers at district, subdivision, and tehsil levels dedicated to tribal issues. In J&K, those posts don't exist.

The social welfare department is left to handle tribal schemes, but they have neither the staff nor the mandate to defend tribal rights. Without district-level officers, without sub-divisional presence, there is no door for tribals to knock on.

This is not an abstract gap. It has cost people their land, their freedom, and their dignity.

I saw this up close in Budgam. Last year, the Chadoora court ordered the authorities to



Local residents told me that a powerful family had leased out 7,000 to 8,000 kanals of pastureland to outsiders. Branwar, Neegu, and Jabbad villagers said that this was their grazing ground, yet they were now locked out of it.

hold a Gram Sabha, a village assembly, to decide whether local Gujjars and forest grazers could retain access to their traditional pastures.

This should have been settled quickly. But the meeting was never held. For an entire year, nothing moved.

Meanwhile, the Gujjars were forced to leave the upper meadows of Budgam where their sheep had grazed for generations. When they tried to move to other meadows, other communities blocked them.

I met the displaced families near the Doodh Ganga for-

est range. They were stranded, caught between the forests and the villages, with nowhere to graze their sheep.

Local residents told me that a powerful family had leased out 7,000 to 8,000 kanals of pastureland to outsiders. Branwar, Neegu, and Jabbad villagers said that this was their grazing ground, yet they were now locked out of it.

The Gujjars asked for a village vote, as the law allows, but the Block Development Officer kept the file untouched.

What should have taken weeks stretched into a year of

silence.

These tribals were not just ignored. They were detained by police and pushed off the meadows when they pleaded for their rights.

They approached the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, the Chief Conservator of Forests, the Deputy Commissioner of Budgam, and several political leaders, including Waheed ur Rehman Parra of PDP and MP Aga Ruhullah.

After all these efforts, the Gram Sabha has finally been scheduled for July 9. It took relentless struggle just to get the

meeting on the calendar.

If a district-level Tribal Affairs Officer had been in place, this could have been resolved without police detentions or year-long delays.

But these communities have no such official to protect them. They are left to fight alone.

Some of the affected families told me they now want to approach the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry. They want to file complaints under the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989.

But even this path is blocked. The law was extended to J&K in 2020, but the special courts required to hear these cases have not yet been set up. The safety nets that exist elsewhere in India are still missing here.

What I see is not a lack of schemes or resources. The government has doubled the budget for Eklavya Model Residential Schools this year, reaching ₹7,088 crore.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Jati-

ya Vikas Mission's budget has grown significantly to support skill-building, forest produce marketing, and tribal livelihoods. The funding for Multi-Purpose Centers in tribal regions has also doubled.

Across India, tribal communities are getting access to markets, education, and legal protections. They are gaining seats at the decision-making tables.

But in Jammu and Kashmir, these protections collapse on arrival.

Without the presence of a functional Tribal Affairs Department on the ground, laws and schemes cannot reach the people they are built for. I have seen this in Budgam, and I know the same pattern plays out in other parts of the region.

The harassment of Gujjar grazers is not an isolated event. It is a symptom of a much deeper failure.

Large budgets and national attention mean little when the people at the heart of these policies are forced to fight the system alone. They are being promised a place in India's growth story but are still struggling to secure the right to live on their own land.

When I met the displaced tribal families, they told me they do not want special treatment. They want the laws to work as they should.

They want the meetings to happen when they are supposed to. They want the officials to act without delay. They want the protections that exist elsewhere to apply to them as well.

In the rest of India, tribal welfare has moved from the sidelines to the centre. The government's focus has changed lives in many states.

But in J&K, that change is incomplete.

Until the Tribal Affairs Department here is reorganised, strengthened, and given a real presence on the ground, these communities will continue to stand alone, asking to be seen.

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Adopt Zero Tolerance Approach Towards Illegal Mining In J&K: Dy CM To Officers

Advocates stringent action against violators, safeguarding critical care infrastructure

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Wednesday reiterated the Government's firm commitment to completely ban illegal mining activities across Jammu and Kashmir.

He made these remarks while chairing a high-level review meeting of the Geology and Mining Department at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar.

The Dy CM emphasized the importance of taking stringent action against the violators to safeguard the region's natural mineral resources. He directed the officials to adopt a zero tolerance approach towards illegal mining, ensuring a complete ban on such activities.

The Dy CM instructed the District Mineral Officers to take full control of all mining resources while keeping strict monitoring and vigilance on the ground. He warned that any laxity or negligence, in this regard, would invite disciplinary action as per the law.

Underscoring the significance of protecting the public infrastructure, the Deputy CM directed the officers to closely monitor all functional mining blocks to ensure that critical infrastructure such as bridges, roads and water supply schemes remain unaffected.

"Immediately cancel the licenses of functional blocks if any damage to infrastructure is reported and impose penalties on the responsible firms," he instructed the officials.

He also directed the depart-

ment to expedite the auctioning process of mineral resources strictly as per the existing rules and regulations, while ensuring robust enforcement and strict compliance with both the Central and UT mining Acts and Rules.

The meeting featured a detailed presentation on the status of exploration and extraction of key minerals including limestone, granite, blue sapphire, gypsum, lithium and coal. The officials informed that 36 major mining leases for limestone and 233 minor mineral leases have been issued, so far.

To further strengthen enforcement, the Dy CM called for establishment of a robust monitoring mechanism involving multi-departmental district-level task forces, flying squads, informant networks, checkpoints and e-challan systems to curb the illegal mining effectively.

Highlighting the potential of the mining sector, the Deputy CM stressed on promotion of mineral-based industries to enhance employment opportunities and revenue generation.

He was informed that the department has generated Rs. 16.79 crore revenue through the compounding of vehicles and machinery involved in illegal mining and transportation, with a total of 6,219 seizures recorded during the financial year 2024-25. Besides, the department has recorded a revenue generation of Rs. 150.49 crore during the same period. Additionally, gypsum mining has earned a revenue of Rs. 438 lakh in 2025-26.

Union Minister, CM Review Animal Husbandry & Fisheries Sector In J&K



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Rajiv Ranjan Singh and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Wednesday jointly chaired a high-level review meeting of the Animal Husbandry and Fisheries sectors of Jammu & Kashmir here at Srinagar, Civil Secretariat.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Agriculture

Production & Panchayati Raj Javid Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Secretary Gol Alka Upadhyay, Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Secretary (CDD/IT) and other senior officers from the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying. Principal Secretary Agriculture Production Department J&K Shailendra Kumar, Vice Chancellors of SKUAST-K and SKUAST-J, and heads of allied departments were also present.

Addressing the meeting, the Union Minister underlined the immense untapped potential in J&K's livestock and fisheries sectors and assured full support from the Centre.

"We are here today to listen, understand your challenges, and work together. Where there is scope, there must be action," he stated.

He called for joint efforts

between the Centre and J&K Government to convert potential into outcomes, adding that rural prosperity can only be achieved when economic development reaches the grassroots through sustainable livelihoods.

Union Minister said that encouraging youth to enter micro and small-scale livestock and fishery enterprises can generate employment and inclusive growth.

He informed that a detailed plan is being drawn up involving key national institutions like the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) to build strong infrastructure and link farmers to markets.

He also announced the government's intention to hold an Exporters' Conference and a Private Sector Investment Conference in J&K to boost entrepreneurship.

Emphasizing the need to shift dairy operations from the unorganized to the organized sector, the Minister stressed the importance of cooperatives and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

He cited the example of dairy cooperatives in Varanasi where milk production increased manifold, and additional income was being earned even from cattle

waste. He urged J&K's officials to study and replicate such successful models.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah thanked the Union Minister for his visit and reiterated the significance of such joint reviews in identifying local priorities and learning from national best practices.

He observed that in J&K, large industries and factories have not always yielded sustainable results, and the real opportunity lies in strengthening traditional sectors like agriculture, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, and tourism. "Our strength lies in these sectors—not in chasing elusive factories. We must build on what is rooted in J&K," he said.

The Chief Minister highlighted that while J&K contributes 90% of India's trout production, the sector lacks organized processing and value addition. Similarly, despite high per capita meat consumption, much of the mutton is sourced from outside. He emphasized that self-sufficiency in meeting domestic demand can significantly improve incomes and reduce imports.

He also spoke about the gradual decline of cooperatives in the dairy sector and assured that his government is committed to reviving cooperative culture and linking milk producers to formal processing networks.



WE ARE HERE TODAY TO LISTEN, understand your challenges, and work together. Where there is scope, there must be action,"

Ranjan Promises Optimal Support For J&K's Dairy, Fisheries Development

Visits SKUAST-K, interacts with farmers

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, who is on a two day visit to Kashmir, Wednesday said the central government will extend all possible support to J&K for developing dairy and fisheries sectors.

The Union Minister was speaking at a function, 'Reimagining Livestock & Fisheries with Future Ready Farmers: Vision 2030', at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K).

The Union Minister reaffirmed the Central Government's commitment towards agricultural advancement and farming community in J&K. He said that these sectors need to be organised by strengthening and bringing them under Cooperatives at district, block and panchayat level to benefit



the dairy farmers, who are mostly small and marginal. He added that there is tremendous potential for exports for Kashmir trout and niche dairy products, however, that requires processing and value addition. He said his Ministry will provide full support to the UT government for establishing retail dairy outlets in each district.

