

Kashmir Under Heat Siege Srinagar Records Hottest July In Over 70 Yrs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A relentless heatwave continues to grip the Kashmir Valley, setting new temperature benchmarks and disrupting daily life across the region. On Saturday, Srinagar recorded a scorching 37.4°C, marking the third highest temperature ever recorded in July. This reading comes close to the second highest of 37.7°C logged on July 5, 1953, and just below the all-time high of 38.3°C recorded on July 10, 1946.

The extreme heat wasn't limited to the capital. Pahalgam, which serves as a key base camp for the ongoing Amarnath Yatra, witnessed its hottest July day ever with the mercury touching 31.6°C, surpassing its previous record of 31.5°C set on July 21 last year. Kokernag also sizzled at 34.0°C, the second-highest



- Srinagar**
- **37.4°C:** 3rd highest July temperature ever
 - **2nd highest:** 37.7°C (July 5, 1953)
 - **All-time high:** 38.3°C (July 10, 1946)
- Pahalgam**
- **31.6°C:** All-time high
 - **Previous record:** 31.5°C (July 21, 2024)
- Kokernag**
- **34.0°C:** 2nd highest on record
 - **Record high:** 34.1°C (July 28, 2024)

temperature ever recorded there, falling just short of the 34.1°C record set on [More on P10](#)

Demand For Vacation Extension Grows; Decision Today

As Kashmir continues to reel under an intense heatwave, the demand for extending the summer vacation for schools has grown louder, with parents and students urging the government to act in view of the soaring [More on P10](#)

MeT
Forecast

July 6-8: Cloudy, light to moderate rain thundershowers likely.

July 9-10: Scattered to widespread rain, thundershowers possible.

July 11-12: Hot, humid with brief scattered showers.

Ashura Today: Processions, Prayers to Mark Karbala Sacrifice



As part of the mourning rituals, Dal dwellers take out a boat procession on Tasua (the 9th day of Muharram). KO Photo

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Ashura, marking the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his faithful companions in the plains of Karbala 1400 years ago, will be observed across Kashmir today with religious fervour

amid tight security.

In Srinagar, the organizers said the biggest Ashura procession will be taken out on Sunday morning from Botakadal. Thousands of mourners from different parts of the city are expected to attend the Ashura procession

starting from Bota Kadal and ending at the Imambargah Zadibal in the evening.

In Srinagar, the Shia Muslims used to take out Ashura procession from Abi Guzar in uptown Srinagar that would culminate at historic Zadibal [More on P10](#)

Time To Reflect On Karbala Teachings: CM

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday paid a heartfelt tribute to Imam Hussain (AS) and the martyrs of Karbala on the solemn occasion of Ashura, describing their supreme sacrifice as a timeless symbol of courage, moral steadfastness, and resistance

against injustice. In his message, the Chief Minister said that the tragedy of Karbala was not merely a historical event but a profound moral lesson for all of humanity. "Imam Hussain (AS), the beloved grandson of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), upheld [More on P10](#)

Imam Hussain's Sacrifice Inspires Humanity: LG

Observer News Service

On the eve of Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid heartfelt tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions at Karbala, describing them as timeless symbols of courage, justice, and human dignity.

In a solemn message to the people of the Union Territory, the Lieutenant Governor said, "The sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions at Karbala, and their steadfast commitment to the universal ideals of justice and human dignity continue to inspire humanity to uphold the values of unity, social harmony and righteousness."

He urged [More on P10](#)

36 Amarnath Yatris Injured In Bus Mishap

LG Issues Directives On Pilgrim Safety

Observer News Service

Srinagar- After 36 Amarnath Yatra pilgrims suffered minor injuries in a road mishap near Chanderkot in Ramban district earlier today, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha issued directives on the safety of pilgrims.

Official spokesman said that there was a minor accident at Chanderkote when a Pahalgam bound vehicle collided with some stationary vehicles due to brake failure.

36 pilgrims had received minor injuries and they were discharged after preliminary treatment and have now proceeded on their way to the holy cave, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, as per the spokesman, said, "By the blessings of Lord Shiva, all the devotees are safe. Our priority is the safety of all pilgrims. [More on P10](#)

Over 47K Pilgrims Visit Cave Shrine

Amid multi-layer protection more than 47,000 Hindu pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Amarnath Cave Shrine, nestled in South Kashmir Himalayas, in the first three days, officials said on Saturday. According to data, 21,109 pilgrims visited the shrine on July 5 (Saturday), which included 16,159 males, 3,921 females (250 sadhus & 29 sadhvis), 226 children, 3 transgender devotees, and [More on P10](#)



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Research Suggests Mental Health Support For Burn Survivors In Health Facilities To Deal With Stigma

Press Trust Of India

Researchers at the George Institute for Global Health have identified key areas where India's health system can improve support for patients seeking care for burn injuries, officials said. Mental health support for patients, more training and counselling for healthcare providers and anti-discrimination policies in health institutions were among several recommendations that was made in the study conducted by the medical research institute. The study conducted in Uttar Pradesh explored how burn survivors experience stigma and discrimination within healthcare settings and proposed a set of policy and practice recommendations to address these gaps. Claimed to be first-of-its-kind study globally that specifically aimed to assess stigma faced by burn patients in hospitals and healthcare settings, the research was carried out as part of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (RSTMH) early career grants programme, supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), UK. Even as survival rates have increased with better medical care, the study suggested that institutional neglect, under-resourced facilities, overburdened staff, and systemic failures are

some reasons for burn patients receiving discriminatory and low-quality care. According to officials, burns can result in emotional, physical and psychological damage, particularly for patients with visible disfigurements or disabilities and those from underprivileged backgrounds. Worldwide, there are about 180,000 deaths each year due to burns, with the greatest burden in low- and middle-income countries. India contributes to the largest burden of approximately 2.1 million burn injuries, 25,000 deaths, and more than 1.4 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) annually. "Burn survivors, particularly women and poor people, receive blame and isolation and face neglect in hospitals. At the same time, over-worked and under-supported healthcare staff struggle with burnout, which can lead to unintentional but harmful behaviour towards patients. "Addressing both patient experiences and system challenges is key to building compassionate and fair burn care," said Pratishtha Singh from the George Institute for Global Health. Jagnoor Jagnoor, also from the George Institute for Global Health, said, "Burn survivors show extraordinary resilience in the face of life-altering injuries. Yet, stigma within the very systems meant to support them continues to be a barrier to recovery and reintegration. Our research



highlights the urgent need to create inclusive, dignified spaces that empower survivors to heal, thrive, and reclaim their place in society." Findings from the study suggest that practical steps such as improved provider training, dedicated counselling services, and clear operational guidelines can help create a more supportive environment for burn patients in healthcare facilities.

While India has made commendable strides in emergency burn care in recent years, long-term issues such as persistent stigma, inadequate mental health support, and limited social reintegration of recovered patients remain largely neglected. The study was conducted in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, with more than 200 million people, 77.7 per cent of whom reside

in rural areas. With its limited medical infrastructure and health indicators, the region was a critical location for such a study, emphasising the pressing need for systemic upgrades in patient care throughout India. The research involved interviews with burn patients, healthcare providers, and legal professionals and highlights the need to address both structural limitations and interpersonal interactions in hospitals. Participants reported challenges such as limited empathetic communication, social isolation during hospitalisation, and perceived differences in care based on socioeconomic background. Introducing structured training and counselling for healthcare providers on burns-related stigma, patient-centred care, and mental health support were recommended by the researchers. They also recommended updating medical and nursing curricula to include modules on empathetic communication and psychosocial aspects of burn recovery; strengthening hospital-based support systems, including mental health services and rehabilitation pathways, especially in public facilities. Developing and implementing anti-discrimination policies in health institutions, tailored to the needs of visibly injured or disabled patients, are also among the recommendations made in the study.

Scholarships This Week

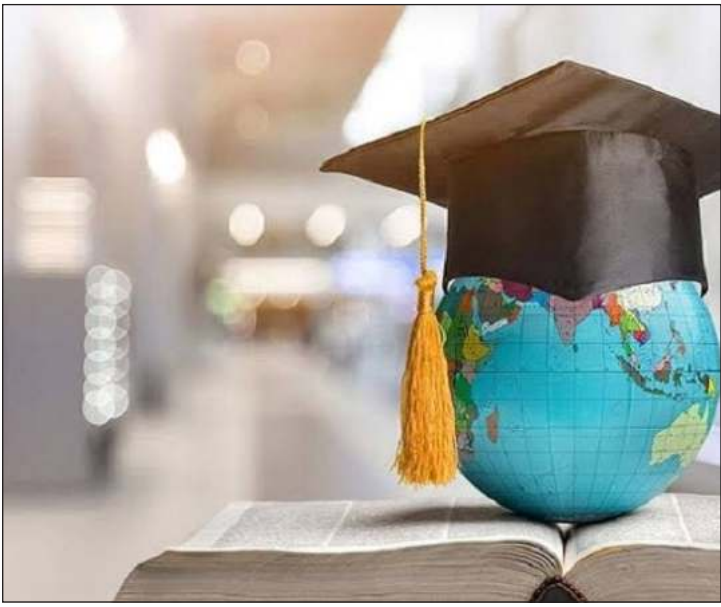
Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir

Scholarship Name 1: Muskaan Scholarship Program 2.0 (2025-26)

Description: An initiative by Valvoline Cummins Private Ltd. (VCPL) to offer financial assistance and mentorship support to children of commercial drivers (LMV/HMV), mechanics and children belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category, ensuring continuity in their education.

Eligibility: Students in Classes 9 to 12 from the southern, eastern, and northeastern states of India are eligible to apply for the scholarship. The scholarship is available to children of commercial drivers (LMV/HMV), children of mechanics, and students belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) category. To be eligible, applicants must have scored above 60% in their previous class. Additionally, the total family income from all sources should not exceed INR 8 lakh per annum. However, children of employees of Valvoline Cummins Private Ltd. (VCPL) and its implementation partner organisations are not eligible for this scholarship.

- Prizes & Rewards: Scholarship of up to INR 12,000 and mentorship support
- Last Date to Apply: 30-09-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/MKSP2
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/2-0-2025-261751290156.png>



Scholarship Name 2: Kotak Kanya Scholarship 2025-26

Description: Under the CSR Project on Education & Livelihood of Kotak Mahindra Group Companies, Kotak Education Foundation invites applications for the Kotak Kanya Scholarship 2025-26 from meritorious girl students from low-income families to empower them to pursue higher studies in professional education after Class 12. Eligibility: Open for meritorious girl students across India. Applicants must have scored 75% or more marks or equivalent CGPA in Class 12 board examinations. Applicant's annual family income must be less than INR 6,00,000. Meritorious girl students who have secured admission to the first year of graduation programs in the academic year 2025-26 in institutes of

repute like NIRF/NAAC accredited for professional graduation degrees like Engineering, MBBS, Integrated LLB (5 Years), Integrated BS-MS/BS-Research, in ISER, IISc (Bangalore), or other professional courses (Design, Architecture, etc.)

- Prizes & Rewards: INR 1.5 lakh* per year
- *Disclaimer: The renewal of the scholarship every year will be at the sole discretion of the Kotak Education Foundation
- Last Date to Apply: 31-08-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/KKGS4
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/2025-261751289904.png>

[net/static/images/scho-media/kotak-kanya-scholarship-2025-261751289904.png](https://www.b4s.in/observer/KKGS4)

Scholarship Name 3: HOPE Engineering Scholarship by Schaeffler India 2025

Description: Schaeffler India invites applications from first-year engineering female students (preference will be given to students with physical disabilities) to provide them with financial support for their engineering studies. Eligibility: The scholarship is open to female students across India enrolled in the first year of an engineering program at any UGC or state-recognised college. Preference will be given to students with disabilities and those pursuing core engineering branches such as Automobile, Mechanical, Mechatronics, Electrical and Electronics, Electronics and Communication, Production, Instrumentation, Computer Science Engineering, and Information Technology. Applicants must have scored over 60% in Class 12 (Science) (40% marks for PwD) in the academic year 2024-25, with an annual family income of less than INR 5 lakh.

- Prizes & Rewards: Scholarship of INR 50,000 per year for four years
- Last Date to Apply: 30-07-2025
- Application mode: Online applications only
- Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/SIHE16
- QR Code: <https://d2w711p59qkl0r.cloudfront.net/static/images/scho-media/20251751290006.png>

TRAFFIC POLICE HEADQUARTERS, J&K, JAMMU/SRINAGAR

- From 04-07-2025, 1600 hrs. to 05-07-2025, 1600 hrs., there was slow movement observed on NH-44 due to breakdown of 02 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/LMVs 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 (HNV/LMV) Operators carrying fresh perishable/live 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 (HNV/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.
- HNVs 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.
- HNVs with only 06 and 10 tyres shall be allowed to ply through Dhar road.
- Commuters are advised to avoid unnecessary haltage between Ramban and Banihal especially near landslide/shooting stone area.

TRAFFIC PLAN & ADVISORY FOR 06-07-2025:-

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.
- Jakheni (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 Jakheni (Udhampur) towards Srinagar after assessing the road and traffic situation on NH-44 and no HMV shall be allowed after 1900 hrs . TCU Udhampur 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/KN/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 Behramgala (Baffliaz) 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)

DIPK-3350/25
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'No Other Option':
Street Vendors In City Work
Through Intense Heat



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With Srinagar - the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, on Saturday surpassing a 70-year-old record by witnessing the season's highest temperature at 37.4 degrees Celsius, street vendors across the valley said they have no choice but to bear the heat and continue working.

On Saturday, Srinagar recorded its highest temperature in over 70 years, touching a searing 37.4 degrees Celsius. For hundreds of street vendors whose daily earnings depend on open-air stalls and roadside sales, the heat is unforgiving, but unavoidable.

In many districts including Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, and areas such as Dargah Hazratbal and Batamaloo, vendors working on roadsides and open markets are managing their daily routines under high temperatures without any formal protection from the sun.

"There is no other option. If I sit at home, my children will sleep hungry," Mohammad Yaqoob, a fruit vendor near Batamaloo bus stand told KNO. He wipes his brow repeatedly with a cloth damp from sweat. "We work in the sun all day because this is our only way to survive."