J&K Agriculture Minister, Javid Ahmad Dar; Union Secretary Department of Animal

Husbandry and Dairy, Alka Upadhyaya; Principal Secretary APD (J&K), Shalendra Kumar; Vice Chancellor SKUAST-K, Professor Nazir Ahmad Gani; Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-J, Professor BN Tripathi; Additional Secretary, Union Ministry for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Varsha Joshi; Animal Husbandry Commissioner, DAHD, Abhijit Mitra and Joint Secretary Ministry of Fisheries, Sagar Mehra were present at the function.



State Tax Deptt Launches Operation Against Fake ITC Evasion In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- In a resolute effort to safeguard the public revenue and ensure compliance with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, the State Taxes Department Kashmir Wednesday conducted massive raids against the business entities involved in fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC) practices across Kashmir.

These meticulously executed raids, planned over the past month, unearthed significant instances of tax fraud, reinforcing the department's commitment towards curbing the fraudulent tax practices.

The raids were initiated based on credible intelligence inputs regarding widespread misuse of ITC provisions, particularly in Kashmir, where certain commodities such as iron, cement and steel have been identified as highly susceptible to tax evasion. The investigation cell of the State Taxes Department conducted thorough research over the past 30 days to identify the entities involved in generating fake invoices and passing ineligible ITC.

The department's proactive approach was driven by a "reason to believe" that fraudulent practices were causing substantial revenue losses to the exchequer. The investigation zeroed in on sectors such

as iron, cement and steel and other high-value commodities known for their vulnerability to tax evasion. These sectors have been exploited through fake billing and shell companies to fraudulently claim ITC without actual supply of goods or services in violation of the Act and rules.

The State Taxes Department's enforcement team, under the guidance of Additional Commissioner State Taxes Department Kashmir, Parveez Ahmad Raina, worked tirelessly to map out the complex web of transactions and pinpoint the perpetrators. The crackdown was proposed and executed under the leadership of Commissioner State Taxes J&K, P.K. Bhat.

The operation comprised seven specialized teams, properly trained and adequately equipped, each led by a State Tax Officer (STO) and supported by a dedicated team of inspectors and Sub-Inspectors. These teams were tasked with conducting simultaneous raids in the early hours today across multiple locations across North Kashmir, targeting the businesses and individuals suspected of orchestrating fake ITC rackets.

Over the past month, the team cross-referenced GST returns and conducted physical verifications to identify discrepancies in ITC claims.

Gold Extends Gain For 2nd Straight Day, Climbs Rs 500 Per 10 G

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices jumped Rs 500 to Rs 99,170 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday, tracking heavy global buying amid renewed concerns over US tariffs.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended Rs 1,200 higher at Rs 98,670 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

The yellow metal has gained Rs 1,700 per 10 grams in the two consecutive sessions.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 450 to Rs 98,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,150 per 10 grams on the previous trade.

"Gold began the July-September quarter on a bullish footing, with the recent retreat from June highs driven solely by fading geopolitical risk premium following the Iran-Israel ceasefire.

"Central banks bought over 50 tonnes of gold in June, led by China and Turkey, while gold ETFs saw renewed inflows, especially in Europe amid trade tensions," Abhilash Koikara, Head FX & Commodity at Nuvama Professional Clients Group, said.

However, silver prices remained flat at Rs 1,04,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday.



Gold was "buoyed by safe haven demand amid concerns surrounding the fiscal implications of US President Donald Trump's sweeping tax and spending cut bill, which has further supported gold prices," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst - commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Spot gold in the global markets went up marginally to USD 3,342.44 per ounce.

"Gold is holding steady near the USD 3,350 level amid renewed trade tensions as President Trump said he is not considering an extension and will not delay the July 9 deadline for the reciprocal tariff rates on trading partners," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP -commodity research at Kotak Securities, said.

According to Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta, investors will be awaiting US labour data, with the ADP employment report due later in the day and the non-farm payrolls and unemployment rate on Thursday.

Stock Markets End Lower; HDFC Bank, Foreign Fund Outflows Drag

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 287 points on Wednesday due to profit selling in HDFC Bank, L&T and Reliance Industries shares and caution ahead of the impending US tariff deadline.

Paring its early gains, the BSE Sensex closed lower by 287.60 points or 0.34 per cent at 83,409.69. During the day, it dropped 546.52 points or 0.65 per cent to 83,150.77.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 88.40 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 25,453.40.

Flight of foreign capital from equities and a mixed trend in global equities impacted market sentiment, traders said.

Among Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Bharat Electronics and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major laggards.

However, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, and Trent were the biggest gainers.

"Mixed global cues, particularly ahead of the impending tariff deadline, are driving in-

vestor caution. Market attention is gradually shifting to crucial Q1 earnings, which have high expectations.

"Underlying trends such as robust macroeconomic fundamentals and increased government expenditure continue to support market resilience. However, being at the breach level of the recent rally, a cautiousness is expected to continue in the near term," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.20 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.18 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, realty dropped 1.36 per cent, financial services (0.92 per cent), industrials (0.84 per cent), power (0.77 per cent), bankex (0.69 per cent) and capital goods (0.69 per cent).

Metal (1.44 per cent), consumer durables (1.22 per cent), commodities (0.90 per cent), telecommunication (0.55 per cent) and auto (0.22 per cent).

As many as 2,205 stocks declined while 1,809 advanced and 157 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Microsoft Announces Another Mass Layoff, Thousands Of Workers Affected

Associated Press

Microsoft is firing thousands of workers, its second mass layoff in months.

The tech giant began sending out layoff notices Wednesday. The company declined to say how many people would be laid off but said that it will comprise less than 4% of the workforce it had a year ago.

Microsoft said the cuts will affect multiple teams around the world, including its sales division and its Xbox video game business.

"We continue to implement organizational changes necessary to best position the company and teams for success in a dynamic marketplace," it said in a statement.

Microsoft employed 228,000 full-time workers as of last June, the last time it reported its annual headcount. The company said Wednesday that its latest layoffs would cut close to 4% of that workforce, which would be about 9,000 people. But it has already had at least three layoffs this year. Until now, at least, the biggest was in May, when Microsoft began laying off about 6,000 workers, nearly 3% of its global workforce and its largest job cuts in more than two years as the company spent heavily on artificial intelligence.

Govt Allows Cab Aggregators To Charge Up To 2-Times Of Base Fare During Peak-Hours

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- The road transport ministry has allowed cab aggregators such as Uber, Ola and Rapido to charge up to two times the base fare during peak hours, as against 1.5 times earlier, while for non-peak hours the fare has to be a minimum of 50 per cent of the base fare.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in its 'Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2025' said "the aggregator shall be permitted to charge a minimum of 50 per cent lower than the base fare and a maximum dynamic pricing of two times the base fare specified under sub-clause (171)."

Moreover, the base fare

chargeable shall be for a minimum of three kilometers to compensate for "dead mileage" -- including the distance travelled without a passenger and the distance travelled and fuel utilized for picking up the passenger(s).

As per the guidelines, the fare notified by the state government for the respective category or class of motor vehicles, shall be the base fare chargeable to passengers availing services from the aggregator.

States have been advised to adopt the revised guidelines within three months.

In case of cancellations, a penalty of 10 per cent of the fare not exceeding Rs 100, shall be imposed on the driver, if the cancellation is made

without a reason identified as valid by the aggregator.

A similar penalty will be imposed on the passenger when such cancellation is made without a valid reason.

The guidelines said the Central government shall develop and designate a portal to enable for single-window clearance of application for licence as aggregator. "The licence fee payable by the aggregator shall be Rs 5 lakhs and the licence shall be valid for a period of five years from the date of its issue," it said.

Aggregators have been mandated to ensure that drivers have health and term insurance of at least Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh respectively.

The guidelines also speci-

fied that a Grievance Officer shall be appointed by the aggregator.

"An aggregator shall not onboard vehicles which have been registered for more than a period of eight years from the date of initial registration of the vehicle and shall ensure that all vehicles onboarded by it should not have exceeded eight years since the date of initial registration of the vehicle," as per the guidelines.

To ensure passengers safety, the aggregators have been directed to ensure installation of the Vehicle Location and Tracking Devices (VLTLD) in vehicles and to make sure that Vehicle Location and Tracking Devices are functional all the time.

India May Soon Have Social Security Agreement With UK Under Free Trade Pact

Press Trust Of India

India may soon have a social security pact with the UK as an in-built component of the free trade agreement (FTA) which has been finalised between the two countries, a source said on Wednesday.

The source said that from now onwards, the social security agreement (SSA) will be an in-built component of all free trade agreements to be negotiated in future.

"UK is believed to have agreed on the social security component under the FTA negotiations, which would be ratified in the near future," the source said.

The SSA, a reciprocal arrangement between two or more countries, ensures that an employee while on a foreign assignment does not have to contribute to the social security coverage fund in that country but get the full benefit of employment period for pension calculation, while the employers are saved from making double social security contributions on behalf of their workers.

The Indian employees posted abroad or on foreign assignment are required to obtain a certificate of coverage (CoC) from retirement fund body EPFO, which helps them avoid paying social security contribution in countries where they are posted.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh To Visit J&K On 3rd & 4th July

Shivraj Singh Chouhan To Chair High-Level Meetings In Srinagar



Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Agriculture, Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on 3rd and 4th July 2025. During his visit, he will chair high-level meetings and participate in key programmes related to agriculture, rural development, and academia.

On the morning of July 3, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan will hold a review meeting at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar with senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Department of Rural Development. In the afternoon, he will attend a meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare on Natural Farming and the National Oilseeds Mission. In the evening, he will attend a courtesy meeting hosted in his honour by the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha, at the Raj Bhavan.

On the second day of the visit, Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be the chief guest at the sixth convoca-

tion ceremony of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST-K), Srinagar, which will be held at the university's Shalimar Convention Centre. The event will also be attended by Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor and Chancellor of the University, Shri Manoj Sinha, and Chief Minister and Pro-Chancellor of SKUAST-K, Shri Omar Abdullah.

During the convocation, 5,250 students will be awarded undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD degrees. In addition, 150 gold medals and 445 merit certificates will be awarded to outstanding students in recognition of their academic excellence.

After the convocation ceremony, Shivraj Singh Chouhan will visit saffron and apple orchards at the SKUAST-K campus and interact with horticulture scientists and farmers. Following this, the Union Agriculture Minister will meet 'Lakhpati Didis' — women symbolising empowerment and rural prosperity — in Khonmoh village.

The visit by Shivraj Singh is considered a significant step toward promoting sustainable agriculture, natural farming, and rural development in Jammu and Kashmir. Earlier, as part of the 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan', he had visited Jammu and held direct interactions with farmers. In continuation to that engagement Chouhan has been regularly visiting various states and villages to directly connect with the farming community.

JKAEA Extends Gratitude To CM Omar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K Accounts Employees Association, extends its gratitude to the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, ACS to HCM, Pr. Secretary to Govt Finance & Director General Accounts & Treasuries, Finance Department J&K in connection with clearing the proposal of place-

ment cum adjustment of Accounts Officers in the Finance Department.

The newly promoted officers & those awaiting transfers among members of J&K Accounts Service shared their heartiest congratulations to the Govt for considering their proposal and making their adjustment in a balanced & equitable manner.

ADC Reviews Arrangements For Ensuing Muharram

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Mehraj-ud-Din Shah convened a meeting of officers to review the arrangements being put in place for the 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Muharram in the district.

The meeting had detailed deliberation on various issues and demands including scheduled power and water supply, repairing and surface leveling of roads, link roads and inner lanes in all areas, timely distribution of ration, LPG and firewood, sanitation, installation/restoration of street lights, daily garbage lifting, adequate healthcare facilities,

transport and other related facilities in all Shia dominated areas.

Stressing on prompt and elaborate arrangements, the ADC directed the officers to ensure full support and fulfil the genuine demands well in advance. He directed the officers to ensure adequate supply of essential commodities like Ration, water supply, power supply, firewood etc on Muharram.

The ADC asked the concerned authorities to ensure full security and free transport facilities during the period.

The meeting among others was attended by SDMs, CMO, Executive Engineers of R&B, PDD and PHE, EOs and others.

Amarnath Pilgrims Accorded Rousing Reception At Udhampur



Observer News Service

UDHAMPUR: The first batch of pilgrims of Amarnath Yatra 2025 was accorded a rousing reception by District Administration Udhampur on their arrival at Kali Mata Mandir Tikri.

On reaching at Kali Mata Temple, Pilgrims were warm welcomed by DDC Chairman, Lal Chand, Member Legislative Assembly Udhampur East, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Member Legislative Assembly Chenani, Balwant Singh Mankotia, DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range Sarah Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur Saloni Rai, SSP Amod Ashok Nagpure, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Prem Singh, DDC Member, Ashu Sharma, ACR Dr Umesh Shan and other officers besides prominent citizens of the District.

A large number of locals along with district officers

received the first batch of pilgrims at Kali Mata Mandir Tikri Udhampur.

Information Department Udhampur arranged a cultural programme in which students of Government Higher Secondary School and Sainik Cooperative Public High School Tikri presented themed based cultural items which was applauded by the pilgrims as well as locals.

The authorities urged upon the pilgrims to utilize and avail all the facilities being extended by the government during the yatra. The pilgrims were also informed about the arrangements made for them at the base camp, besides other facilities being extended to them. The pilgrims appreciated the goodwill gesture of Civil and Police Administration Udhampur for according them rousing reception and cooperation.

7th Muharram Procession To Be Taken Out From Botraj Mohalla Today



Observer News service

SRINAGAR: Preparations were underway in Srinagar's old city for the traditional 7th Muharram procession, scheduled to be taken out from Botraj Mohalla, Androoni Kathidarwaza to Imambargah Hasnanabad. This is the first major Alam Sharif procession in the city and marks a significant part of the mourning rituals observed during the Islamic month of Muharram by the Shia Muslim community.

Officials confirmed that the procession has been permitted by the district administration and will follow the traditional route through the inner areas of Rainawari. The route is ex-

pected to witness a large turnout of mourners participating in remembrance of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions at Karbala.

Local residents and volunteers have set up sabeels (refreshment stalls) along the procession path, offering water, sherbet, and tea to participants.

The procession will commence after Zohrain prayers and a majlis which will be addressed Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari as per past practice, members of the Raja family who organize the event said.

To ensure smooth conduct of the event, authorities have put in place elaborate security arrangements. Additional deployments of police and

paramilitary personnel will manage crowd movement and maintain law and order. Traffic police have also issued a diversion plan for commuters to avoid congestion along the procession route, particularly between 1:30 PM and 5:00 PM.

A senior police official urged citizens to cooperate with security personnel and adhere to advisory instructions for public safety. "We are committed to facilitating religious freedom while ensuring peace and order," he said.

The 7th Muharram procession is among several key events in the ten-day mourning period, culminating in Ashura, observed on the 10th of Muharram.



OFFICIALS CONFIRMED THAT THE PROCESSION HAS BEEN PERMITTED by the district administration and will follow the traditional route through the inner areas of Rainawari.

First Batch Of Amarnath Yatra Devotees Reach Nunwan Base Camp

Observer News Service

PAHALGAM: The first batch of devotees of the Amarnath Yatra 2025 reached the Nunwan Base Camp here, where they received a rousing welcome from the administration.

The devotees were received by Rahul Yadav, Nodal Officer for Pahalgam Axis; Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag; Amritpal Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police; Sundeept Singh Bali, Additional Deputy Commissioner; Atul Kumar Gupta, Camp Director Nunwan and other senior officers of the administration.

The devotees reached here in the afternoon and received colourful traditional welcome.

The administration has made comprehensive arrangements for the Yatris which include health care facilities, transportation, sanitation, drinking water facility etc. The



devotees expressed satisfaction on the arrangements and were highly enthusiastic as they embarked on the spiritual journey to the Holy Cave.

Notably, the Amarnath Yatra proceeds along the twin axis of Pahalgam and Baltal in Kashmir division with the Pahalgam axis

being the longer of the two.

Along this axis the main points include Chandanwari, Pissu Top, Zojibal, Sheshnag, Mahagunas Top, Poshpatri and Panjarni. First batch of Yatris shall be flagged off from Nunwan Base Camp in the early hours of 3rd July.

Javed Rana, Javid Dar Review Irrigation Scenario

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana and Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Javid Ahmad Dar had a comprehensive review of the irrigation scenario in Jammu and Kashmir in a meeting held at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was called in view of the irrigation problems being faced by the farming community besides assessing the response mechanism adopted by the department to ensure farmers are provided a reliable irrigation supply.

Legislators, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Hasnain Masoodi, Irshad Rasool Kar, Hilal Akbar Lone and Irfan Hafiz Lone also attended the meeting and shared their concerns with respect to irrigation supply in their constituencies.

Detailed discussion was held on the working of Lift & Gravity irrigation schemes, NABARD/CAPEX/CSS projects and ef-



ficient water management for agricultural prosperity.

Javed Rana directed for effective measures to tackle the irrigation issues, especially putting an efficient response mechanism in place to address the complaints of farmers. "There is no doubt that we are facing a critical situation due to adverse climatic conditions and there are shortcomings also but we have to find solutions," he said.

It is our collective responsibility to find solutions to the problems faced by our farming community amid the paddy farming, he said. He called for taking both short and long-term measures to augment the supply of irrigation water as per the requirements on the

ground. He also asked for an assessment of both the machinery and infrastructure given the present climatic conditions.

Superintending Engineers were instructed to submit a comprehensive report outlining the potential measures for upgrading and strengthening the existing resources in their respective areas.

During the meeting, Rana also emphasized timely project completion, regular monitoring of public services and expedited project execution for enhanced agricultural support.

The meeting centered on discussions about restoring previously existing canals that have been encroached upon, with a focus on their revival.



Akashvani Srinagar Inaugurates Audio Studio For Amarnath Yatra

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Akashvani Srinagar inaugurated a state-of-the-art audio studio on Wednesday dedicated exclusively to the special transmission of the Amarnath Yatra (SANJY) 2025. The new facility has been set up to provide seamless and high-quality broadcast services to Yatris and listeners across the globe during the Yatra period.