Shazia Bano, who sells children's toys outside the Children's Hospital in Srinagar, said, "I am the sole breadwinner of my family. My husband is unwell, and my kids are still

in school. Whether it's cold or heat, I have to be here."

The other vendors earn on a daily basis and say skipping work due to weather isn't an option. They, however, said that high temperatures have reduced customer footfall.

"We try to manage by setting up umbrellas or temporary covers for shade, but during the peak afternoon hours, the heat can still be difficult to work in. Footpaths and roads become hot, and many vendors report tiredness and dehydration," Mohammad Amin, a 50 year old vendor said.

In other markets of the valley, sellers sat under temporary covers or umbrellas. Despite these measures, the ground heats up by afternoon, making it difficult to sit or stand for long periods.

"I have worked outdoors for many years, but this level of heat is unlike anything I have experienced before," said Shabir Ahmad, a vendor in Bandipora. "By midday, it becomes physically exhausting. Still, I come every day, because staying home is not a solution."

Meanwhile, the Met Department stated that Jammu and Kashmir's severe heatwave is caused by weak Western Disturbances, persistent high-pressure zones, and rapid climate change accelerating warming. Urbanization and lack of pre-monsoon showers have worsened the situation, leading to prolonged intense heat.

SMC Observes 10th Anniversary
Of PMAY-Urban 2.0

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) is observing the 10th Anniversary of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U 2.0) with a dedicated series of public outreach and awareness activities across the city.

As part of the celebrations, ward-level public awareness and verification camps are being organized in collaboration with the Revenue department to facilitate citizen engagement and last-mile service delivery.

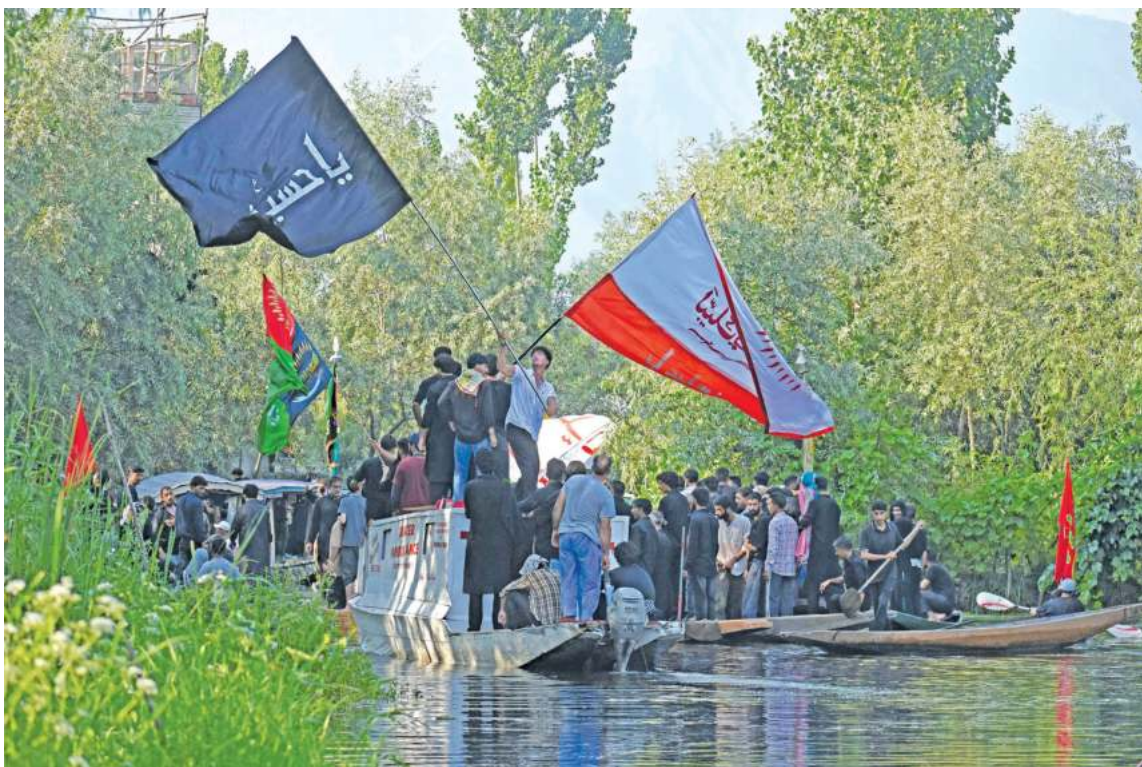
Launched on June 25, 2015, the PMAY-Urban mission was envisioned to provide 'Housing for All' in urban areas by ensuring access to pucca houses with basic amenities for all eligible urban poor families. Now in its 10th year, the PMAY-U 2.0 phase focuses on consolidating the progress made and

ensuring complete saturation of beneficiaries.

As part of the anniversary observance, camps have been held in various wards including Ward No. 31 & 35 at Marriage Hall Chanapora, Ward No. 32 Baghat, Ward No. 28 Batamaloo, and Ward No. 29 Magarmal Bagh. These camps are providing on-spot title verification, issuance of income certificates, application support, and awareness on beneficiary entitlements under the housing scheme.

Speaking on the occasion, officials from SMC stated that the initiative aims to empower citizens through informed participation and accelerate the implementation of the PMAY-U scheme. Banners were installed at all camp venues and information was disseminated to the public through various communication channels to ensure maximum outreach.

TASUA



KO PHOTO/FAISAL KHAN

Mourning Procession
Carried Out In Mir Behri, Dal

Observer news Service

SRINAGAR: On the ninth day of Muharram, the mourners from the floating areas of Dal Lake in Srinagar came together to observe the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) with a solemn and symbolic procession.

Residents moved along narrow wooden walkways and boarded boats draped in black flags, reciting nohas and marsiyas in memory of the tragedy of Karbala.

"It is our way of keeping the message of Karbala alive. Even though we live on water, our hearts beat with the pain and sacrifice of Imam

Hussain (AS)," said Ghulam Hassan, a local elder from Rainawari, Srinagar, while speaking with KNO.

Similarly, the procession, which began in the afternoon, saw youth and elders alike participate, some beating their chests in mourning while others distributed drinking water and dates among participants.

"We have been observing this procession in our community for decades. This is not just a ritual but a legacy of resistance and remembrance," said Muntazir Ali, a youth volunteer helping to organize the gathering.

Moreover, today people were

moving on wooden shikaras carrying mourners, children holding Alams (flags), and the reflections of banners dancing on the waters of Dal.

Additionally, authorities ensured peaceful conduct by deploying police and arranging first aid. Local imambargahs also remained open for community prayers and sermons throughout the day.

Meanwhile, the Dal Lake procession remains one of the most unique and visually striking Muharram rituals in Kashmir, echoing the message of sacrifice and justice far beyond the shores.

Police Attach Property In
Terror-Linked Case

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Srinagar Police has attached a residential property, comprising 8 Marla's and 202 sqft of land along with the building structure, worth Rs 1.5 crore under unlawful activities act.

According to a statement, the property, located in Mir Masjid Mohalla, Shallabagh Khanyar, is recorded in the name of Mohammad Yousuf Shah S/o Hafiz Waliullah Shah.

"It is currently in the possession of Masood Hussain Shah S/o Mohammad Yousuf Shah. The attachment has been carried out under the relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with FIR No. 48/2024 under Sections 109 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 7/27 of the Indian Arms Act, and Sections 16, 18, 19, 20, and 39 of the UAP Act, reg-



istered at Police Station Khanyar," reads the statement.

It reads investigations have established that the property was acquired through illegal proceeds linked to terrorist activities. "Acting under Section 25 of the UAP Act, the

immovable property has been formally seized and attached following due legal procedure".

It added through this attachment notice, the owner is prohibited from selling, leasing, or transferring the said property in any manner.

Condolence
Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'un

We deeply mourn the passing of the wife of Ab Rashid Mir (C/o Ali Mohammed & Sons, Kashmir Book Depot), who left for her heavenly abode on 5th July 2025. Mourning will be observed for three days at House No. 35, Pine Avenue Colony, Lane No. 2, Near Masjid Amir Kabir, Rawalpura, Srinagar. May Allah (SWT) grant her the highest place in Jannah and give strength to the family.

The bereaved family:
Ab Rashid Mir (Husband)
Zahoor Ahmad Mir (Son)
Zaffer Ahmad Mir (Son)

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• ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
• BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
• BIJBHERA: 01932-228243
• PAMPORE: 01933-294132
• PATTAN: 01954-293507
• QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS
• Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
• Mughal Road - (Open)
• Srinagar-Leh- (Open)

PRAYERS

FAJR	3:41
ZUHR	12: 35
ASR	5:35
Magrib	7:49
ISHA	9:29

This Day In History

- 1044- The Battle of Mēnf takes place.
- 1189 - Richard the Lionheart is crowned King of England.
- 1253 - Mindaugas is crowned King of Lithuania.
- 1348 - Papal bull of Pope Clement VI issued during the Black Death stating Jews not to blame and urging their protection
- 1415 - Jan Hus is burned at the stake.
- 1483 - England's King Richard III crowned
- 1484 - Portuguese sea captain Diogo Cão finds the mouth of the Congo River.
- 1491 - Opening ceremony of Daitokui's Shinju at subtemple
- 1495 - Battle of Fornovo, near Parma: French King Charles VIII beats Holy League
- 1560 - England and Scotland sign Treaty of Edinburgh
- 1573 - Pacificatie of Boulogne: new peace treaty with huguenots
- 1573 - Córdoba, Argentina, is founded by Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera.
- 1621- Dutch governor general John Pieterszoon Coen takes Banda islands, 15,000 die
- 1630- Swedish troops under Gustaf II Adolf land at Peenemunde
- 1673- French troops conquer Maastricht as part of the Franco- Dutch War
- 1770- Battle at Cseme: Russian fleet beats Turkish
- 1776- American Declaration of Independence announced on front page of "PA Evening Gazette"
- 1782- British-French sea battle at Negapatam (off India)
- 1801- Battle at Algeciras: French fleet beats British
- 1848- Mexican-American War ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- 1885- Louis Pasteur successfully tests an anti-rabies vaccine
- 1892- Dadabhai Naoroji elected as first Indian Member of Parliament in Britain.
- 1898- US Senate agrees to annex Hawaii
- 1904- Two Russian cruisers move into the Red Sea and begin to stop ships of Britain, Germany, and other nations they believe friendly to Japan
- 1923-The Central Executive Committee accepts the Treaty of Union, signed in Moscow in December 1922, and the Russian Empire becomes the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- 1924 -1st photo sent experimentally across Atlantic by radio, US-England
- 1928- Worlds largest record hailstone 1.5 lbs (7 inches in diameter) at the time falls in Potter, Nebraska
- 1947- The AK-47 goes into production in the Soviet Union.
- 1959-Saar becomes part of German Federal Republic
- 1961- Portuguese ship explodes near Mozambique, kills 300
- 1975- Comoros declare independence from France (most of them)
- 1976- Soyuz 21 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 5 space station
- 1977 France performs nuclear test at Muruora Island
- 1978- Israeli jet fighters swooped over mostly Muslim West Beirut
- 1987- 1st of 3 massacres by Sikh extremists takes place in India
- 1986 - Premier Nakasone's Liberal Democratic Party wins Japan's election
- 1987 - Pakistan cricket all-rounder Imran Khan reaches 300th Test wicket milestone, during 3rd Test vs England at Leeds
- 1987 - USSR performs nuclear test
- 1997 - Australian cricket batsman Steve Waugh completes twin centuries (108 & 116) in 268 run 3rd Test win v England at Old Trafford
- 2002 - Wimbledon Women's Tennis: Serena Williams beats older sister Venus 7-6, 6-3 for her first Wimbledon singles title
- 2006- The Nathula Pass between India and China, sealed during the Sino-Indian War, re-opens for trade after 44 years
- 2009- Jadranka Kosor becomes the first female prime minister of Croatia
- 2017- France announces it will ban petrol and diesel cars by 2040
- 2018- Paraguay has eliminated malaria in announcement by the World Health organization
- 2020- Zoonotic diseases, which jump from animals to humans, are increasing due to unsustainable farming and climate change according to new report by the UN

Over 100 BBC Staff Accuse Broadcaster of Pro-Israel Bias

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: More than 100 current BBC employees have signed a scathing open letter accusing the broadcaster of failing its editorial standards and acting as “a mouthpiece” for Israel amid its coverage of the war in Gaza.

The letter, also endorsed by over 300 media figures — including actors Miriam Margolyes and Charles Dance, filmmaker Mike Leigh, and historian William Dalrymple — criticizes the BBC for sanitizing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and for internal censorship.

“All too often it has felt that the BBC has been performing PR for the Israeli regime and military,” the letter reads, calling this “a cause of great shame and concern.”

Signatories allege editorial interference and pressure to avoid content critical of Israel, under the guise of neutrality. Staff also condemned

the BBC’s decision to pull its own commissioned documentary Gaza: Doctors Under Attack, which Channel 4 has since picked up, calling the move politically motivated.

The letter further demands the resignation of BBC board member Robbie Gibb over what it calls a conflict of interest, citing his ties to The Jewish Chronicle, which it accuses of publishing anti-Palestinian material.

Critics say the BBC has failed to report adequately on UK government arms sales to Israel or the broader legal implications of Britain’s involvement in the war.

According to Gaza health officials, over 57,000 Palestinians — mostly women and children — have died since Israel launched its military campaign in October 2023. Israel now faces genocide proceedings at the International Court of Justice and war crimes charges from the International Criminal Court.

Setback for Saif Ali Khan: ₹15,000 Cr Property Case Revived

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: In a setback to actor Saif Ali Khan and his family, who inherited Rs 15,000 crore properties owned by Bhopal’s erstwhile rulers, the Madhya Pradesh High Court has set aside the trial court’s verdict given over two decades ago, and ordered a retrial in the case.

In its order passed on June 30, the single Bench of Justice Sanjay Dwivedi set aside the judgment and decree of the trial court which upheld Pataudis — Saif Ali Khan, his mother Sharmila Tagore and his two sisters Soha and Saba — to be the owners of the properties.