The studio was formally inaugurated by Gurbinder Singh, Deputy Director General (Engineering) and Head of Office, Akashvani Srinagar.

While speaking on the occasion, Gurbinder Singh termed the newly launched studio a "technological leap" in pilgrimage broadcasting. The studio has been equipped with the latest audio technologies to ensure seamless and uninterrupted transmission for the benefit of Yatris and stakeholders. Our aim is to make the broadcast accessible not only on the ground but globally, he stated.

He further informed that broadcasts for SANJY 2025 will be available across several platforms, including 103.7 MHz FM, WAVES OTT Platform, DTH Services, NewsonAir Android & iOS App, Akashvani Aradhana Channel. Additionally, two special transmitters have been installed at Baltal and Pahalgam to ensure uninterrupted coverage along the trekking routes to the Holy Cave, even in remote and high-altitude areas.

The special transmission will include Devotional music, Daily reports from all base camps and Yatra routes, Special interviews, Features, segments and informative capsules.

Also present were Shri Pramod Kumar, Deputy Director Engineering; Akhilesh Sharma, Assistant Director Engineering; Ghulam Rasool Akhoun, Head of Programmes; Dr. Satish Vimal, Programme Executive & Incharge Special Transmission SANJY 2025; Wasim Farooq, Transmission Executive, along with other staff members of Akashvani Srinagar.

DLCC Review Meeting On Tobacco Control Held

Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) review meeting was held on Wednesday at Mini Secretariat, Shopian to facilitate the strict enforcement of 'Control of Tobacco Protection Act, 2003' (COTPA) and 'National Tobacco Control Program' (NTPC) in the district.

The meeting, chaired by Deputy Commissioner Shishir Gupta, reviewed the measures and action taken till date towards the promotion of Tobacco free society.

Officers of the health department presented various provisions of COTPA and NTPC for awareness of the stakeholder departments. They called for the conduct of enforcement drives against smoking in the public places with focus on imposing fines against the violations.

The DC directed for ensuring strict enforcement of Tobacco Control measures especially in prohibited public places including the educational and healthcare institutions. He also discussed the modalities for making all the government

institutions/high footfall areas as 'Tobacco Free Zones' and all educational institutions as 'Tobacco Free Educational institutions' as per the guidelines.

The DC directed for displaying mandatory signages across the prominent places, denouncing use of tobacco products. He asked for strict enforcement of surrogate advertising and imposition of fines by all the departmental nodal officers against violations in their respective areas.

The members deliberated on the critical role of multi sectoral strategies and proper implementation of laws to tackle the issue comprehensively. They assured a tougher and strictest stance and enforcement from the police administration in the district towards the implementation of NTPC and COTPA.

Emphasis was given on strict enforcement of rules by the shopkeepers selling tobacco products besides installation of CCTVs in the shop premises.

ADC Shopian Dr. Zakir Husain Faaz, district officers and nodal agencies besides other concerned officers from the district attended the meeting.

Handicrafts & Handloom Dept Organizes Awareness Camp



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: As part of the public outreach programme of the department, a one day seminar cum awareness camp was organized by the Department of Handicrafts and Handlooms, Shopian, at Gagren.

During the day-long camp, the experts from Craft Development Institute and Industries and Commerce Department apprised the participants of GI, product branding, marketing strategies and product diversification.

More than 100 artisans and

local people attended the event.

The Department deliberated upon the importance of the sector for boosting UT's economy. It exhorted upon the participants to avail the benefits being offered under different departmental schemes including credit card scheme for artisans and weavers, Weavers Mudra Scheme, Education Scholarship for children of Artisans and Weavers, Karkhandar Scheme, Financial Assistance to Cooperative Societies and GI tagging of selected Kashmiri crafts like Pashmina, carpet weaving and Sozni Embroidery.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that I, Tauseef Rashid Dar, intend to correct the spelling of my name in the Registration Certificate (RC) of my two-wheeler bearing Registration No. JK01P-1784. The correct spelling of my name is Touseef Rashid Dar, S/o Abdul Rashid Dar, R/o House No. 136, Lane No. 6, Near Masjid Ibrahim, Budshah Colony, Sanat Nagar, Srinagar, as per my Aadhaar card. If any person has any objection to this correction, they may submit the same in writing to the Regional Transport Office (RTO), Srinagar, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objections will be entertained after the stipulated period.

Touseef Rashid Dar, S/o Abdul Rashid Dar,
R/o House No. 136, Lane No. 6, Near Masjid Ibrahim, Budshah
Colony, Sanat Nagar, Srinagar

AR

Tourist Influx to Offbeat Kashmir Destinations Sparks Waste Woes

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As heatwaves sweep the northern plains, Kashmir's offbeat hill destinations have witnessed a sharp surge in tourist footfall. But the growing influx has brought with it an alarming environmental crisis — unchecked littering and waste dumping that now threatens the fragile ecosystems of these scenic regions.

Remote yet stunning destinations like Bangus, Gurez, Tulail, Drang, Tangdhar, Gagangeer, and parts of Uri have become popular summer escapes. However, with no formal waste management systems in place, meadows, riverbanks, and forests are now dotted with plastic bottles, food wrappers, and non-biodegradable waste left behind by visitors.

In Gurez, residents say the once-pristine banks of the Kishanganga River are increasingly defiled by heaps of litter.



"Tourists don't have a place to dispose of their trash, so they leave it wherever they camp. It's hurting our land," said Mumtaz Ahmad, a local homestay owner. He urged tourists to either carry their waste back or ask locals for help with disposal. The problem is mirrored

across other destinations. In Bangus, locals warn that scattered trash is finding its way into water bodies and villages. "We see plastic waste entering streams that are our primary drinking sources," said Mushtaq Ahmad, a resident. Tourists, too, expressed

concern. Amir Ahmad, visiting Drang, said while many try to be responsible, others "just treat nature like a garbage bin." In Gurez, Rayees Ahmad, a tourist from Anantnag, was shocked by the amount of trash: "People must understand this is not a picnic ground. It's nature."

In Surinder, another emerging destination in Bandipora, the buildup of plastic waste has residents worried. "The beauty of this place brought the tourists. Now the same tourists are spoiling it," said Aqib Najar, a local.

The lack of basic infrastructure like dustbins, waste collection points, and signage adds to the problem. Locals complain that authorities have not prepared these remote destinations for sustained tourism, despite aggressively promoting them as alternatives to overcrowded places like Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

Environmentalists have

sounded the alarm. "This kind of tourism is unsustainable. Without basic facilities and strict enforcement, we risk turning these hidden gems into trash heaps," said Shakir Ahmad, an environmental activist.

He urged joint responsibility from both tourists and the administration. "Visitors must be mindful of their waste. The government must create a proper mechanism for garbage collection and disposal."

A district official told KNO that waste management plans are being prepared in collaboration with local panchayats and municipal bodies. "We are aware of the issue and are looking into sustainable solutions to preserve these ecologically sensitive areas."

As Kashmir's lesser-known spots gain popularity, the question looms large: Will the surge in visitors be a blessing or a burden?

Srinagar Airport Records Over 2 Lakh Passengers In June

Agencies

Srinagar: : After a brief slump in air operations following the Pahalgam attack earlier this year, Srinagar International Airport has recorded a slow but steady revival in flight and passenger traffic in the month of June—2025.

According to figures, the airport handled 1,537 flight movements (arrivals and departures) and 2,05,110 passengers during the month, reflecting a return to operational stability.

As per data, the revival began gradually. On June 1, the airport recorded just 36 flights and 5,965 passengers, but by June 28, the flight operations rose to 60 and the number of passengers reached 10,331, the highest for the month.

The data says key traffic days of the month were: June 01 with 36 arrival and departure flights with 5,965 passengers travelled, followed by June 14 with

58 flights and 10,147, followed by June 21 with 58 flights with 10,210 passengers, followed by June 27 with 48 flights and 10,454, followed by June 28 with 60 flights and 10,331 passengers travelled, and followed by June 30 with 56 flights with 9,570 passengers.

An official at Srinagar Airport said that they are witnessing a consistent improvement in air traffic after the dip following the Pahalgam terror attack.

"The numbers in June reflect a return of passenger confidence and coordinated efforts to ensure smooth flight operations. We expect this trend to continue in the coming weeks," he said.

Notably, the increase in traffic was also supported by the return of Hajj pilgrims, summer tourism and airlines resuming regular services. With the Amarnath Yatra underway, airport officials anticipate continued high footfall in the coming weeks.(KNO)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Amarnath Yatra 2025

from July 3 via the twin tracks: the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag and the steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal.

Over 3.31 lakh devotees have registered for this year's yatra so far, while on-the-spot registration is also underway in Jammu.

Soon after reaching the base camp, LG Sinha performed a ceremonial pooja before flagging off the convoy. "Wishing all spiritual seekers a safe and comfortable journey to the holy abode of Lord Shiva. Prayed to Baba Amarnath for peace and blessings to all," he said.

Referring to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 lives, Sinha asserted that the spirit of the pilgrims remains undeterred. "The devotees of Bholenath have defied all terror threats. Jammu feels like a city in celebration," he added.