It also directed the trial court to make all possible efforts to conclude and decide the matter within one year.

Nawab Hamidullah was the last ruling Nawab of the princely state of Bhopal. He and his wife Maimoona Sultan had three daughters — Abida, Sajida and Rabia. Sajida married Iftekhar Ali Khan Pataudi and became the Nawab Begum of Bhopal. Their son, Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, former Indian cricket team skipper, married Sharmila Tagore.

After Nawab Hamidullah’s eldest daughter Abida migrated to Pakistan, Sajida became the owner of the properties. Later, her son Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi became the successor of these properties estimated to be valued at nearly Rs 15,000 crore — which were inherited by Saif Ali and his siblings.

The two appeals, one filed by Begum Suraiya Rashid and others, and another by Nawab Mehr Taj Sajida Sultan and others, all heirs of late Nawab



ab Mohammad Hamidullah Khan, said the trial court had dismissed their suits against what they called as ‘unfair partition of royal property’.

In their pleas, they stated that the Bhopal district court’s judgement and decree dated February 14, 2000, dismissed their suits unfairly.

Their lawyers pleaded that the partition of the Nawab’s personal property should have been done between them and defendants Saif Ali, Sharmila and 16 other heirs as per the Muslim Personal Law.

The appellants opposed the defendants (Pataudis) for citing the certificate issued by the Government of India on January 10, 1962, in favour of Sajida Begum as the sole successor of all the private properties.

Justice Dwivedi said, “The matters are remanded back to the trial court for deciding it afresh.”

“And if so required, the trial court can allow the parties to lead further evidence in view of the subsequent development and changed legal position,” the court ordered.

“I am of the opinion that the trial court, without considering other aspects of the matter, had dismissed the suits, that too relying upon the judgment which has already been overruled by the Supreme Court. Thus, in my opinion, the impugned judgment and decree deserve to be and are hereby set aside,” the judge said.



Bilawal Says Pak Open To Extraditing ‘Individuals Of Concern’ To India

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: Pakistan’s former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that his country had no objection to extraditing “individuals of concern” to India as a confidence-building measure, as long as New Delhi showed willingness to cooperate in the process.

Bilawal, the chairman of the Pakistan People’s Party, made the comments in an interview with Al Jazeera on Friday while responding to a question about extraditing Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar as possible concessions and good-faith gestures to India, Dawn newspaper reported.

“As part of a comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan, where terrorism is one of the issues that we discuss, I am sure Pakistan would not be opposed to any of these things,” Bilawal said.

Both LeT and JeM have been banned by Pakistan, according to the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta), while Saeed, the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack mastermind, is currently serving a 33-year sentence for terror financing, and Azhar, a UN-designated global terrorist, has been proscribed by Nacta.

Bilawal said that cases prosecuted against these “individuals” were those related to Pakistan, such as terrorist financing. However, he noted that prosecuting them for cross-border terrorism was difficult due to what he claimed was “noncompliance” from Delhi.

“India is refusing to comply with certain basic elements that require that conviction to take place,” he said. “It’s important ... to present evidence within these courts, for people to come over from India to testify, to put up with whatever the counter-accusations will be.” “If India is willing to be co-

operative in that process, I am sure there will be no hurdle in extraditing any individual of concern,” he added.

Bilawal also expressed concern about India’s vow to pursue terrorists, calling it a “new abnormal”.

“This does not serve the interests of Pakistan, and it does not serve the interests of India,” he added.

Pressed on the whereabouts of Saeed and Azhar, Bilawal stated that the former was incarcerated, while Islamabad believes the latter is in Afghanistan.

“It is factually not correct that Hafiz Saeed is a free man; he is in the custody of the Pakistani state,” he maintained, stating that Islamabad has been unable to arrest Azhar.

“It is our belief that he is in Afghanistan,” Bilawal stated. “If and when the Indian government shares information that he is on Pakistani soil, we will be more than happy to arrest him.”

Russia Is Paying Schoolgirls To Have Babies

Countries Are Pushing Women to Have More Babies

Press Trust Of India

Moscow: In some parts of Russia, schoolgirls who become pregnant are being paid more than 1,00,000 roubles (nearly ₹900) for giving birth and raising their babies.

This new measure, introduced in the past few months across 10 regions, is part of Russia’s new demographic strategy, widening the policy adopted in March 2025 which only applied to adult women. It is designed to address the dramatic decline in the country’s birthrate.

In 2023, the number of births in Russia per woman was 1.41 – substantially below 2.05, which is the level required to maintain a population at its current size.

Paying teenage girls to have babies while they are still in school is controversial in Russia. According to a recent

survey by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre, 43% of Russians approve of the policy, while 40% are opposed to it.

But it indicates the high priority that the state places on increasing the number of children being born.

Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, regards a large population as one of the markers of a flourishing great power, along with control over a vast (and growing) territory and a powerful military.

Paradoxically, though, his efforts to increase the physical size of Russia by attacking Ukraine and illegally annexing its territory have also been disastrous in terms of shrinking Russia’s population.

The number of Russian soldiers killed in the war has reached 2,50,000 by some estimates, while the war sparked an exodus of hundreds of thousands of some of the most highly

educated Russians.

Many of them are young men fleeing military service who could have been fathers to the next generation of Russian citizens.

But while Russia’s demographic situation is extreme, declining birth rates are now a global trend.

It is estimated that by 2050 more than three quarters of the world’s countries will have such low fertility rates that they will not be able to sustain their populations.

It’s not only Russia

Putin is not the only world leader to introduce policies designed to encourage women to have more babies. Viktor Orbán’s government in Hungary is offering a range of incentives, such as generous tax breaks and subsidised mortgages, to those who have three or more children.

PM Modi Arrives In Argentina On Two-Day Visit

Press Trust of India

Buenos Aires: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has arrived here on a two-day visit during which he will hold talks with the country’s top leadership to review ongoing bilateral cooperation and discuss ways to enhance India-Argentina partnership in key areas.

Modi, who reached here on Friday evening (local time), was accorded a ceremonial welcome upon his arrival at the Ezeiza International Airport.

“Landed in Buenos Aires for a bilateral visit which will focus on augmenting relations with Argentina. I’m eager to be meeting President Javier Milei and holding detailed talks with him,” he said in a post on X.

This is the first Indian bilateral visit at the prime ministerial level to Argentina in 57 years. It is Modi’s second visit to the country as prime minister; he had visited in 2018 for the G20 Summit.

It also marks the third stop on the prime minister’s five-nation visit.

“Celebrating the enduring friendship between our nations. PM @narendramodi has landed in the vibrant city of Buenos Aires, Argentina on an Official Visit. He was accorded a ceremonial welcome on arrival at the airport. This is the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM to Argentina in 57 years, marking a new chapter in India-Argentina ties,” Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir



Jaiswal said in an X post.

Modi will hold wide-ranging talks with President Milei to further boost India-Argentina partnership in key areas including defence, agriculture, mining, oil and gas, renewable energy, trade and investment, according to the MEA.

“The bilateral visit of the prime minister will further deepen the multifaceted strategic partnership between India and Argentina,” it said in a statement.

In his departure statement, the prime minister said that Argentina is a key economic partner in Latin America and a close collaborator in the G20 and that he looked forward to discussions with President Milei, whom he had met last year.

“We will focus on advancing our mutually beneficial cooperation, including in the areas of agriculture, critical minerals, energy, trade, tourism, technology, and investment,” Modi had said.

India Becomes Fourth "Most Equal" Country Globally: World Bank Report

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Inequality in India has come down significantly between 2011-12 and 2022-23, making it the fourth-most equal country globally, according to a World Bank report.

This is in addition to a sharp decrease in extreme poverty, which has dropped from 16.2 per cent in 2011-12 to 2.3 per cent in 2022-23, an official release said quoting World Bank data.

The government attributed the reduction in inequality to various initiatives and schemes pursued during the last decade.

The only three countries which have a better Gini Index score, a measure of equality, are the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Belarus. India is much better placed than countries like China, the USA and the United Kingdom.

“...India’s Gini Index stands at 25.5, making it the fourth most equal country in the world, after the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Belarus,” the statement said.

The Gini Index helps in understanding how equally income, wealth or consumption is distributed across households

or individuals in a country. It ranges in value from 0 to 100.

A score of 0 means perfect equality, while a score of 100 means one person has all the income, wealth or consumption and others have none, hence absolute inequality. The higher the Gini Index, the more unequal a country is.

India’s score is much lower than China’s 35.7 and far lower than the United States, which stands at 41.8.

As per the World Bank’s report, which has released the data for 167 countries, India falls into the “moderately low” inequality category, which includes Gini scores between 25 and 30.

India is only a fraction away from joining the “low inequality” group.

The government attributed this achievement to a sharp reduction in the poverty level in the last decade.

According to the World Bank report, 171 million Indians have been lifted out of extreme poverty over the past decade. The share of people living on less than USD 2.15 a day, which was the global threshold for extreme poverty till June 2025, fell sharply from 16.2 per cent in 2011-12 to just 2.3 per cent in 2022-23.

N E W S M A K E R S

Dalai Lama Hopes To Live Beyond 130 Years, Much Longer Than Predicted

The Dalai Lama said on Saturday he hopes to live until he is more than 130 years old, two decades longer than his previous prediction, following his assurance to followers that he would reincarnate as the spiritual head of the faith upon his death.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner was speaking during a ceremony organised by his followers to offer prayers for his long life, ahead of his 90th birthday on Sunday, and as China insists it will choose his successor. The Dalai Lama told Reuters in December he might live to 110.

“I have been able to serve the Buddhaharma (the teachings of Buddhism) and the beings of Tibet so far quite well,” he said between prayers, clearing his throat now and then.

“And still, I hope to live over 130 years,” he said, sparking applause and cheers among his followers.

The 14th Dalai Lama, already longest-lived head of Tibetan Buddhism, spent

about 90 minutes at the prayers in his temple. The ceremony was attended by thousands of followers from around the world who gathered in the northern Indian hill town of Dharamshala, where he has lived since fleeing Tibet in 1959 in the wake of a failed uprising against Chinese rule.

“We have lost our country and we live in exile in India, but I have been able to benefit beings quite a lot. So, living here in Dharamshala, I intend to serve beings and the dharma as much as I can,” he said in Tibetan, which was translated simultaneously in English and other languages.

China, keen to consolidate its control over Tibet, views the Dalai Lama as a separatist. Beijing insists its leaders would have to approve his successor, in a legacy from imperial times.

The Dalai Lama has previously said that he would reincarnate in the “free world” outside China and this week told his followers that the sole authority to recognise his reincarnation rests with his non-profit insti-



tution, the Gaden Phodrang Trust.

Devotees stream in

The Dalai Lama is a charismatic figure whose following extends well beyond the millions of Tibetan Buddhists living around the world. He won the 1989 peace



“We have lost our country and we live in exile in India, but I have been able to benefit beings quite a lot. So, living here in Dharamshala, I intend to serve beings and the dharma as much as I can

prize for what the Nobel committee said was keeping alive the Tibetan cause and seeking genuine autonomy to protect and preserve the region’s unique culture, religion and national identity without pressing for independence.

At the prayers on Saturday, he sat on a throne before a large statue of the Buddha,

with dozens of monks seated in front of him. Marigold garlands hung from pillars as his followers and journalists crowded around the main temple area.

Oracles and other figures, shaking in trance, arrived to pay their obeisance to their guru. Monks struck cymbals and played ornate long trumpets in honour of the Dalai Lama and others.

The Dalai Lama said he prays daily to benefit all sentient beings and feels he has the blessings of Tibet’s patron deity, Avalokitesvara.

“Looking at the many prophecies, I feel I have the blessings of Avalokitesvara,” he said. “I have done my best so far. At the least, I hope to still live for 30 or 40 years more.”

His birthday celebrations on Sunday will be attended by senior Indian ministers as well as diplomats from the United States, along with thousands of his devotees.

Reuters

Javid Dar Inaugurates Waste Management Facility



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, along with MLA Pahalgam Altaf Ahmad Wani, today visited the base camp Nunwan to review the arrangements made for smooth conduct of the ongoing Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY2025).

The dignitaries inspected the sanitation infrastructure, public facilities and sustainability measures put in place by the Directorate of Rural Sanitation to ensure a clean, safe and dignified experience for the pilgrims.

Secretary Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Aijaz Asad, Director General Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra and senior officers of the Rural Development Department also accompanied the Minister.

During the visit, the Minister interacted with the sanitation workers deployed across various points. He lauded their outstanding contribution in maintaining

hygiene and healthy environment along the Yatra route.

A special highlight of the visit was the felicitation of a local hero, who displayed exemplary courage during the recent Pahalgam incident. He was honoured with a cheque of appreciation by the department and also recognized as the Brand Ambassador for Sanitation during this year's Yatra.

The Minister also took stock of several digital and eco-friendly initiatives including introduction of QR code-based feedback systems at toilet blocks for instant grievance redressal and a sanitation feedback kiosk for the yatrins.

Other initiatives included installation of Water ATMs to reduce single-use plastic bottles, distribution of eco-friendly cloth bag kits, enhanced toilet and bathing facilities and dedicated sanitation areas for female pilgrims with female supervisors.

On the occasion, a Nukkad Natak promoting awareness on cleanliness and environmental responsibility was also staged and appreciated by all.

HC Slams KU's 'Hire & Fire' Policy

Orders Continuation Of Contractual Law Faculty Until Core Staff Appointed

M Ahmad

SRINAGAR: The High Court of J&K and Ladakh has directed University of Kashmir to allow contractual as well as faculty members engaged in academic arrangement to continue till such time when core faculty is put in place in the Department of Law.

"So far as the legal position as regards the possibility of replacing the teaching faculty of an educational institution engaged on contractual basis or academic arrangement basis by a similar arrangement is concerned, the same,, is beyond any cavil, inasmuch it is not permissible for an institute to resort to hire and fire policy and to replace contractual/temporary arrangement by a similar arrangement," a bench of Justice Sanjay Dhar said while allowing a bunch of petitions filed by those engaged on academic arrangement basis and whose engagement was extended from time to time either by virtue of interim orders passed by the Court or otherwise.

"The replacement can only be resorted through regularly appointed staff/teaching faculty," the court said.

ulty," the court said.

The petitioners had challenged various advertisement notices whereby the University invited applications for engagement of contractual Lecturers on academic arrangement basis for the Session 2023 and 2024.

"The action of the respondents (KU authorities) in disengaging the services of the petitioners and replacing them by ad hoc arrangements like visiting lecturers and guest lecturers is nothing but a malafide exercise of power," the court said, adding, "By doing so, the respondent University intends to do away with the service contracts of the petitioners but in the process, they are also doing a great disservice to the students' community who are being left to the mercy of guest/visiting lecturers without there being any continuity."

Instead of creating a core faculty, as envisaged under Rule 17 of the Rules of Legal Education 2008, the court said, the University, it seems, is resorting to hire and fire policy which is detrimental to the interests of not only the petitioners but also to the larger interests of the student community.

J&K NARCO-TERROR CASE

Hizb Chief Salahuddin, 10 Others Chargesheeted

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir State Investigation Agency (SIA) has filed a chargesheet against 11 accused, including Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen supremo Syed Mohammad Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahuddin, in connection with a narcotics case here, an official said.

The case was initially lodged by SIA, Jammu in 2022 and a probe uncovered a well-organised network of terrorist associates and couriers aiding the proscribed outfit by facilitating smuggling of narcotics and raising funds for terror activities, a spokesperson of the agency said.

"Besides Sallahuddin, a resident of Sibugh village in central Kashmir's Budgam who is presently operating from across the border, another Hizbul terrorist, Basharat Ahmad Bhat of Khan Sahib area of Budgam, was named in the chargesheet. He operates from Rawalpindi in Pakistan", he said.

"The others were identified as Khalid Hussain of Rajouri, Mohd Shokit of Poonch, Javid Ahmed Rather of Budgam, Manzoor Ahmad and Asif Rehman Reshi of Srinagar and Harpreet Singh, Chain Singh, Sahil Kumar, and Sandeep Singh of Jammu", the official said.

"This network as per the investigations has emerged as a major channel for terror financing in the region," the spokes-

person said, adding several of these individuals involved have amassed significant wealth through drug proceeds, despite having negligible legitimate sources of income. The SIA said the investigation revealed a systematic modus operandi where-in narcotics were smuggled from Pakistan into the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The proceeds from the sale of these drugs were deposited in the account of one of the accused, on the instructions of Pakistan-based terrorist Bhat, the spokesperson said.

He said the accused individuals were allegedly key drug dealers responsible for distributing narcotics among local youth. Some reportedly employed the other accused for selling narcotics to their clientele, the spokesperson said.

He said the investigation points to a larger conspiracy spearheaded by Pakistan-sponsored Hizbul Mujahideen to destabilise the peaceful atmosphere of Jammu and Kashmir by facilitating terrorist activities.

Further investigation is going on to identify and apprehend additional individuals involved in the network, he said.

He said the filing of the chargesheet reflects SIA's firm commitment to dismantling terror-financing ecosystems and preserving peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ujh Multipurpose Project In Kathua Being Revived: Jitendra Singh

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the much-anticipated Ujh Multipurpose project in the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir is being revived to benefit the people.

The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office was addressing a gathering during a 'public darbar' at Basholi in Kathua, which is part of his Udhampur parliamentary constituency, an official statement said. Singh held the public darbar as part of his continued outreach efforts to engage directly with citizens and local representatives, not only at the district level but also at the tehsil, block and panchayat level, it said.

"The Ujh Multipurpose Project is being revived. Apart from enhancing irrigation and power generation capacities, the project will also serve a critical security role, as the region has been identified as vulnerable to cross-border infiltration," the minister said.

According to PTI, the project aims to harness the waters of the Ujh River, a tributary of the Ravi River, for hydropower generation, irrigation, and drinking water supply. It will increase India's utilization of the eastern rivers under the



Indus Waters Treaty, which has been in abeyance since April following the Pahalgam terror attack. Singh announced the widening of the Dhar Road, a key move to ensure smooth and secure movement of commuters as well as security forces given its strategic significance, the statement said.

He said an AIIMS Jammu Outreach Centre would be set up at Basohli, addressing a long-pending demand of the region.

"The facility will ensure 24x7 availability of super-specialty doctors and surgeons as well as emergency services," he said, adding discussions are already underway between AIIMS Jammu authorities and the Jammu and Kashmir government to finalize the location and to put in place a roster system for specialist medical personnel to serve the new branch.

He said a separate district for Basohli-Billawar is top of the agenda. It will be pursued vigorously whenever the Jammu and Kashmir government sets up the next district reorganization committee, he said. About Basohli being notified as a heritage town, the minister said the authorities have been asked to send a proposal in a proper format so that it can be taken up at the Centre.

During the public interaction, several issues were resolved on the spot, while in other cases, the minister issued directions to the concerned district officials for swift and time-bound action.

The minister emphasized that elected representatives have a responsibility not only to solve the genuine issues of the people but also to make them feel available, heard and cared for.

"The public durbar initiative is one of the most effective means of strengthening the bridge between the people and their government," he said.

Reiterating the commitment of the NDA government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Singh said the aim is to deliver transparent and efficient governance to the doorstep of every citizen, transcending the barriers of region, caste, or political affiliation.

THE FACILITY WILL ENSURE 24X7 AVAILABILITY OF SUPER-SPECIALTY doctors and surgeons as well as emergency services,"

Langars At Baltal Serve Pilgrims Round-The-Clock With Food

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a heart-warming display of service and devotion, hundreds of langars have been set up at the Baltal base camp to provide round-the-clock food, shelter, medical assistance and other essential services to Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra pilgrims.

These langars—community kitchens run by various religious and social organizations—are not only feeding thousands of devotees every day but also offering free lodging, washrooms, and resting areas. The collective efforts have turned Baltal into a hub of care and hospitality for the yatrins.

"We are very happy with the services provided by the langars here at Baltal. The food is delicious, and we feel at home," said a devotee, expressing gratitude for the arrangements.

The langar owners have gone a step further by ensuring hygienic and well-lit facilities.

Speaking with KNO, a group of langar organizers said, "We installed our stall on the 13th, and our main langar is at Rail Patri. We have also made good lighting arrangements for the safety and convenience of pilgrims."

Vikas Sharma from Delhi, who runs a langar at the base camp, shared, "We have been setting up this langar for the past 19 years at Baltal. Every pilgrim is welcome to have food and shelter here—free of cost. This is our service to Baba Amarnath."

The Shiv Gauri Sewa Mandal

Rise In Tourist Footfall Puts Mughal Road To Test

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The historic Mughal road, which connects Shopian in South Kashmir to Poonch-Rajouri in Jammu division, is witnessing a surge in tourist and commuter traffic this summer.

With every passing year, the volume of vehicles on the scenic 84-kilometer stretch continues to rise—but so do complaints about poor infrastructure and lack of essential facilities.

Despite being granted National Highway status three years ago, the Mughal Road remains devoid of basic amenities, leaving both tourists and local drivers in distress.

Speaking to KNO, officials said that footfall has significantly increased in recent months. Tourists from both the Poonch-Rajouri and Shopian sides are thronging destinations like Peer Ki Gali, Dubjan and Aliabad Sarai, drawn by the region's breathtaking natural beauty.

However, visitors say the scenic drive comes at the cost of safety and comfort.

"The views are stunning, but you're completely cut off from the world once you enter the stretch. There is no mobile network, no roadside help and not even basic washrooms," said Shabina Jan, a visitor from Srinagar, who visited Peer Ki



Gali with her family.

Locals and regular travellers echoed similar concerns, urging the government to address the lack of infrastructure.

"The road feels like paradise, especially from Hirpora to Peer Ki Gali—but if your vehicle breaks down, there is no mechanic or help available. You're on your own," said Abdul Majid, a driver who frequently commutes on the route.

"There are stretches of over 20 kilometers without a single shop or eatery. It's a nightmare for tourists and commuters alike," said Fayaz Ahmed, a local transporter from Rajouri.

"In case of accidents or emergencies, it's impossible to call for help due to zero network connectivity. This makes the road risky, especially for those travelling with children or elderly people," added Tariq Lone, a regular commuter.

For women, the absence of

public washrooms poses an even more serious issue.

"It's a shame that such a beautiful and important road lacks basic sanitation. It becomes a traumatic experience for women, especially during long journeys," said Nusrat Bano, a tourist from Pulwama. Stakeholders have urged the government to act swiftly and improve facilities along the Mughal Road—not just to ease travel, but also to boost tourism and local livelihoods.

"If roadside facilities, eateries, and communication setups are improved, the tourist footfall will increase tenfold. This will generate employment for locals and additional revenue for the government," said Aijaz Khan, a hotelier in Poonch.

People from both sides have called for mobile towers, emergency helpline booths, public toilets, rest areas, and regular maintenance of the road.

Sakeena Itoo Reviews Arrangements For Ashura



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today visited Imam Baras at Shahoo in Kulgam and took stock of arrangements for the 10th Muharram.

During her visit, Minister Sakeena engaged with local community members, religious leaders and residents to understand their concerns and ensure that necessary arrangements are in place for the smooth and peaceful observance of Ashura. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the sanctity of the occasion and assured full support in addressing any logistical or administrative issues.

The Minister highlighted the Muharram holds deep spiritual and cultural significance for the Muslim community and it is our collective responsibility to provide an environment of dignity, safety and comfort to the mourners.

She directed the officers to deploy adequate manpower of health department along the routes of Muharram processions for the facilitation of mourners.

Expressing deep respect for the rich traditions and historical significance of Muharram, the Minister outlined the role of inter-community harmony and urged officials to ensure uninterrupted essential services, security and cleanliness around Imam Baras.

She also directed concerned authorities to coordinate closely with local committees to meet the requirements of the devotees, like proper lighting, drinking water, medical aid as well as traffic regulation.

Chief Medical Officer, Executive Engineers of various wings, District and sectoral officers of all the line departments and other concerned officers accompanied the Minister during the visit.

HEATWAVE

Hariparigam Orchardists Crave For Water Agencies

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Farmers of Hariparigam village, Awantipora in south Kashmir's Pulwama district are reeling under a severe irrigation crisis as their orchards, dependent on the Dadi Canal, are drying up due to non-availability of water.

Locals said that despite being allocated water supply during the first four days of July as part of the irrigation department's Warbandi (irrigation schedule), the residents say that they were unable to irrigate their orchards due to unavailability of water.

The villagers allege that residents of upstream areas have been using water pumps illegally on the Dadi Canal to irrigate their fields, leaving tail-end villages like Hariparigam high and dry.

"We were scheduled to receive water during the first four days of July according to the department's schedule, but nothing reached us. Powerful motors used by people in upstream villages have left us with parched fields," said Ghulam Nabi Wani, a local orchardist.

He added that the orchardists in Hariparigam are largely dependent on the Dadi Canal for irrigation, and with the current heatwave and prolonged dry spell, the absence of water has pushed their orchards to

the brink of disaster.

"Over 70% of orchards in our area are rain-fed or canal-dependent. With this level of water theft, our trees are drying, leaves are falling prematurely, and fruit size is shrinking. We fear heavy losses this season," said Farooq Ahmad Dar, another orchardist from the village.

Locals accused the authorities of inaction despite repeated complaints.

"We have approached the irrigation officials multiple times, but no action has been taken against the violators. There should be a strict ban on illegal motor use and proper monitoring to ensure fair distribution of water," said Bilal Ahmad, a resident.

The residents have urged the higher authorities, particularly the Executive Engineer Irrigation Department Anantnag and the District Administration, to take strict action against violators and ensure that scheduled water reaches tail-end villages without hindrance.

"If immediate steps are not taken, our entire fruit crop will be lost. This is our only source of livelihood," said another resident.

Locals have demanded field-level monitoring teams and a ban on unauthorized motor pumps to ensure water reaches the end users—(KNO)

NC Not Afraid Of Polls: CM's Advisor

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Senior National Conference (NC) leader and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Advisor, Nasir Aslam Wani, on Saturday asserted that holding assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are not a prerequisite for the restoration of statehood.

Talking to reporters, Wani, according to KNO said, "The NC is fully prepared for elections whenever they are announced but the restoration of J&K statehood should not be linked to electoral timelines." "We come to know about such reports only through media leaks or planted stories," Wani said while referring to recent news reports suggesting that assembly elections must precede the return of statehood.

"No official proposal regarding the holding of fresh elections has been communicated to us so far. For Jammu and Kashmir to regain statehood from Union Territory status, the Reorganisation Act needs to be amended and the Legislative Council (upper house) must be restored. Nowhere is it mentioned that elections are a precondition."

He added, "Let me be very clear — National Conference has never been scared of facing the people. We are the only true grassroots party in Jammu and Kashmir. Our

demand remains clear: full statehood for Jammu and Kashmir."

Wani also reiterated NC's long-standing call for the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a proposal repeatedly advocated by Omar Abdullah to bridge the trust gap between Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits. "There has been a serious trust deficit since the 1990s, and only a credible Truth and Reconciliation mechanism can help heal the wounds and foster understanding between communities," Wani said.

Referring to the turbulent 1990s, Wani highlighted the sacrifices made by NC workers. "Our workers stood by the nation at a time when standing with India cost them their lives. Hundreds of our party men were killed just because they chose the path of democracy and unity. Despite that, we are still asked to prove our nationalism," he said.

He lamented the recurring political experiments in Jammu and Kashmir, saying, "Since I joined politics, I have seen various experiments being conducted in J&K. But whenever the people are given the opportunity to choose freely, they repose their faith in the National Conference. That's because NC wasn't created by Delhi or any agency. It was born out of the aspirations of the people of this land."

Summer’s Toll on Students

When schools become ovens, learning can’t survive. Kashmir’s classrooms need urgent attention.

Mushtaq Hurra

“
Kashmir's education system cannot keep relying on old patterns. The world is moving ahead, fast. We need new ideas and bold steps. Ending long vacations without fixing school buildings won't help.