The LG highlighted enhanced security arrangements, including 24x7 monitoring through an Integrated Command and Control Centre, RFID-based tracking, and a strict no-drone policy along the route. "A 100-bed hospital has been established at both Chandanwari and Baltal by ONGC. We've also inaugurated board offices and Yatri Niwas in Srinagar, with more to follow in Baltal," he added.

Pilgrims braved heavy rainfall but remained upbeat. "Even if there are attacks, we will still come. This is our faith," said Sarwanand Patel, a yatri from Gujarat. Another pilgrim, Sunita from Uttar Pradesh, said the security and facilities made them feel safe and well-cared for.

Officials said the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway has come under a strict security grid with traffic restrictions, cut-off timings, and CCTV monitoring. Daily advisories will be issued to ensure smooth movement.

Religious leaders and political figures also welcomed the start of the yatra. J&K BJP President Sat Sharma said the sense of fear has been replaced by faith. "The atmosphere created by the April incident has now turned into one of devotion."

The pilgrimage will conclude on August 9.

Satellite Tech Brings

significantly improving patient outcomes and reducing emergency evacuations.

Buoyed by the success at Baltal and Panjarni, DHSK is now expanding this telemedicine network to four additional strategic locations: the Holy Cave, Lower Holy Cave, Sheshnag, and Chandanwari. These installations are currently underway and promise to revolutionise healthcare delivery across the entire pilgrimage corridor.

Each telemedicine unit is equipped with advanced diagnostic tools, satellite communication terminals, high-definition video conferencing, and real-time data sharing, creating a virtual link between frontline caregivers and remote specialists.

Dr Jehangir Bakshi, Director of Health Services, Kashmir, said, "With the operationalisation of telemedicine at Baltal and Panjarni, pilgrims at the most remote camps can access timely specialist care. This technology helps reduce unnecessary evacuations and strengthens on-site medical support."

This integration of space technology into public health demonstrates its potential in geographically difficult and disaster-prone areas, Dr Bakshi said, adding, "Not only does it enhance healthcare quality and reach for pilgrims, but it also ensures more efficient health infrastructure management during one of India's largest religious gatherings."

The DHSK has also undertaken extensive measures for Yatra safety,

deploying over 1,000 medical personnel, including specialists, doctors, and allied health workers, across all medical stations, along with establishing Emergency Aid Centers (EACs), Mobile Medical Units, and Base Hospitals at critical points.

Life-saving equipment has also been provisioned, and pre-Yatra refresher training sessions and public awareness campaigns on high-altitude illnesses and emergency preparedness have been conducted.

The successful deployment of telemedicine services in such remote, logistically challenging locations highlights the transformative role of space technology in public health. It not only elevates the standard of medical care during this major pilgrimage but also sets a precedent for future healthcare interventions in remote and disaster-prone areas. (KNO)

Kashmir Valley

the yatris were greeted with flower petals, garlands, sweets, and cheers—setting the tone for what many called a "spiritually charged" welcome.

Top officials, including the Deputy Inspector General of Police, South Kashmir Range, and the Deputy Commissioner of Kulgam, were present to receive the pilgrims. Senior BJP leader Ravinder Raina also joined the welcome ceremony, offering flower bouquets and sweets to the devotees.

From there, the convoy was divided and routed towards the two main base camps—Baltal in Ganderbal and Pahalgam in Anantnag—marking the final staging points for the trek to the holy cave. Welcoming ceremonies continued along the route, with locals and officials greeting the yatris at Nunwan Base Camp in Pahalgam and Nunwan area of Srinagar, reflecting the region's traditional hospitality.

The 38-day-long yatra, which officially begins on Thursday, offers pilgrims the choice between the traditional 48-km route via Pahalgam and the shorter but steeper 14-km route via Baltal. The pilgrimage will conclude on August 9.

According to officials, more than 3.31 lakh pilgrims have registered so far for this year's Yatra, which is being held under an extensive security and logistical umbrella, ensuring the safety and convenience of the devotees.

Helpline Set-Up

support available) on all working days between 1000 hrs (10 am) to 1800 hrs (6pm). Besides, a Sopore helpline has been established at District Police Headquarters, Sopore and affected individuals or their families can approach helpline numbers 9596773073 or 01954222313 (10 AM to 6 PM) on all working days.

"J&K Police is fully committed to extending every possible support and will promptly share the collected information with the concerned authorities for appropriate action," the statement reads. (GNS)

HC Grants Centre

the number of cases pending in different subordinate courts as well as the matters pending in the High Court against the MPs or MLAs.

Rain Likely From

a pleasant 27.2°C. Kupwara, Kokernag, and Gulmarg registered maximum temperatures of 34.4°C, 30.0°C, and 22.8°C, respectively.

In the Jammu division, temperatures remained below normal, with Jammu city logging a day temperature of 32.9°C. Katra recorded 31.0°C, Bhaderwah 30.6°C, Banihal 27.3°C, and Batote 26.5°C.

Rain Deficit in Several Areas

As per the seasonal rainfall data compiled by the local Meteorological Department, three stations—Kishtwar,

Kulgam, and Bandipora—recorded large rainfall deficits ranging between 60% to 99% from June 1 to July 2, 2025.

Several other districts including Srinagar, Shopian, Poonch, Kupwara, Ganderbal, Doda, Baramulla, Budgam, and Anantnag reported rainfall deficits between 20% to 59%.

In contrast, Rajouri, Reasi, and Samba witnessed large excess rainfall. Rajouri received 1871 mm of rain against the normal 94.1 mm, Samba logged 155 mm against the usual 88.4 mm, and Reasi recorded a significant 312.4 mm against the average 151 mm.

Director of the Meteorological Department, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, said that from July 5 to July 7, generally cloudy skies with intermittent light to moderate rainfall and thundershowers are expected at many places.

"A few areas, particularly in the Jammu division, may experience intense showers and heavy rainfall," he added.

From July 8 to July 10, brief spells of rain are expected at scattered locations across the Union Territory.

The Met has also issued an advisory warning of flash floods at vulnerable spots, as well as the possibility of landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones in hilly areas.

"A rise in water levels in rivers, streams, and local Nalas, along with waterlogging in some low-lying areas, is expected between July 5 and 7," the advisory said.

Authorities have urged residents and travelers to remain alert and take necessary precautions, especially in flood-prone and landslide-vulnerable zones.

Kashmir's Water

turning vast stretches of farmland into cracked, barren earth.

In Srinagar and other urban centres, residents are grappling with irregular and limited water supply, prompting the Jal Shakti Department to deploy additional water tankers and ramp up monitoring. However, public frustration continues to grow.

"We get water for barely half an hour in the morning," said Bilal Ahmad, a resident of Zaina Kadal. "By the time we store it, the supply is gone."

The Chief Engineer of Jal Shakti (PHE) Kashmir, Er Taj Mohammad Chowdhary, said that the department is managing peak season demand, but high temperatures and misuse are placing unprecedented stress on the system.

"The infrastructure is working. The problem lies in soaring demand and wastage," Chowdhary said, adding that contingency measures are in place, including pre-approved tenders for expanded tanker operations if the dry spell persists into August.

North Kashmir's Fields Turn to Dust
The situation is even more dire in rural areas of north Kashmir, particularly Sopore, where over 40,000 kanals of paddy land across villages like Zaloora, Sagipora, Harwan, and Zaingeer belt have gone dry. The main irrigation source, the Lal Koul stream, has nearly vanished, leaving farmers in despair.

"In my 60 years, I've never seen anything like this," said a visibly distressed elderly farmer in Sagipora, standing in a dried-up paddy field. "No warnings, no help. We are at the end of our hope."

The failure of the irrigation department to act in time—despite collecting irrigation fees—has led to mounting anger among farmers, some of whom warned of mass suicides if immediate intervention is not made.

"They could've installed a basic pump system, but they chose to ignore us. Now we're begging for water," said a group of farmers from Sagipora.

Agricultural Collapse in the Making

The crisis threatens to derail Kashmir's key paddy-growing season. With many villages having skipped cultivation altogether this year due to early signs of water stress, others who sowed paddy are now watching their crops fail in real-time.

"We're stuck between repaying loans and feeding our children," said a farmer from Zaloora. "The government must act now or be ready to witness a disaster."

Similar reports are emerging from Handwara, where the irrigation network has also failed to support cultivation, despite official claims of preparedness.

Officials Promise Response

While the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Sopore, S.A Raina, said the issue would be taken up with the irrigation department on priority, concerned engineers remained unavailable for comment.

In the meantime, both urban households and rural communities are being urged to conserve water as a collective responsibility.

The Meteorological Department has forecast some relief in the form of intermittent rainfall from July 5 to 7, but officials warn that the damage already inflicted on the crop cycle may be irreversible.

With Kashmir's urban taps running dry and rural fields collapsing, the Valley faces a full-blown water emergency that cuts across regions, classes, and livelihoods.

Summer Vacations

(Saturday).

"In partial modification of the Government Order No. 261-JK(HE) of 2025 dated 30.05.2025, Government Order No. 290-JK(HE) of 2025 dated 23.06.2025 and Government Order No. 291-JK(HE) of 2025 dated 24.06.2025, it is hereby ordered that the Summer Vacations in all the Government Degree Colleges of Kashmir Division and Jammu Division (falling under Winter Zone) shall be extended upto 05.07.2025 (Saturday)," the order reads.