The summer heat in Kashmir this year has been brutal. Temperatures have hit levels that locals say haven't been seen in over a century. As the valley swelters, a fresh debate has erupted: should schools extend the summer break? It's not just a quiet conversation among parents anymore. Social media has exploded with opinions, arguments, and even angry accusations. Some influencers, chasing likes and shares, have turned the issue into a public spectacle. They offer advice as if they understand the real situation inside our schools. But many of them are far from the ground reality. Let's be clear: the people making these decisions are not sitting in a bubble. School authorities and officials know what they're doing. They don't need YouTube personalities or self-proclaimed experts preaching from air-conditioned rooms. What they need, and what we all need, is to look closely at the actual conditions our children face in schools across the valley. Parents are right to worry. Most government schools in Kashmir are simply not built to handle extreme weather. Many classrooms have broken windows, cracked walls, and tin roofs that trap heat like ovens. Some schools don't even have proper ceilings or fans. Students sit on uncomfortable benches in rooms with no cooling at all. In these conditions, asking young children to sit through classes in the peak of summer is more than unfair. It's unsafe. Some critics, especially online, have mocked teachers during this debate, painting them

as people looking for an easy way out. That's a terrible misjudgment. Teachers in Kashmir have worked in some of the harshest conditions imaginable. In the far-flung areas of the valley where temperatures can drop to minus 40 degrees, teachers still show up. They work in schools high up in the mountains and in towns where basic facilities are missing. To suggest they are lazy is both unfair and uninformed. It's important to understand that summer vacations are for students, not for teachers. Teachers lose out on service days and other work benefits during these breaks. No one is asking for extra holidays. What we're asking is: how can we send children to classrooms that feel like furnaces? Look at our hospitals. They work round the clock because they have at least the basic facilities to help people through extreme weather. Imagine if those hospitals lacked fans or cooling systems, how would the doctors and staff cope? Yet that's exactly the situation in many schools. Even at home, we can't switch off our fans in this weather. Some families can afford air conditioners, but many can't. And when you think about those uncomfortable classrooms, how can we expect small children to focus, let alone stay healthy? We don't need swanky schools with air conditioning. But we do need the basics: working fans, proper windows, and decent roofs. If those things were in place, the demand for extended summer vacations would shrink. Right now, there is no other option. In fact, over the past few

years, schools in Kashmir have made good progress in reducing the number of days lost to strikes, shutdowns, and curfews. That's a big step forward. But winter vacations still eat up a huge chunk of the academic calendar. This can change if we modernize our schools. Other places have shown it's possible. Delhi, for example, has improved the condition of its government schools by investing in better facilities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Kashmir had winter tutorial programs that helped students continue their studies even during long breaks. These sessions were flexible and widely appreciated. We should bring them back. I'm not asking to cancel winter vacations altogether, students need time to rest and recharge, but perhaps we can reduce the break to just January, the coldest month. Kashmir's education system cannot keep relying on old patterns. The world is moving ahead, fast. We need new ideas and bold steps. Ending long vacations without fixing school buildings won't help. But if we invest in infrastructure, basic things like heating in winter and fans in summer, our schools can stay open longer and our students can finally catch up. Teachers are ready to do their part. What we need now is a serious plan to make our schools places where learning is possible, no matter the season.

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

The Valley Bets Big

In tea shops and on bus rides, the buzz of stock alerts is replacing old conversations about land, gold, and orchards.

Irshad Mushtaq

His investments stretched from Mumbai to New York, from India's largest companies to the global giants whose offices he would likely never see. But the markets, like the valley, can turn. Faisal's small gains did not last. Prices slipped. His carefully stacked portfolio began to tremble. Some days, the red numbers on his screen felt like the seasons had turned against him. Friends who had started with him silently sold their shares and stepped away. Perhaps, they said, this game was not made for people like them, people from Kashmir. But Faisal did not step away. The gamble was never just about making money. It was about the chance to belong to something that stretched beyond the valley's tight borders. To know that from his small town, he could hold a fraction of a company that shaped the world. And he was not the only one. Across the region, the change was catching on. By early 2025, the number of Demat accounts in Jammu and Kashmir had crossed 250,000, a figure that would have once seemed almost impossible. Investment apps, stripped of old barriers, began appearing on the phones of university students, shopkeepers, even housewives. Mutual funds became a stepping stone for many. They offered a gentler

“The gamble was never just about making money. It was about the chance to belong to something that stretched beyond the valley's tight borders. To know that from his small town, he could hold a fraction of a company that shaped the world.

path, managed by professionals and watched by regulators like SEBI. In 2024, the Association of Mutual Funds in India recorded one of the sharpest increases in investor participation from Jammu and Kashmir. These were often first-time investors, cautiously placing their money in funds that balanced risk and reward. The doors to global markets opened wider through Exchange-Traded Funds. Some investors in Baramulla now tracked the movement of gold through ETFs. Others followed the fate of American tech stocks from the narrow courtyards of Pulwama. But there were twists still to come. Faisal thought he was alone until the morning he overheard two young men arguing about stock ratios at a roadside stall near Dal Lake. He didn't know their names. He didn't need to. The conversation told him enough. The markets had crept into the cracks of everyday life. It was no longer just about the saffron crop or the price of timber. It was about Meta's quarterly earnings. It was about whether to hold or sell. The game had arrived. The valley's old wealth remains wrapped in gold, rooted in land, tucked inside family homes. But something else is growing now. Something slower, more patient, more uncertain. Each morning, Faisal checks his stocks. Some days they rise. Some days they fall. The gamble is not whether he wins or loses today. The gamble is whether he can wait long enough to see how far this story will go. And somewhere inside him, he knows the real reward is not the money. It's the proof that even from here, you can still play the long game. And maybe, just maybe, you can win.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

The Race for Ranks

The push for academic success in Kashmir is draining families and shaping young lives in ways we can no longer afford to ignore.

Malik Daniyal and Shahida Mushtaq

Education in Kashmir has always carried the weight of expectation. For decades, families have looked to books and degrees as their path to dignity and security. But when learning turns into a product sold in shiny packages, the dream begins to cost more than most can afford. Today, Kashmir's coaching centres are estimated to be worth several hundred crores. They cover everything from medical and engineering entrances to civil services and even school-level tutoring. Every step of a child's academic journey has been turned into a business opportunity. Students move through long hours of memorization, expensive study guides, and endless tests. The question is no longer what they are learning, but how much they are paying. At the heart of this growing system is fear. Parents are often told, directly or indirectly, that missing out on a particular coaching centre could ruin their child's future. Fees as high as 1.5 to 2 lakh are treated as necessary, not optional. Many families willingly sell gold, take loans, or cut daily expenses to pay these fees. For a daily wage worker earning 600 or 700 a day, spending 70,000 on coaching feels like an investment in survival. But this isn't always an investment that pays off. Classes stretch from early morning to late evening, and instead of sparking curiosity, they leave students exhausted. Many no longer find joy in learning. They are buried under expectations they cannot escape, and soon their mental health begins to suffer. In homes across Kashmir, parents watch their children lose their spark, but feel trapped by the fear of doing otherwise. In this industry, there is little room for those who stumble. Coaching centres focus their advertising on the few who top exams. The students who do not make it are simply left out of the story. Their photos are never on the walls, their efforts never mentioned. For these centres, students who fail are not people. They are forgotten numbers. The way these coaching centres operate is troubling. They often charge similar fees, use the same teaching methods, and compete over celebrity teachers who carry more brand value than teaching skill. Sometimes, a single successful student is claimed by several centres, their story retold in glossy pamphlets. The message is always the same: success is for sale. The problem does not stop there. In some schools, coaching centres have started shaping classroom learning to fit their own targets. Some government school teachers also work at coaching centres, raising serious concerns about divided loyalties. Oversight is weak, and few seem interested in changing that. For many, this is a system too profitable to challenge. There is also no safety net for students caught in this race. Few centres offer mental health support. Few even consider it their responsibility. Students struggling with stress are often told to work harder. No one asks if the system itself is the problem. The price is not just stress. It is a loss of confidence, imagination, and sometimes, self-worth. These coaching centres set their own rules. Fees are fixed without checks. Claims about success are rarely verified. There are no public reports to show how many students truly benefit. In the absence of clear rules, profit, not education, becomes the driving goal, and even students start to believe that only high ranks can prove their value. What Kashmir urgently needs is a system to monitor and regulate these coaching centres. These are not just small tuition shops. They are large, powerful businesses that shape the hopes of an entire generation. Regulation should bring fair fees, honest advertising, and basic welfare standards. Mental health support should not be optional. It must be part of the system. If coaching centres help shape young lives, they must also help protect them. But new rules alone will not be enough. There needs to be a deeper change in how people think about success. The mindset that links worth to rank, and education to suffering, must be questioned. Parents must stop believing that more money always means better chances. Teachers, especially those in public schools, must be held to higher ethical standards. The media must also take a step back from celebrating only the toppers and begin asking about those left behind. Kashmir's conversation about education must go beyond numbers and cut-offs. We must ask: what are we building, if the price is the happiness and health of our children? The goal should not be to simply make this system less harmful. It should be to build something better - something kinder, more honest, and more just. Such a vision cannot come from those who profit from the present system. It must be led by parents who ask for more, by teachers who choose care over cash, and by young people who believe learning can still be a joyful journey. Until then, coaching centres will keep selling promises. And beneath every success story on a billboard, there will remain untold stories of loss, stories we can no longer afford to ignore.

Malik Daniyal is studying Economics at the University of Delhi, where Shahida Mushtaq is also pursuing a degree in Political Science. Views expressed are author's own.

Karbala's Haunting Hours

From the first arrow to the final prayer, the battlefield of Karbala became a memory that time could not bury.

Sayyid Ali

The morning sky over Karbala was dark but still. The first call to prayer pierced the silence at 5:47 AM. In the camp of Imam Husayn, men stirred from uneasy sleep, their hearts tethered to the weight of the day ahead. They knew this dawn might be their last.

After the prayers, Husayn gathered his companions. His voice, steady but shadowed with sorrow, called them to patience, to courage, to the kind of steadfastness that legends remember. Across the plain, the soldiers of Kufa prayed behind their commander, Umar ibn Sa'ad, then busied themselves tying armor, readying bows, tightening their ranks.

The earth itself seemed to hold its breath. As the first light broke at 7:06 AM, Husayn mounted his camel, rising above his men so the enemy could see him. He rode alone towards the Kufan army, his words ringing out like an urgent drum. He reminded them who he was—the grandson of the Prophet, the son of Ali, the brother of Hasan. He called out their betrayal, their false invitations sealed in the very letters he now flung back at them.

His sermon hung in the desert air for half an hour, but the hearts he addressed had already turned to stone.

By 8 AM, his companions stepped forward

to speak. Burayr, the master Qur'an reciter of Kufa, stood tall, his voice a blade. After him came Zuhayr. Their words tried to reach the wavering hearts on the other side. Husayn's cry came next—a question that would echo through history: Is there anyone to help me? Some soldiers hesitated. Hurr, a commander, faltered on the edges of his loyalty. Others slipped away from the Kufan side, drawn by the magnetic pull of Husayn's cause.

Then the hour struck.

At 9 AM, Shimr's voice cut through the morning, urging Umar ibn Sa'ad to begin. Umar raised his bow, loosed the first arrow, and declared: Let it be known—I shot first. A hailstorm of arrows followed, falling like rain upon Husayn's camp. Husayn turned to his companions and told them to prepare for death. Scores fell in that opening barrage, their bodies folding into the sand before they could lift a sword.

The ground trembled as individual duels broke out at 10 AM. Abdullah bin Umair stepped forward, his resolve like iron. He struck down two of Kufa's warriors but lost his fingers in the clash. The battles grew fierce. On the right flank, Habib's men clung to the line. On the left, Zuhayr's fighters met Shimr's assault. Shimr, the merciless commander, was wounded but not stopped. Then Umar unleashed five hundred archers. More

of Husayn's men fell. Abu al-Sha'tha, a skilled bowman, fired his last arrows before the enemy consumed him.

The Kufan army tried to outflank Husayn from behind, but they were met with fire. A trench burned like a wall of flame, keeping the enemy at bay, barely.

By 11 AM, Husayn's companions were dying faster than they could be mourned. They made a pact: no one from Husayn's family would go to battle while they still lived. Burayr, old yet fierce, was among the first to fall, followed by Muslim bin 'Awsajah. In his final breath, Muslim pointed to Husayn. That is my will—protect him. Seven of Husayn's men were surrounded; Abbas broke through to save them.

Then the call to Zuhr prayer rose at 12:50 PM. Even as swords clashed, Husayn ordered the prayer to be held. Some fought while others prayed. Saeed bin Abdullah shielded Husayn, his body catching thirteen arrows before he collapsed. Habib ibn Mazahir was struck down after defending the sanctity of Husayn's prayer. Husayn wept, the first time his tears broke through that day.

By the end of the prayer, only thirty companions remained. Hurr, once an enemy, now bled among the martyrs. Now, the Bani Hashim stepped onto the battlefield. Ali Akbar, Husayn's son, fought with the fire of his

father. His brothers, nephews, cousins followed. One by one, they were cut down.

By 2 PM, the sons of Hasan, the sons of Husayn, the brothers of Husayn, and their kin had fallen. Only Abbas and Husayn remained. Abbas, the loyal brother, asked to fight. Husayn sent him instead to fetch water for the thirsty children. Abbas reached the river but was ambushed. His arms were severed. His head was smashed with a pole. When Husayn found him, his knees buckled. Now my back is broken, he cried.

By 3 PM, Husayn stood alone. He returned to the tents to bid farewell. In a heart-wrenching gesture, he tore pieces from his shirt to wear, so the looters would find it unworthy of theft. In one final plea for mercy, Husayn carried his six-month-old son, Ali Asghar, to the battlefield. He lifted the baby towards the enemy, asking for a drop of water. In answer, an arrow pierced the infant's throat.

Husayn kissed his son and turned to face the end.

They came for him from a distance, fearful to face him up close. Spears and arrows tore into him until his body was marked by dozens of wounds. Near 4:06 PM, as the Adhan for Asr called out, Husayn fell. Some say it was Sinan bin Anas who struck the fatal blow. Others say it was Shimr.

The looting began almost immediately. They stripped the dead, even Husayn. It is said those who robbed him were later cursed with incurable diseases. Umar ibn Sa'ad ordered a brief halt to the looting. Suwayd bin Mata', a Shia from Basra who had arrived too late, fought to protect the surviving women and children but was killed.