LG Hails Border

resident of India's borders should feel left behind.

"PM Modi always says that border residents should never feel they lack any facilities compared to people in other parts of the country. The Government of India has launched a special initiative to develop our border villages as hubs of growth and opportunity," he said.

Responding to public demands during the visit, LG Sinha assured that the sacred Daati Maa Dev Sthan would be brought onto Jammu and Kashmir's religious tourism map. He also pledged to promote Suchetgarh and its surrounding areas as part of both general and pilgrimage tourism circuits.

The Lieutenant Governor also urged citizens to pray for the successful completion of the Amarnath Yatra, which began on Thursday, and called for collective efforts to shape a peaceful and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.

"The collective effort of our citizens, especially those living in the most challenging terrains, will shape the future of Jammu and Kashmir. Together, let us move forward with hope and determination," LG Sinha said.

Studies Debunk

collaboration with ICMR—is titled "Establishing the Cause in Sudden Unexplained Deaths in Young". Initial results from this study further support the ICMR's conclusion, identifying myocardial infarction (heart attack) as the leading cause of sudden deaths in young adults, consistent with pre-pandemic patterns. In some cases, genetic mutations were also found to be contributing factors.

Health experts have welcomed the clarity, warning against dangerous misinformation.

"Unverified and alarmist narratives erode public trust in vaccines, which were instrumental in saving millions of lives during the COVID-19 pandemic," said a senior ICMR official.

Both institutions have emphasized the safety and efficacy of India's COVID-19 vaccines, reiterating that serious side effects remain extremely rare. They condemned speculation linking vaccines to sudden deaths as "false, misleading, and harmful to public health."

The government maintains that public health policy must be guided by science, not speculation, and has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting evidence-based research and citizen safety.

Rs 100 Cr Aqua

committed to building strong infrastructure to support fish farmers," the Minister said.

He also revealed that J&K's trout production has seen a remarkable rise—from just 262 metric tonnes in 2013-14 to 2,380 MT in 2023-24, marking an increase of over 800%. Trout seed production rose from 9 million to 15.2 million, while carp seed production increased from 40 million to 63.5 million.

The transformation is largely credited to flagship schemes like the Blue Revolution, FIDF, and PMMSY, which have strengthened the fisheries ecosystem across the Union Territory.

The Union Minister also disclosed that 300 crore out of the 852 crore allocated for Himalayan and Northeastern states under PMMSY has been earmarked for J&K alone.

"Aquaculture holds immense potential for income generation and employment in the region. We are focused on supporting youth, building infrastructure, and linking fish farmers directly to markets," he stated.

Earlier in the day, Rajiv Ranjan Singh co-chaired a high-level review meeting with the Chief Minister at Civil Secretariat, Srinagar, and virtually inaugurated a 50,000 LPD UHT Milk Processing Plant at Satwari, Jammu.

CM Seeks More

during weekends, holidays, and the ongoing tourism and pilgrimage seasons.

"Augmenting the train's capacity by adding chair cars and executive class coaches will go a long way in addressing the passenger surge," he stated in the letter.

Increase in Frequency

Highlighting the strategic importance of the Katra-Srinagar corridor, Omar urged the Railway Ministry to increase the frequency of the Vande Bharat service to better serve the growing number of commuters and tourists.

"This would greatly benefit local commuters and help unlock the full potential of this vital corridor," he wrote.

Rescheduling Timings for Same-Day Travel

The Chief Minister also proposed a change in the train's schedule to enable more practical day trips for those travelling for work, education, medical, and pilgrimage purposes.

"It is earnestly requested that the departure from Katra be scheduled in the early morning hours, and the return journey from Srinagar be timed for late evening. This would facilitate same-day return travel and significantly enhance commuter convenience," Omar added.

Call for Onboard Internet Connectivity

In an additional recommendation, Omar emphasized the need for high-speed onboard internet services,

especially given the poor mobile connectivity in several parts of the route, including long tunnels.

"In today's digital age, uninterrupted internet access is a key expectation. Provision of Wi-Fi will improve the overall travel experience, allowing passengers to stay connected for work and entertainment," he said.

How A Kashmir

days, M I Securities offered basic stockbroking services. Irshad focused on what others often ignored: explaining each step to clients in simple words, sharing detailed account ledgers, and making sure investors knew where their money was going.

Even as India's financial markets opened up, many in Kashmir remained hesitant. Irshad worked to bridge that gap.

He held community sessions, patiently guiding clients through the idea of long-term investments. He discouraged risky screen-based trading and instead promoted steady buying of quality shares, mutual funds, and ETFs.

"We told people: you don't need to chase the screen. You need to build wealth over years," Irshad says.

His approach wasn't always the most profitable in the short term. M I Securities often recommended products with lower commissions if they were better suited for the client.

But slowly, word spread. Families brought in relatives. Friends recommended friends. Small investments grew. Some who began with Rs. 10,000 eventually saw their savings grow to Rs. 40 lakh or more.

The loyalty was built with regular conversations.

As the years passed, the financial culture in Kashmir started to shift. Young professionals became more open to investing. Retired employees wanted to plan pensions with more than just savings accounts. Parents started thinking about college funds and wedding plans through SIPs.

Through all this, M I Securities stayed firm on its original principles: transparency, patience, and long-term partnerships.

Even during financial shocks, the 2008 recession and the uncertainty during COVID-19, the firm did not chase quick profits. It did not push clients into panic selling or risky trades. Instead, it held on to its slow-growth philosophy.

Irshad also made financial education part of his mission. Through articles, workshops, and videos, he aimed to demystify investing for Kashmiris who had long been cautious about markets. His message was consistent: Investing is not a gamble. It's a disciplined journey.

His team, grown carefully over two decades, shares this belief. They don't see their clients as account numbers. They know their life goals: a daughter's wedding, a son's education, a family home.

Many clients still walk into the office for face-to-face meetings, even in an age of digital platforms. "Trust is what built us," Irshad says. "Not fast money. Not selling dreams. Just helping people plan."

M I Securities now serves clients across India, but its heart remains in Kashmir.

For Irshad, the recent top award is not a finish line. It is a marker of what long-term trust can achieve.

Encounter In Kishtwar

Earlier, three terrorists and a soldier were killed in two separate encounters in Chatroo belt in April and May, this year. The latest encounter comes a week after a JeM terrorist was killed in an encounter by security forces in remote Bihali area of Basantgarh in Udhampur district.



Jaiswal Misses On Ton As India Reach 182/3 At Tea

Press Trust of India

BIRMINGHAM: A soft dismissal cost Yashasvi Jaiswal a well-deserved hundred as India ambled to 182 for three at tea day one of the second Test against England here on Wednesday.

Captain Shubman Gill (42 batting off 109) looked comfortable in the middle alongside his deputy Rishabh Pant (14 batting off 28) on another good batting surface in the five-match series.

England skipper Ben Stokes, who has a knack of picking up wickets out of nowhere, had Jaiswal (87 off 107) caught behind off a short and wide delivery. Jaiswal perhaps went too hard at the ball only to offer a simple catch to Jamie Smith behind stumps.

With not much happening in the session, the English fans in the iconic Eric Hollies Stand sporadically made plenty of noise to push the home team. India added 84 runs in 28 wickets in the session for the loss of Jaiswal.

In the 34th over, Gill survived a DRS lbw call off a Brydon Carse nip backer due to an inside edge.

Against the sole spinner Shoaib Bashir, Gill stepped out from time to time and on one occasion dispatched him over extra cover.

Pant joined him late in the session and took his time to settle down before using his feet against Bashir for a six over mid-on.

Earlier, Jaiswal maintained his aggression despite being tested by the England pacers while Karun Nair (31 off 50) showed promise at number three before being dismissed late in the morning session.

Considering the overhead conditions, Stokes opted to bowl but Jaiswal and Nair did well to survive the tough period. In the first hour, KL Rahul (2 off 26), played on to the stumps off a Chris Woakes delivery before Jaiswal-Nair duo added 80 for the second wicket.

Carse got one to rise sharply minutes before lunch, inducing an outside edge off Nair's bat that went to Harry Brook at second slip.

There was not a lot of swing on offer but the ball did seam a fair bit during the first hour of play. Carse targeted Jaiswal's rib cage often but the southpaw was unscathed.

Jaiswal began with a couple of

cover drives off Carse, who purposely bowled full to the batter and mixed it up an odd short ball into the body. Besides the flowing drives, the southpaw also played the pull and a slap over backward point off Ben Stokes.

Nair, moved up three places in the batting order from the last game, was offered plenty of full balls from the England pacers and he duly obliged by driving it through the cover and straight boundary.

Before toss, the boundary ropes being brought in significantly caught the eye of many at Edgbaston.

With premier match winner Jasprit Bumrah rested from the game, India brought in Akash Deep in his place while making two interesting changes, leaving out Sai Sudharsan for Washington Sundar and replacing Shardul Thakur with Nitish Kumar Reddy.

Kuldeep Yadav was once again brought in. India picked a second spinner in batting all-rounder Washington. For a team that struggled to take 20 wickets at Leeds, the decision to shore up the batting was debatable.

Pant Rises To 6th, Bumrah Still Top-Ranked Test Bowler

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Swashbuckling India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant continued his ascent in the ICC Test Rankings, moving up to sixth place in the latest list released on Wednesday.

Pant, who became only the second wicketkeeper in Test history to score two centuries in the same match during the first Test against England last week, gained one spot to reach a new career-best rating of 801. He now trails top-ranked batter Joe Root by just 88 points.

This marks a return to familiar territory for Pant, who had reached a career-high fifth spot during the same period in 2022.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal retained his fourth position to remain the highest-ranked Indian, while captain Shubman Gill slipped one spot to 21st.

At the top, Root maintained his slender

lead following scores of 28 and 53 not out in the Headingley Test. His teammate and No.2 ranked batter Harry Brook remains 15 rating points behind.

England opener Ben Duckett reached a career-best ranking, rising to eighth place following his match-winning 149 in the second innings at Leeds.

In the bowling charts, India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah continued to reign supreme with 907 rating points, consolidating his position at the top after a five-wicket match haul against England.

South Africa's Kagiso Rabada and Australia captain Pat Cummins held on to the second and third spots respectively. Josh Hazlewood moved up one place to fourth, displacing Pakistan spinner Noman Ali.

Meanwhile, India's Ravindra Jadeja retained his position as the No.1 Test all-rounder despite a relatively quiet outing in the recent Test.



Secretary J&K Sports Council Felicitates Boxing Team



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The J&K Boxing team was felicitated by Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, during a ceremony on Wednesday to acknowledge their strong performance at the 6th Junior National Boxing Championship in Rohtak, Haryana. The event placed special focus on youngster Bareena, who secured a silver medal and was named Best Promising Boxer of the Tournament for her outstanding performance.

The felicitation ceremony, held at the J&K Sports Council office, was attended by Anissa Nabi (JKAS), Chief Sports Officer, J&K Sports Council, along with team coaches, officials and boxing contingent members.

Congratulating the entire team, Gul commended their hard work and competitive spirit, while placing particular emphasis on the growing participation and success of women in sports across J&K. She described Bareena's achievement as a significant benchmark that underscores the evolving landscape of women's involvement in physically de-

manding and traditionally male-dominated sports.

"Women athletes in J&K are consistently demonstrating their capability and resilience in every sport, including demanding combat disciplines like boxing. Bareena's performance exemplifies what focused training and commitment can achieve. It is vital to support and encourage such talent to inspire many more young women to step confidently into the sporting arena," she said.

She also praised the coach of the boxing team for their tireless efforts in training and mentoring the athletes.

Gul further said that the J&K Government remains committed to expanding access to quality training, infrastructure, and competition opportunities for women athletes, with plans to organize more national and domestic events in the coming months.

The event reinforced the focus on fostering a balanced and inclusive sporting culture across J&K, with a clear emphasis on empowering young women through structured support and recognition.

Chelsea Signs Brazil Forward Joao Pedro From Brighton

AP

LONDON: Joao Pedro joined Chelsea from Brighton on Wednesday to continue the Premier League club's lavish spending under American owners Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital.

The Brazil forward cost a reported 60 million pounds (\$82 million) and has signed a contract through to 2033.

"Everyone knows this is a big club with a great history," Joao Pedro said. "They had brilliant players in the past and have brilliant players now. So I am excited to join and you know when you are a Chelsea player you must think one thing — win."

The Brazil international has joined up with Chelsea's squad at the Club World Cup in the United States and is eligible to play in

Friday's quarterfinal against Palmeiras.

Joao Pedro is Chelsea's fifth major signing this offseason after previous deals for Liam Delap, Dario Essugo, Kendry Paez and Mamadou Sarr.

Under Boehly and Clearlake, who bought Chelsea in 2022, the six-time English champion has spent well in excess of \$1 billion on transfers, including British record fees for Enzo Fernandez and Moises Caicedo.

The 23-year-old Joao Pedro hit 10 goals in 32 appearances for Brighton last season and scored 30 across two years with the club.

He is the latest player to leave Brighton for Chelsea in a big-money move in recent years after deals for Marc Cucurella, Robert Sanchez and Caicedo.

The move also represents a



sizeable profit for Brighton after signing Joao Pedro from Watford for 30 million pounds (\$41 million) in 2023.

"This is a good move for all parties. It's an excellent deal for the

club, and a good return on a significant investment in an area of the pitch where we have a lot of competition and are already well served in terms of our attacking talent," said Brighton coach Fabian Hürzeler.

Joao Pedro's arrival comes as Chelsea prepares for a return to the Champions League after a two-year absence.

Under coach Enzo Maresca, the London club finished fourth in the Premier League last season, its highest place since Boehly and Clearlake bought out former owner Roman Abramovich, and also won the UEFA Conference League.

Chelsea can add to that at the Club World Cup, but the expectation next season will be to challenge for a first Premier League title under its American owners.

Jobe Bellingham Suspended, To Miss CWC Game v Jude

Jobe Bellingham is suspended for the Club World Cup quarterfinals after picking up a yellow card in Borussia Dortmund's victory against Monterrey, meaning he will miss the chance to face his brother, Jude, and Real Madrid in the next round.

Dortmund plays Madrid at MetLife Stadium on Saturday, but midfielder Jobe will serve a one match suspension for his second yellow card of the tournament. He was previously booked in the win against Ulsan HD in the group stage.

The clash between Dortmund and Madrid would have been a proud moment for the Bellingham family, showcasing the rapid rise of the brothers, who were both developed at Birmingham's academy.

J&K Cricket Association Celebrates Van Mahotsav

In view of the ongoing Van Mahotsav week, Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association launched a massive plantation drive at JKCA Complex, Hostel Ground, Jammu, on Wednesday. More than 100 trees are being planted around the ground.

The ceremony began with planting of trees by Brig. Anil Gupta, Member Administration, JKCA, Anil Choudhary, International Umpire, Vivek Khajuria, In-charge grounds Maintenance and Development and Vikas Dalal, Umpire BCCI.

These trees, apart from providing shade, will add to the scenic beauty of the ground, stated Brig. Anil Gupta. The variety of trees being planted includes Bottle Brush, Arjun, Cassia, Neem, Suk-chain, Amal Tash, etc.

Brig. Gupta insisted that our job does not finish by mere plantation of trees but we also need to ensure that they are properly cared for and maintained. He made an appeal to the ground staff of JKCA for each individual to adopt five trees and take care of them till they are properly grown up. Caring trees and ensuring greenery is not only good for all of us but is very necessary for our future generations as well, said Anil Choudhary.

Under-Fire Marquez Quits As India Football Coach



Embattled India football head coach Manolo Marquez stepped down on Wednesday after reaching a "mutual agreement" with the All India Football Federation (AIFF), which was under pressure to fix accountability for the recent downward spiral of the national team.

The AIFF Executive Committee, in its meeting here, agreed to relieve the 56-year-old Marquez after he expressed his desire to do so despite one year still left in his contract.

The AIFF later said in a statement that the executive committee members "collectively decided on the mutual termination of Marquez's contract".

It also said that the Technical Committee, headed by former India captain IM Vijayan, had on Tuesday recommended the AIFF Executive Committee to appoint a new head coach "through an open application process".

The Spaniard was appointed as head coach in June 2024 for a two-year tenure. He worked in a dual role last year as he was also the head coach of Indian Super League side FC Goa in 2024-25 season.

India lost 0-1 to lower-ranked Hong Kong in an away match of the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers on June 10, which left the country in danger of missing out on qualifying for the continental showpiece in 2027.

India logged just one win from their last eight matches under Marquez's tutelage, the lone victory coming against Maldives in March. (PTI)

Bumrah Will Play In Third Test At Lord's: Gill

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will return to the Indian playing eleven against England in the third Test at Lord's next week after sitting out of the second match here, captain Shubman Gill said on Wednesday.

Bumrah was rested from the second Test, which began here on Wednesday, as part of his workload management. He played in the first Test at Leeds which India lost by five wickets.

"Third Test being at Lord's, we think there'll be more in that pitch so we'll use him there," Gill said at the toss for the second game here.

"We were tempted to play Kuldeep (Yadav) but decided to add some depth to the batting."

The third Test is scheduled to start on July 10.

The Indian team management had declared at the start of the series that Bumrah will only play in three Tests out of five. (PTI)

Atletico Madrid Adds Álex Baena From Villarreal

Atletico Madrid continued boosting its squad by signing midfielder Álex Baena from Villarreal on Wednesday.

The transfer was announced a day after Atletico said it signed 22-year-old Italian left back Matteo Ruggeri from Atalanta. Both have signed five-year contracts. Financial details were not immediately disclosed.

The 27-year-old Baena helped Spain win last summer's European Championship and Olympic gold medal.

Baena made his Spain senior-team debut in 2023 against Cyprus, scoring with his first touch of the ball two minutes after entering the match.

He helped Villarreal win the Europa League in 2021 and spent the following season on loan at Girona.

Atletico said Baena "has great dribbling ability, shooting and vision, and throughout his career has played in every possible position in midfield, especially as a left winger, although he is naturally right-footed."

Atletico has parted ways with some players from last season's squad including Reinildo, Axel Witsel and Cesar Azpilicueta.