As the sun slipped low near 5 PM, Husayn's severed head was handed to Khuli to be sent to Ibn Ziyad. The soldiers then trampled Husayn's body beneath the hooves of their horses.

At 6:49 PM, the call for Maghrib prayer rose over the blood-soaked field. Umar ibn Sa'ad led the evening prayer as though nothing had happened. Sinan recited poetry, boasting that gold awaited him for killing the finest man who had walked the earth.

The day ended, but in places far from Karbala, in cities like Srinagar, its story never would. The sorrow travels through centuries, carried in processions, in the laments of Muharram, in the chests of those who still beat their hands to the rhythm of that long, mournful day.

The piece is an abridged version of Sayyid Ali's 2017 piece on the final hours of the Ashura. The author is an Islamic scholar and educator based in Toronto.

Why Ashura Still Matters

Ashura remains a call to conscience, echoing across time for those who face injustice.

Murtaza Hassan

More than fourteen centuries ago, in a time of slavery, injustice, and chaos, a man set out on a mission that would forever change the world.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) faced ridicule, rejection, and threats as he tried to teach a new way of life, one that valued truth, justice, and compassion.

His mission wasn't just about prayers or rituals. It was about creating a fair and ethical society.

From those difficult beginnings, Islam slowly grew, touching hearts and building communities. It offered a system of life where people could find order, dignity, and purpose.

But even after the Prophet's passing, his message faced fresh dangers. Corrupt rulers, injustice, and moral decay began to creep in.

It was in this setting that Imam Hussain, the beloved grandson of the Prophet, made a choice that would shape history.

Imam Hussain refused to accept Yazid, a leader who had brought oppression, dishonesty, and cruelty to power. He knew that staying silent would mean surrendering the values his grandfather had fought for.

So, he left Medina with his family and a few loyal companions, beginning a journey that would lead them across deserts and into the

heart of Karbala.

The story of Karbala is one of the most powerful moments in Islamic history. Imam Hussain was not driven by power or fame. As he told his brother, "I have not risen to spread evil or to show off. I have left for the betterment of my grandfather's community. I wish to do good and stop evil."

What happened next is remembered every year on Ashura, the 10th of Muharram.

On that day, in the year 680 CE, Imam Hussain and his small group of supporters faced an army that vastly outnumbered them. They were surrounded, denied water, and brutally attacked.

Imam Hussain, along with his family and companions, embraced martyrdom. But in losing their lives, they won something much greater: a timeless victory of courage over fear, of truth over tyranny.

The sacrifices of Karbala did not end on the battlefield.

Lady Zainab, the Prophet's granddaughter, rose in the aftermath, delivering bold speeches in the streets of Kufa and even in Yazid's court. In chains, she carried the message forward, making sure the world would never forget what happened.

Across centuries, stories about Karbala have crossed continents and languages. Even today, visitors at a museum in Istanbul pause before

a simple display: a glass case holding what is marked as "The Soil of Karbala."

According to tradition, the Prophet once collected this soil and gave it to his wife Umm Salma, telling her that it would turn red on the day his grandson would fall. And it did.

In 2018, in Srinagar, a scholar spoke of this moment during a public gathering, reminding listeners that the soil still holds its sacred meaning.

Surviving the tragedy was Imam Zain-ul-Abideen, the Prophet's great-grandson, who was just 23 years old and seriously ill at the time. He would carry forward the teachings, ensuring that the spirit of Karbala did not fade.

Today, the story of Ashura is not simply a ritual of mourning. It remains a call to stand for what is right, even when standing alone.

Imam Hussain's story speaks to anyone who faces injustice, who refuses to bow to fear, who believes that values matter more than victory.

As the philosopher Thomas Carlyle once wrote, "In the history of Islam, the life of Imam Hussain stands unique... Without his martyrdom, Islam would have long perished."

The battle of Karbala ended in blood, but it gave the world a message that still survives: truth does not die.

The author is a Srinagar-based author.

Muharram in Poonch's Many Tongues

From Punjabi elegies to Pahari chants, Poonch carries Muharram in the sound of many voices.

Sammer Mehdi

The hills of Poonch come alive each Muharram, not with the sound of a single language, but with the layered voices of many.

Here, remembrance speaks in Kashmiri, mourns in Punjabi, chants in Pahari.

It is a grief stitched into the land, shaped by the borders that cut through these mountains, yet softened by the ways people hold on to each other.

In this border district, Muharram is not just a religious observance. It is a memory kept alive in every dialect, a procession that carries history not only through footsteps but through words.

The streets fill with the cries of Ya Hussain, carried in Pahari songs, echoing in Urdu verses, folded into Kashmiri laments.

Jaffer, a lifelong resident of Poonch, finds comfort in this.

"For generations, our majalis have echoed with nohas in Punjabi, marsiyas in Kashmiri, and qasidas in Urdu," he said. "It's not just ritual. It's how we remember, how our grandparents mourned."

Across Jammu and Kashmir, Muharram is marked by proces-

sions and prayers. But in Poonch, something else lingers in the air.

The people here move with a certain rhythm. When they say the julioos will begin at two in the afternoon and end by five, it happens that way.

The processions start on time, the gatherings flow in an order everyone seems to know by heart.

Every majlis moves through a familiar sequence: the recitation of the Qur'an, the singing of praises, the telling of elegies, and the collective beat of mourning.

There's a discipline to the sorrow, a structure that seems to hold the weight of the grief.

"This is our way," said one of the local organizers. "It keeps the sanctity alive. It keeps us together."

The mornings during Ashura have their own tenderness.

After the pre-dawn meals, the Imambargahs open their doors early. Volunteers, many of them young, serve sehri to anyone who walks in. Rich or poor, local or traveler, it doesn't matter. They sit side by side, sharing the same food, preparing for the long day of remembrance.

"You don't have to call people twice here," Jaffer said. "They re-

turn on their own. It's part of their respect."

There is a kind of unsaid discipline in Poonch's Muharram that doesn't come from announcements or loud instructions. It seems to rise naturally from the people, from their deep sense of responsibility toward what they are remembering.

In many places, Muharram rituals are shown in ways that make them all look the same.

But Poonch does not follow the expected patterns. The people here remember Karbala in ways that feel local, that feel close to their skin. They sing in their mother tongues, they recite in the language their grandmothers spoke.

This is not a loss of tradition. It is its survival.

When the processions pass through the narrow lanes, they carry more than flags and slogans. They carry the weight of belonging. They carry the promise that even in the smallest dialect, grief will find its voice.

And as the chants of Labbayk Ya Hussain rise from the streets of Poonch, they do not rise as many, but as one.

The author is a trainee reporter at Kashmir Observer.

Iqbal's Pursuit of the Sacred in Karbala's Shadow

In Allama Iqbal's poetry, the love for Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Hussain is more than reverence. It is a bold reminder of courage, conviction, and the kind of faith the modern world often forgets.

Muntashir Kifayat Hussain

In a world where faith is often measured by ritual, not courage, Allama Iqbal takes us back to the heart of Islam, a place where love is defiance and resilience is worship.

Iqbal's poetry is not content with praising from a distance. His devotion to Hazrat Ali [A.S.] is raw, urgent, and deeply personal. In his verses, Ali is not just the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or the fourth caliph of Islam. Ali is the first Muslim, the king of the brave, and, most of all, the gate to the city of love.

But Iqbal's admiration is not for titles. It is for Ali's life, his fierce courage, his unmatched simplicity, his stubborn refusal to be dazzled by the world's empty crowns.

Ali ate barley bread, slept on the bare earth, and yet carried the weight of armies on his shoulders. Iqbal does not idolize Ali because he was powerful. He loves him because Ali walked away from power when it meant losing his integrity.

In a time where people chase status and influence, Iqbal's obsession with Ali cuts sharply against the grain. For Iqbal, the power worth chasing is not the power of empires. It is the power of self-mastery. "For me, the strength of Ali is enough," he writes. "Let others chase the sharpness of Plato's mind."

It is this strength, Iqbal believes, that moves history forward, not grand speeches or clever philosophies. In a line that burns with pride, he writes that the wealth of faith is to love Ali. It is not a metaphor. It is his faith.

Iqbal never hides his own faults. He admits he is far from pure. But his heart, stained as it may be, holds one thing tightly—the love of the Prophet's family, the Ahle Bait.

He believes this alone might be enough to save him. He writes that he carries the mark of this love on his heart and imagines Ali searching for him, ready to offer shelter.

In Kashmir, where the love of Ahle Bait still shapes the rhythm of mourning processions and shapes stories passed from grandmothers to grandchildren, Iqbal's poetry is more than literature. It is a heartbeat.

His verses remind Kashmiris, and perhaps all Muslims, that faith is not just in rituals. It is in standing firm when the world leans the other way.

Iqbal's devotion is not bound to

Hazrat Ali alone. It flows through to Hazrat Hussain, Ali's son, the man who stood alone on the plains of Karbala and refused to bow to tyranny.

Hussain's death is often seen as tragedy. But for Iqbal, it is something else. It is Islam's proudest moment of resistance, Hussain's refusal to submit made him the beating heart of truth.

Iqbal's words capture this sharp and sacred link: "Allah, Allah! The father belongs to Bismillah, the son to the meaning of sacrifice."

Ali stands for the opening of love; Hussain becomes the full expression of it, a sacrifice that does not break, but builds.

Even in one of his most precise observations, Iqbal links Hussain to the beginning of Islam's history. He writes, "The story of Haram is simple

and colorful. It began with Ismail and reached its fullness with Hussain."

It is an unbroken chain of courage and submission to truth, passing from the knife held over Ismail to the sword that could not break Hussain's resolve.

There is something sharp in Iqbal's refusal to let the past remain in the past. For him, Karbala is not over. The battle lines are always drawn, in every age, in every heart. The choice between surrendering to falsehood or standing firm with dignity is not ancient history. It is a present-day decision.

His anger at those who speak ill of Ali is not rhetorical. It is personal. He wonders how those who claimed to love the Prophet still found room to hate Ali.

And if Ali was not spared by his own people, why would Iqbal, a mere servant of Ali, expect anything better?

In today's world, where political calculations often matter more than principles, where many choose comfort over standing firm, Iqbal's love for Ali and Hussain is a provocation.

It pushes us to ask: Who are we really standing with? What are we really defending?

For Iqbal, the answer was never complicated. The love of Ali and Hussain is not a soft love. It is not ornamental. It is a fire that burns down falsehood, a courage that stands alone if needed, and a wealth that no empire can buy.

It is a love that still has the power to reshape hearts. Even now. Even here.

The author is a Budgam based teacher. He can be reached out at muntashirkifayat@gmail.com

Study Finds Human Brain Cells Continue To Form Into Late Adulthood

Press Trust Of India

A study has shown that neurons or nerve cells continue to form well into late adulthood in the brain's hippocampus, which manages memory -- a finding that presents compelling new evidence about the human brain's adaptability.

Neurogenesis -- a process whereby new neurons are created -- is said to continue throughout one's life, even as the rate is considered to slow down with age.

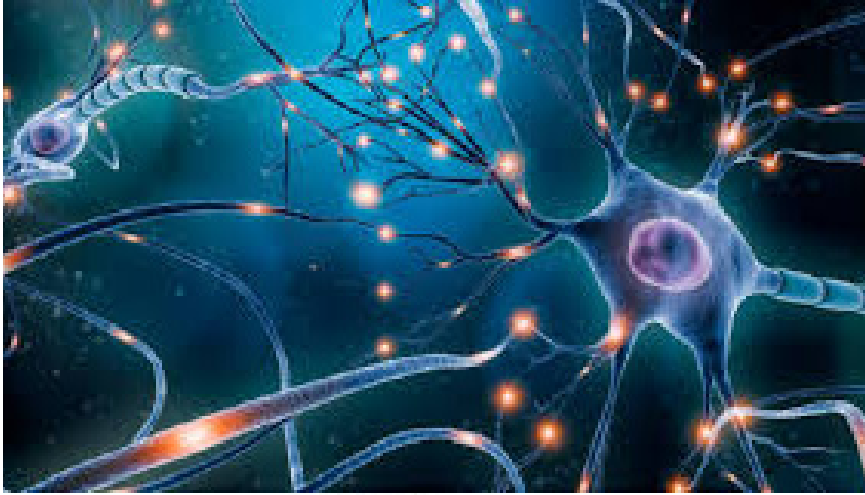
However, researchers from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden said the extent and significance of neurogenesis is still debated with no clear evidence of cells that precede new neurons -- or 'neural progenitor cells' -- actually existing and dividing in adults.

"We have now been able to identify these cells of origin, which confirms that there is an ongoing formation of neurons in the hippocampus of the adult brain," Jonas Frisen, professor of stem cell research, Karolinska Institutet, who led the research published in the journal Science.

The team used carbon dating methods to analyse DNA from brain tissue, which made it possible to determine when the cells were formed. Tissue samples of people aged 0 to 78 were obtained from international biobanks, they said.

The results showed that cells that precede the forming of new neurons in adults are similar to those mice, pigs and monkeys, with differences in genes which are active.

The researchers also found large differences between individuals -- some adult humans had many neural progenitor cells, others hardly



“We have now been able to identify these cells of origin, which confirms that there is an ongoing formation of neurons in the hippocampus of the adult brain

any at all.

Frisen added that the study is an "important piece of the puzzle in understanding how the human brain works and changes during life", with implications for developing regenerative treatments in neurodegenerative and psychiatric disorders.

A steady loss of neurons resulting in an impaired functioning and

eventually cell death is said to drive neurodegenerative disorders, which affects the hippocampus, among other brain regions. Risks of the disorders are known to heighten with age.

For the study, the researchers used a method called 'single-nucleus RNA sequencing', which looks at activity of a gene in a cell's nucleus.

This was combined with machine learning (a type of AI) to discern varied stages of how neurons develop, from stem cells to immature neurons, many of which were in the division phase, the team said.

"We analysed the human hippocampus from birth through adulthood by single-nucleus RNA sequencing. We identified all neural progenitor cell stages in early childhood," they wrote.