Diego Simeone's team finished third in the Spanish league last season, behind Real Madrid and champion Barcelona. It was eliminated in the group stage of the Club World Cup. (AP)

WHO Calls For 50% Tax Increase On Sugary Drinks, Tobacco And Alcohol By 2035 To Curb Chronic Disease

AP

The World Health Organization is pushing countries to raise the prices of sugary drinks, alcohol and tobacco by 50% over the next 10 years through taxation, its strongest backing yet for so-called "sin taxes" to help tackle chronic public health problems and boost government health budgets.

The United Nations health agency said the move would help cut consumption of the products, which contribute to diseases like diabetes and some cancers, as well as raising money at a time when development aid is shrinking and public debt rising.

"Health taxes are one of the most efficient tools we have," said Jeremy Farrar, WHO assistant-di-



rector general of health promotion and disease prevention and control. "It's time to act."

The WHO launched the push, which it is called "3 by 35" at the UN Finance for Development conference in Seville.

WHO said that its tax initia-

tive could raise \$1 trillion by 2035 based on evidence from health taxes in countries such as Colombia and South Africa.

The WHO has backed tobacco taxes and price rises for decades, and has called for taxes on alcohol and sugary drinks in recent years, but this is the first time it has suggested a target price rise for all three products. WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the conference that the taxes could help governments "adjust to the new reality" and bolster their own health systems with the money raised.

As an example, it would mean a government in a middle-income country raising taxes on the product to push the price up from \$4 today to \$10 by 2035, taking into account

inflation, said WHO health economist Guillermo Sandoval. Nearly 140 countries had already raised tobacco taxes and therefore prices by over 50% on average between 2012 and 2022, the WHO added.

Sandoval said the WHO was also considering broader taxation recommendations, including on ultra-processed food, after the agency finalises its definition of that type of food in the coming months. But he added that the agency expected pushback from the industries involved.

The initiative is also backed by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and involves support for countries who want to take action.

92-year-old gets life sentence for 1967 crime in one of UK's oldest cold cases

AP

A British court on Tuesday gave a life sentence to a 92-year-old man for a crime committed in 1967, in one of the country's oldest cold cases.

A jury had found the man, Ryland Headley, guilty on Monday of the murder and rape of a 75-year-old British woman, Louisa Dunne, nearly six decades after a neighbour found her body in her home outside Bristol, England, according to Avon and Somerset Police.

The judge, Derek Sweeting, said during the sentencing that Headley had shown a "complete disregard for human life and dignity," according to a statement from the police after the sentencing hearing on Tuesday.

He added that Headley had committed a "pitiless and cruel act".

Headley's sentence has a minimum of 20 years before consideration for parole, which Judge Sweeting told him meant he would die in prison. The police reopened the case in 2023. In May 2024, they sent items — including a blue skirt Dunne was wearing at the time of her attack — for forensic analysis, the police said.

Police obtained DNA that they were able to match with Headley.

Semen was found on the back of the skirt, said Heidi Miller, a forensics specialist at the Avon and Somerset Police Department, in an ITV documentary about the case released this week. "It gives me goose bumps," she said.

The yatris, travelling to seek blessings of Shri Amarnath Ji, in their own/rented cars/buses or any other mode, are requested to travel in the main Yatra convoy only, starting from Bhagwati Nagar Jammu daily; in the interest of smooth and secure conduct of Shri Amarnath ji Yatra 2025.

DIPK-3246/25 Dated: 02.07.2025

TRAFFIC POLICE HEADQUARTERS, J&K, JAMMU/SRINAGAR

- From 01-07-2025, 1700 hrs. to 02-07-2025, 1600 hrs., there was slow movement observed on NH-44 due to breakdown of 05 HMVs, single lane traffic at Nashri-Dalwas and between Marog & Kishtwari Pather.
- Commuters belonging to Reasi, Katra, Udhampur, Patnitop, Doda and Ramban town are requested to keep their photo ID card to prove their identification after cut off timing from Jammu/Udhampur so that their movement can be facilitated smoothly.
- Passengers/LMV's operators are advised to undertake journey on Jammu-Srinagar NHW during day time due to apprehension of shooting stones between Ramban and Banihal.
- Goods carrier (HMV/LMV) Operators carrying fresh perishable stock are advised to load their vehicle as per advisory issued by Traffic Police Headquarters time to time as there is single lane traffic and poor condition of road at Nashri-Dalwas and between Marog & Kishtwari Pather on Jammu Srinagar NHW.
- Fruit growers/ Load carrier (HMV/LMV) Operators carrying fresh perishable from Valley towards Jammu are advised to load and park their vehicle timely (every morning before 9.00 am at designated place between NAVYUG Tunnel and Levdoora) so that their movement can be facilitated smoothly.
- HMVs Operators/Owners are requested to desist from overloading and carry sufficient fuel during journey on Jammu-Srinagar NHW. It is further requested that vehicle owners must double check the fitness of their vehicles and carry sufficient fuel before undertaking journey on Jammu-Srinagar NHW.
- HMVs with only 06 and 10 tyres shall be allowed to ply through Dhar road.
- Commuters are advised to avoid unnecessary halts between Ramban and Banihal especially near landslide/shooting stone area.

TRAFFIC PLAN & ADVISORY FOR 03-07-2025:-
Subject to fair weather and better road conditions SANJY convoy /LMVs Passenger/Private Cars shall be allowed from both sides on Jammu-Srinagar NHW (NH-44) viz from Jammu towards Srinagar and vice-versa. However, HMVs shall be allowed on alternate days . TCU Jammu/ Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing this traffic.

SHRI AMAR NATH JI YATRA 2025
Please refer to Yatra Advisory No. 01 dated 27-06-2025

CUT OFF TIMINGS FOR LMVs/PASSENGER/PRIVATE CARS: -
To be released from:-

- Nagrota (Jammu) towards Srinagar: from 0600 hrs. to 1200 hrs.
- Jakhni (Udhampur) towards Srinagar: from 0700 hrs to 1300 hrs &
- Qazigund towards Jammu: from 1130 hrs to 1400 hrs.

TCU Jammu and TCU Srinagar will inform all concerned about the traffic advisory and cut off timings. No vehicle shall be allowed to move before and after cut off timings.

HMVs/Load Carriers:-
Subject to fair weather and better road conditions, HMVs shall be allowed from NAVYUG Tunnel (Qazigund side) towards Jammu after assessing the road and traffic situation on NH-44 and no HMV shall be allowed after 1900 hrs. TCU Srinagar shall liaise with TCU Ramban before releasing the HMVs.

Moreover, in view of ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2025, to provide hassle free movement of trucks carrying fresh/perishable goods on NH-44, UT administration has decided, all tankers of Petrol, Diesel, LPG bulk gas, all trucks carrying empty LPG Cylinders; all empty vehicles of FCI; any other vehicle loaded/empty upto 10-tyres shall use only Mughal Road while returning to Jammu, as per advisory issued by DIVCOM Kashmir vide No. Divcom/Dev/120/2025/7055-75 dated 01-07-2025

Kishtwar- Sinthan- Anantnag NH-244:-
Subject to fair weather and good road condition, after getting green signal from NHIDCL, LMVs/ HPSVs shall be allowed from both sides viz from Anantnag towards Kishtwar and vice- versa on Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road. These vehicles shall be allowed from PP Parana towards Anantnag from 0800 hrs to 1600 hrs and from PP Daksum towards Kishtwar from 0900 hrs. to 1500 hrs. No HMV other than designated HPSVs shall be allowed as per order issued by SDM Chhatroo vide No. SDM/C/2025-26/146-53 dated 16-05-2025 and SDM Kokernag vide No. SDM/ KNG/665-71 dated 16-05-2025.

SSG ROAD
Subject to fair weather and good road condition, (after getting green signal from the BRO) traffic movement shall be allowed on regulated manner on Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumari road. LMVs followed by HMVs shall be allowed from Minamarg towards Srinagar at 0500 hrs. to 1000 hrs. Similarly, LMVs followed by HMVs shall be allowed from Sonamarg towards Kargil at 1130 hrs to 1730 hrs. No vehicle shall be allowed after cut off timing.

SFs Convoy, plying from Srinagar to Kargil and vice versa shall plan their movement in such a manner so that Yatra convoys (both UP and DOWN) don't get disturbed.

Mughal Road:-
Subject to fair weather and good road condition, after getting green signal from Road maintenance agencies (GREF), LMVs Passenger/Private Cars shall be allowed from both sides on Mughal road viz from Jammu towards Srinagar and vice-versa via Poonch. However, HMVs (upto ten tyres only) shall be allowed from Shopian towards Poonch. These vehicles shall be allowed from Behrangala (Baffiaz) and Herpora (Shopian) at 0700 hrs. upto 1800 hrs. as per advisory issued by DIVCOM Kashmir vide No. Divcom/Dev/120/2025/7055-75 dated 01-07-2025.

ADVISORY :-
People are advised to undertake journey only after confirming status of the road from Traffic control units as under:-

- Jammu (0191-2459048, 0191- 2740550, 9419147732, 103)
- Srinagar (0194-2450022, 2485396, 18001807091, 103)
- Ramban (9419993745, 1800-180-7043)
- Udhampur (8491928625)
- PCR Kishtwar (9906154100)
- PCR Kargil (9541902330, 9541902331)

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