"In adults, using antibodies against the proliferation marker Ki67 and machine learning algorithms, we found proliferating neural progenitor cells," the authors wrote.

"The results support the idea that adult neurogenesis occurs in the human hippocampus and add valuable insights of scientific and medical interest," the study said.

'Stimulating Brain With Weak Electric Currents May Help Improve Learning Maths'

Press Trust Of India

A new study in young adults has found that stimulating the brain with safe electric currents may help them solve mathematical problems more efficiently.

Researchers, led by those at the University of Surrey, UK, found that applying safe, painless electric currents to the brain's dorsolateral prefrontal cortex -- which helps with learning, memory and focus -- improved mathematical problem-solving abilities in people aged 18 to 30.

The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex is located on the outer surface of the frontal lobe, which is at the front of the head behind the forehead.

"A growing body of research has shown that biological factors often explain educational outcomes in mathematics more powerfully than environmental ones," said Roi Cohen Kadosh, head of the University of Surrey's school of psychology and lead author of the study published in the journal PLOS Biology, said.

The author pointed out that efforts to improve education have primarily focused on environmental factors, such as training teachers and redesigning curricula, while largely ignoring the neurobiology of the learner.

"Transcranial random noise stimulation" -- a non-invasive technique that involves delivering weak electrical currents to the brain via electrodes placed on the scalp -- is being studied for how it can impact brain activity, such as improving cognition, depressive symptoms and reducing pain.

Seventy two adults took part in a five-day maths training programme -- 24 received transcranial random noise stimulation to the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, 24 to the posterior parietal cortex, and 24 received a sham version of the treatment (placebo).

The posterior parietal cortex, which helps process information received via



one's senses, is located in the parietal lobe at the top rear of the head.

Brain scans revealed that people with a stronger connection between the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (which helps focus and learn) and the posterior parietal cortex performed better in mathematical tasks.

However, for those having a weak connection between these brain regions, providing safe electric currents to the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex significantly improved learning, the researchers said.

Improvements were also related to lower levels of GABA in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. GABA is a brain chemical that works to stabilise newly acquired information and is, therefore, crucial to learning and memory.

"By integrating insights from psychology, neuroscience and education to develop innovative techniques that address neurobiological constraints, we can help more people reach their potential, broaden access to diverse career pathways and reduce long-term inequalities in income, health and wellbeing," Kadosh said.

The team emphasised that while previous studies have highlighted the role of brain regions -- dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and posterior parietal cortex -- in mathematical learning, their study sheds light on how these regions play a causal role in a critical academic skill.

"Our multimodal approach elucidates the causal role of the (dorsolateral prefrontal cortex) and frontoparietal network in a critical academic learning skill," the authors wrote.



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Microsoft Shuts Its Pakistan Office After 25 Years, Sparks Economic Concerns



Press Trust Of India

KARACHI: Tech giant Microsoft has announced to shut down its limited operations in Pakistan as part of its global strategy to reduce workforce, which various stakeholders termed on Friday as a “troubling sign” for the country’s economy.

Microsoft, while closing its office in Pakistan on Thursday after 25 years, cited global restructuring and a shift to a cloud-based, partner-led model.

The move came as the tech giant cut roughly 9,100 jobs worldwide (or about 4 per cent of its workforce) in its largest layoff round since 2023.

Jawwad Rehman, former founding Country Manager of Microsoft Pakistan, urged the government and IT minister to engage with the tech giants with a bold KPI (Key Performance Indicators) driven plan. He said the exit reflected the

current business climate. “Even global giants like Microsoft find it unsustainable to stay,” he posted on LinkedIn.

Former Pakistan president Arif Alvi, in a post on X, also expressed concern over Microsoft shutting down operations.

“It is a troubling sign for our economic future,” he wrote.

He claimed Microsoft once considered Pakistan for expansion, but that instability led the company to choose Vietnam instead by late 2022.

“The opportunity was lost,” he wrote.

Jawwad explained that Microsoft didn’t operate a full commercial base in Pakistan, relying instead on liaison offices focused on enterprise, education, and government clients.

Over recent years, much of that work had already shifted to local partners, while licensing and contracts were managed from its European hub in Ireland.

Number Of Poor Rising, Wealth Getting Concentrated In Hands Of Some Rich: Gadkari

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday expressed concern over the “rising” number of poor, and said wealth was getting concentrated in the hands of some affluent people.

There is a need for decentralisation of wealth, Gadkari said during an event in Nagpur, where he touched upon a range of issues, including agriculture, manufacturing, taxation and public-private partnerships in infrastructure development.

“Slowly the number of poor people is increasing and wealth is getting centralised in the hands of some wealthy people. It should not happen,” the Road Transport and Highways Minister said.

The economy must grow in a manner that creates jobs and uplifts rural areas, he said.

“We are looking at an economic option that will create jobs and (give a boost to the) growth of the economy. There is a need for decentralisation of wealth, and many changes have happened in that direction,” he said.

The senior BJP leader also credited former prime ministers P V Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh for adopting liberal economic policies but cautioned against unchecked centralisation. “We have to be worried about it,” he added.

Referring to India’s economic structure, he pointed out the imbalance in sectoral contributions to GDP.

“Manufacturing contributes 22-24 per cent, services 52-54 per cent, while agriculture, despite engaging 65-70 per cent of the rural population, contributes only around 12 per cent,” he said.

Invoking Swami Vivekananda, Gadkari said, “Philosophy can-



not be taught to someone whose stomach is empty.”

He highlighted the evolving role of chartered accountants, Gadkari said, “CAs can be the growth engines of the economy. Our economy is changing rapidly. It is not only about filing income tax returns and GST submissions.” Talking about the infrastructure development, Gadkari highlighted his own initiatives in the transport sector.

“I was the one who started the Build-Operate-Transfer system for road construction,” he claimed. There is no shortage of funds for road development, he added. “Sometimes I say I do not have a fund crunch but I have a shortage of work,” Gadkari said.

“Now, we earn nearly Rs 55,000 crore through toll booths and in the next two years, our income will go up to Rs 1.40 lakh crore. If we monetise it for the next 15 years, we will have Rs 12 lakh crore. New toll will add more money to our coffers,” he said. The minister also spoke about projects aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and investment.

“We are constructing a rope of Rs 5,000 crore in Kedarnath. The contractor is ready to spend the amount and give Rs 800 crore royalty to the Union government. When the Uttarakhand government asked us to share the royalty, I asked whether they would also share the loss-making units,” he said.

J&K To Host Maiden National Tourism Secretaries’ Conference At SKICC On July 7, 8

Union Tourism Minister, Tourism heads of all States, UTs to participate

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- In a significant boost to Jammu & Kashmir’s tourism profile, the Union Ministry for Tourism is organising two day Tourism Secretaries’ Conference of all States and Union Territories at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar, on 7th and 8th July 2025, for the first time in Jammu & Kashmir

The national event will bring together the Tourism Secretaries and Heads from across the country for high-level deliberations on collaborative policy-making and strategic planning in the tourism sector. Senior dignitaries including the Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, the Union Home Secretary and the Secretary, Ministry for Tourism are expected to attend the event.

The conference will focus on key national-level policy areas like tourism-related budget announcements for 2025-26, destination development and infrastructure initiatives, review of sanctioned projects, promotion and marketing strategies, investment opportunities and film tourism promotion.

A special session dedicated exclusively to Union Territo-



ries will be held on 8th July, with participation from top-level officials and expected attendance of the Union Home Secretary.

In preparation for this prestigious event, Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Yasha Mudgal, today conducted a detailed review of the arrangements at SKICC. She was accompanied by Director Tourism Kashmir and Director SKICC, who briefed her on logistical, hospitality and security measures being put in place.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner Secretary said, “This is a proud moment for Jammu & Kashmir. Hosting tourism leaders from across the country is both an opportunity and a responsibility. We are committed towards ensuring immaculate

arrangements and seamless coordination.” She added that the conference offers a unique chance to “showcase J&K’s tourism potential, recent progress and its policy alignment with national tourism goals.”

The event is expected to serve as a platform for collaborative dialogue, knowledge exchange and launch of new initiatives for sustainable and inclusive tourism. The scenic setting of Srinagar will also allow delegates to experience first-hand the region’s renowned natural beauty and warm hospitality.

This historic gathering marks a major milestone in Jammu & Kashmir’s emergence as a year-round tourism destination and a hub for national policy engagement in the tourism sector.



THIS IS A PROUD MOMENT FOR JAMMU & KASHMIR. Hosting tourism leaders from across the country is both an opportunity and a responsibility. We are committed towards ensuring immaculate arrangements and seamless coordination.”

‘India’s Rights In WTO To Retaliate On US Auto Tariffs Wont Affect Trade Deal Talks’

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India’s decision to reserve its rights to impose retaliatory duties on the US over imposition of tariffs on auto parts is a procedural move under the WTO agreement on safeguards and it will not affect ongoing negotiations on the proposed trade pact between the two countries, an official said.

India on Friday proposed imposing retaliatory duties under the WTO (World Trade Organisation) norms against the US over American tariffs on imports of the country’s auto parts in the name of safeguard measures.

The proposed suspension of concessions or other obligations would take the form of an increase in tariffs on selected products originating in the US, according to a notification of the WTO being circulated at the request of India.

“The notification in WTO is an essential step to reserve India’s right, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement on safeguard and does not prejudice ongoing discussions, deliberations, negotiations for finalizing tranche one or subsequent tranches of India-US bilateral trade agreement (BTA) in any way,” the official told PTI.



The two countries have aimed to conclude the first phase of the BTA by fall (September-October) this year. The agreement is aimed at more than doubling bilateral trade to USD 500 billion by 2030 from the current USD 191 billion.

Both India and the US are signatories to the Agreement on Safeguard at the WTO which empowers a WTO Member to suspend its tariff concessions to another member who introduces safeguard measures on its imports.

On 26 March 2025, the US announced a 25 per cent ad valorem tariff on the import of automobiles and on certain automobile parts, including, from India under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, 1974.

“India treated it as a safeguard measure and gave a notice for consultation under the WTO agreement earlier. Now, as per the provisions of that agreement, after completion of 30 days period for consultation, as a next step, India has notified that it is reserving its right to suspend concession on equivalent US exports to India as a response to enhanced tariff of 25 per cent imposed by the US on Indian exports of auto components,” the official said.

Before the first phase, India and the US are negotiating to finalise an interim trade agreement before July 9, which marks the end of the 90-day suspension period of the Trump tariffs imposed on dozens of countries including India.



India’s First National Cooperative University Will End Nepotism In Sector, Training Vacuum: Shah

Press Trust Of India

ANAND (GUJARAT)- Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said India’s first national university for cooperatives coming up in Gujarat will work to end nepotism as only persons trained by it will get jobs in this sector in the future.

Shah was addressing a gathering at the campus of Anand Agriculture University after laying the foundation stone of Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) that will be built on a 125-acre plot at a cost of Rs 500 crore.

The university has been named after the late Tribhuvandas Keshubhai Patel, one of the pioneers of the cooperative movement in India who was instrumental in laying the foundation of Amul. Born on October 22, 1903, in Kheda in Anand, Patel died on June 3, 1994.

“The upcoming university will work to address the allegations of nepotism in this sector. Unlike the past, when people were first hired and then trained, only trained people will get jobs in this sector in the future,” Shah said.

The Union minister said the university will also address the existing “weaknesses” in this sector and fill the training gaps in the domain that engages ev-

ery fourth person of the country, or about 30 crore people.

He said the cooperatives sector in India has no dearth of talent and what the country requires now is trained manpower.

TSU will fill this “mega vacuum” which has stopped the progress of this sector, he said.

Shah also sought to address criticism from some quarters about the upcoming university not being named after Dr Verghese Kurien, the father of the White Revolution, saying his role in the cooperatives sector can never be denied.

“Patel sahab (Tribhuvan Patel) enlightened and nurtured the cooperative movement... it was his vision that the sector is standing strong today,” he said.

Shah said it was Patel who sent Kurien to study in the Netherlands, adding those “who say that Kurien’s contribution to this sector was not being acknowledged were the ones who did nothing to celebrate his birth centenary.”

It is Amul that is celebrating his legacy, he said.

Congress leaders who raised such questions do not know that Patel was from their party. The BJP did not even exist then, the minister said.

Shah said the TSU will not only produce a talented workforce but also leaders like Patel for the cooperatives sector.

Nearly Half Of MSMEs Polled Prefer UPI For Business Transactions, Says Report

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Nearly half of MSMEs surveyed prefer UPI as a mode of transaction to grow their business, followed by Aadhaar-enabled banking, says a report.

According to the MSME Digital Index Report by PayNearby, digital payments continue to gain strong acceptance among MSMEs, with UPI emerging as the most preferred mode of transaction at 48 per cent, followed by Aadhaar-enabled banking at 39 per cent.

Among women entrepreneurs, Aadhaar banking saw even higher preference at 42 per cent, reflecting increasing trust in secure, tech-enabled services such as fingerprint and face authentication, the report said.

The report is based a nationwide survey conducted among 10,000 individuals and MSMEs in retail-focused segments such as kirana stores, mobile recharge outlets, medical shops, customer service points (CSPs), and travel agencies.

It found that smartphones have emerged as primary business device at 71 per cent while among women, it is even higher at 84 per cent.



On benefits from digital adoption, a third of respondents cited improved operational efficiency, while over 73 per cent of small businesses across semi-urban and rural India have seen increased income or improved operational efficiency as a result of adopting digital tools.

“A small but notable 7 per cent of respondents have begun exploring automated or AI-powered tools, including inventory apps, automated billing systems, and customer engagement platforms, mostly through third-party solutions,” the report said.

Anand Kumar Bajaj, Founder, MD & CEO, PayNearby, said, “The MSME sector is the backbone of Bharat’s economy, and the rapid adoption of digital tools such as smartphones, UPI, Aadhaar-enabled banking, and emerging AI workflows is proof that this segment is embracing modernisation.”

India, Maldives Hold Talks To Deepen Trade And Investment Ties

Press Trust Of India

MALE- India and the Maldives discussed ways to explore new opportunities for economic cooperation and trade enhancement, state-run media said on Saturday.

The discussion for strengthening trade was held during a meeting between India’s Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal and Maldivian Economic Development and Trade Minister Mohamed Saeed here on Friday.

The meeting, held at the Maldivian Economic Ministry as part of Barthwal’s visit, focused on exploring new areas of economic collaboration and strengthening existing trade ties, according to Public Service Media (PSM News), the state-run media.

After the meeting, Saeed said in a post on X: “Had a productive meeting today with India’s Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal. We discussed strengthening trade and investment partnerships between our nations and exploring new opportunities for economic cooperation.”

The Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in a post on X, said Barthwal had “a constructive” meeting with Saeed, “focusing on enhancing trade and investment ties and exploring new avenues for economic cooperation between the two countries.”

Market Manipulation Is Not Going To Be Tolerated: Sebi Chairman Pandey

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Capital markets regulator Sebi chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Saturday made it clear that market manipulation is not going to be tolerated.

Speaking with reporters a day after an interim order against New York-based hedge fund manager Jane Street, Pandey said surveillance has been increased both by the regulator and also at the exchange level.

When asked if similar patterns have been seen with other foreign portfolio investors as well, Pandey said, “All what I can say that market manipulation is not going to be tolerated”. Sebi on Friday barred US-based Jane Street Group from the securities markets and directed the group to disgorge unlawful gains of Rs 4,843 crore for allegedly manipulating stock indices through positions taken in the derivatives segment.

This could be the highest disgorgement amount ever directed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

In its interim order, the regulator has debarred JSI Investments, JSI2 Investments Pvt Ltd, Jane Street Singapore Pte Ltd, and Jane Street Asia Trading -- entities collectively referred to as the Jane Street Group -- from trading until further notice, while continuing its investigation.

Dir Agri Inaugurates Commercial Vermicompost Unit Under HADP

Observer News Service

RAJOURI- In a significant step toward promoting organic farming and empowering women farmers, the Director Agriculture Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen today inaugurated a Commercial Vermicompost Unit under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) at Bhajwal-A, Nadani, Sunderbani, District Rajouri. The unit has been established by progressive woman farmer Kulwanti Devi, serving as a model for sustainable and chemical-free agricultural practices in the region.

The inaugural event witnessed the presence of Chief Agriculture Officer Rajouri, S. Madan Gopal Singh, Tehsil Horticulture Officer, Sunderbani, Arun Kumar Sharma and other dignitaries including Yashpal Sharma, Dr. Mulkhraj Sharma and Vinod Raina (Sathi), along with senior officers from the Agriculture Department.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director emphasized the importance of organic farming in improving soil health, reducing input costs and enhancing farm incomes. “Under HADP, we are establishing commercial vermicompost units as decentralized hubs for organic input production,” he said. “Progressive farmers like Kulwanti Devi are leading the change towards a greener, healthier agriculture ecosystem.”

Pak, US Conclude Critical Round Of Trade Negotiations

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD- Pakistan and the US have concluded a critical round of trade negotiations, reaching an understanding on a deal that could shape the future of the country’s key export sectors, a media report said on Saturday.

While both sides have reached an understanding, a formal announcement is expected only after the US concludes similar ongoing negotiations with other trade partners, Dawn News reported.

The understanding was reached with less than a week before the July 9 deadline to conclude the talks in Washington, where Commerce Secretary Jawad Paal led the Pakistan delegation to finalise a long-term reciprocal tariff agreement that would prevent the re-imposition of a 29 per cent tariff on Pakistani exports, primarily textiles and agricultural products.

The tariff relief, temporarily paused earlier this year, was at risk of expiring if no progress had been made by July 9. Officials familiar with the negotiations said the four-day talks were successful, with both sides agreeing to a broad framework.

The agreement, when signed, could lead to increased Pakistani imports of US goods -- notably crude oil -- and potential American investment in Pakistan’s mining, energy, and infrastructure sectors.



Gill, Pacers Put India In Driver's Seat In Edgbaston

Press Trust of India

BIRMINGHAM: Shubman Gill's insatiable appetite for runs resulted in a second hundred of the game as India set an impossible 608-run target, throwing down the gauntlet to England's Bazballers who were staring down the barrel going into day five of the second Test here.

Gill (161 off 162 balls) turned himself into a virtual 'Run Machine', smashing his third hundred in four innings following his epic 269 in the first essay.

The other contributions in the second innings came from Ravindra Jadeja (69 not out), Rishabh Pant (65) and KL Rahul (55) as India declared their second innings at 427 for six.

The Indian pacers once again got the new ball to talk with Akash Deep accounting for the dangerous Ben Duckett and the dependable Joe Root while and Mohammed Siraj had Zak Crawley caught at backward point with a full outswinger, reducing the hosts to 72 for three in 16 overs at

stumps on day four.

The timing of India's declaration, that came one hour after tea, was questioned by the experts and fans alike with the likes of Cheteshwar Pujara saying on air that India should have declared at least half hour earlier.

The England fans in the fabled Hollies stand chanted 'boring boring' when declaration was not announced despite Gill's dismissal. The booing followed soon after.

Gill, who got to three figures at the stroke of tea, stepped up his offensive against the spin duo of Shoaib Bashir and part timer Joe Root, employing the sweep to deep square and mid-wicket fence regularly.

His innings included 13 fours and eight sixes and took his match tally of runs to 430, surpassing the great Sunil Gavaskar's record (344 against West Indies at Port of Spain in 1971) for most runs by an Indian.

He also became the second Indian after Gavaskar to get a 200 and 100 in the same Test.

The wickets have been flat and

produced mountain of runs but India have already aggregated seven hundreds on the tour, unprecedented in an away series.

It would be interesting to see what approach England adopts though their philosophy in the Ben Stokes-Brendon McCullum is driven by results and not draws. The only draw in the Bazball era, the Old Trafford game in Ashes 2023, was caused by rain.

Gill changed gears post the lunch break to push the scoring rate before completing his second hundred of the game at the stroke of tea.

He brought the rare milestone with a single off Bashir in the penultimate over before the tea break.

Following his double in the first innings, the hundred celebrations were not over the top, signalling his focus on levelling the series.

Gill shared a 110-run stand with Rishabh Pant (65 off 58) who exhibited breathtaking strokeplay and departed in a fitting fashion, losing control of his bat in his attempt to whack Shoaib Bashir out of the park.

Suryavanshi Fastest & Youngest Centurion In Youth ODIs



Press Trust of India

WORCESTER: Impressive Vaibhav Suryavanshi continued to push his stocks up, smashing the fastest Youth ODI hundred to guide India Under-19 to a mammoth 363 for nine against their English counterparts in the fourth match here on Saturday.

Suryavanshi, who had a breakout IPL 2025 season, proved his mettle in the 50-over version too while making 143 off just 78 balls at a whopping strike-rate of 183, including 13 fours and 10 sixes.

Suryavanshi broke the record for the

quickest Youth ODI century held by Pakistan's Kamran Ghulam, who had reached the milestone in 53 deliveries, also against England, back in 2013.

Till now, Raj Angad Bawa's 69-ball hundred against Uganda at the U-19 World Cup in 2022 was the fastest century by an Indian in Youth one-dayers.

The 14-year-old left-hander brought up his 100 in just 52 balls, and it also made him the youngster batter to cross the milestone in youth cricket.

Suryavanshi is 14 years and 100 days when he made his hundred, going past Bangladesh's Najmul Hossain Shanto who went past the three-figure mark when he was 14 years and 241 days.

This is a continuation of Suryavanshi's ever-growing career graph after becoming the youngest ever batter to make 100 in the IPL, achieving the feat in just 35 balls for Rajasthan Royals against Gujarat Titans.

The lad from Bihar's Samastipur had also struck the second-fastest hundred in men's Youth Tests against Australia U19 in Chennai last year.

He reached the ton in just 58 balls and now sits behind former England all-rounder Moeen Ali, who hit a 56-ball hundred in 2005.

The latest feat of Suryavanshi attracted high praise from Bihar Cricket Association (BCA) president Rakesh Tiwari.

He said Suryavanshi is on his way to break several other records.

For the record, the India U19 side is leading the five-match series 2-1.

BCCI, BCB Agree To Defer White Ball Series In Bangladesh



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Saturday mutually agreed to defer the white-ball series between Bangladesh and India, which was scheduled to be held in August 2025 to September 2026.

The away series was to feature three ODIs and three Twenty20 Internationals to be played from August 17 to 31 in Chittagong and Dhaka.

"This decision has been reached following discussions between the two Boards, taking into account the international cricketing commitments and scheduling convenience of both teams," the BCCI said in a release.

The BCB said the fresh schedule of the series will be announced in "due course."

"The BCB looks forward to welcoming India in September 2026 for this eagerly

anticipated series. Revised dates and fixtures for the tour will be announced in due course," the release said.

While the two boards pinned the reason for deferring the series to scheduling inconveniences, the PTI had reported on July 4 that the BCCI wanted the series to be rescheduled since it was wary of the security situation in Bangladesh which is in turmoil since last year's civil unrest that resulted in the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

It is understood that the BCCI wanted the tour to go ahead only after the general elections are held in Bangladesh and "a stable government is in place taking care of the law and order situation."

Elections in Bangladesh are not expected to take place before early next year.

Bangladesh is currently governed by an interim government led by Muhammad Yunus.

Liverpool Players Join Family Of Diogo Jota For Funeral In Portugal

AP

GONDOMAR (PORTUGAL): Liverpool players joined family and friends for the funeral of their teammate Diogo Jota and his brother on Saturday, two days after the siblings died in a car crash in Spain.

The service will be held at Igreja Matriz church in the Portuguese town of Gondomar, where Jota had a home.

Portugal's national team coach Roberto Martinez and several top Portuguese players also attended, including Manchester City duo Bernardo Silva and Ruben Dias and Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes.

Jota, 28, and his brother, André Silva, 25, were found dead near Zamora in northwestern Spain early Thursday after the Lamborghini they were driving crashed on an isolated stretch of highway just after midnight on Thursday and burst into flames.

The brothers were reportedly heading to catch a boat from northern Spain to go to England where Jota was to rejoin with Liverpool after a summer break.

Spanish police are investigat-



ing the cause of the crash, which did not involve another vehicle, they said. They said they believe it could have been caused by a blown tire.

Their bodies were repatriated to Portugal after being identified by the family. A wake was held for them on Friday.

Jota's death occurred two weeks after he married long-time partner Rute Cardoso while

on vacation from a long season where he helped Liverpool win the Premier League. The couple had three children, the youngest born last year.

Jota was born in Porto but started his playing career as a child on nearby Gondomar.

Silva played for Portuguese club Penafiel in the lower divisions.

Their loss led to an outpouring of condolences from the soccer

world and Portuguese officials.

Neves Serves As Pallbearer At Jota Funeral

Al-Hilal's Ruben Neves and Joao Cancelo flew to Portugal for the funeral for their former teammate Diogo Jota after an emotional Club World Cup quarter-final against Fluminense on Friday that saw them break down in tears during the minute's silence.

Neves, one of Jota's closest friends, served as a pallbearer for the Liverpool forward.

Tributes have continued to pour in for the brothers with footballing greats including Cristiano Ronaldo and Steven Gerrard, joining the Prime Ministers of Portugal and Britain in mourning the loss.

Friday's match between Al-Hilal and Fluminense in Orlando began with players and fans observing a minute's silence in memory of the two brothers.

Neves, who played with the 28-year-old Jota during their days at Wolverhampton Wanderers, issued a touching tribute on Instagram about an hour before kick-off. "Wherever you are, I know you're going to read this, we've never been one for this sort of thing and maybe now I'll regret it a little, but you know what you mean to me just as much as I know what I am to you," Neves said.

Chelsea's Portuguese forward Pedro Neto also paid a heartfelt tribute to his friends when he walked out on the field with a shirt bearing their names before their quarter-final against Palmeiras in Philadelphia.

You Deserve All Of This: Kohli Lauds Gill

Former India Test captain Virat Kohli on Saturday lauded "star boy" Shubman Gill for "rewriting history" against England, saying that he deserves "all of this".

Gill brought up his second consecutive century and third of the ongoing tour of England while crossing the 500-run aggregate in only four innings of the five-match series on Saturday.

The 25-year-old captain struck 13 fours and eight sixes to make 161 off 162 balls, following up his first-innings' 269 to become only the second Indian after legendary Sunil Gavaskar to have scored a double century and a ton in a Test.

"Well played star boy. Rewriting history. Onwards and upwards from here. You deserve all of this," wrote Kohli, who retired from Test cricket a month before the England tour and is now settled in London.

Gill amassed 430 runs in the two innings of the second Test, which is also the second highest aggregate ever from a batter in a match following Graham Gooch's 456 runs (333 and 123) against India at Lord's in 1990. (PTI)

Hosting & Competing, Neeraj Wins NC Classic

Indian javelin superstar Neeraj Chopra on Saturday clinched the inaugural NC Classic as he realised his dream of hosting and competing in a world class event in front of the home crowd and family members.

The 27-year-old double Olympic medallist emerged winner with his third round throw of 86.18m at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium watched by his parents. This was his third straight title, having won in Paris Diamond League (June 20) and Golden Spike in Ostrava, Poland (June 24).

Kenya's 2025 world champion Julius Yego was second with 84.51m while Rumesh Pathirage (84.34m) of Sri Lanka was third.

It was a tough outing for all the competitors as they had to throw under a strong wind blowing almost head-on.

Organised by Chopra himself in collaboration with JSW Sports and sanctioned by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), the event featured a world-class field of 12 javelin throwers -- seven top international throwers and five Indian athletes, including Chopra himself.

The NC Classic has been given category A status by World Athletics.

Chelsea Completes Signing Of Winger Gittens From Dortmund

Chelsea completed the signing of English winger Jamie Gittens from Borussia Dortmund on Saturday for a reported initial fee of 48.5 million pounds (\$66 million).

The 20-year-old Gittens signed a contract until 2032 and follows in the footsteps of Jadon Sancho, another former Manchester City youth player who developed his game at Dortmund. Sancho spent last season on loan at Chelsea from Manchester United.

"It feels great," Gittens said. "It's a great feeling to join such a big club as Chelsea."

"I can't wait to learn from everyone in the team and to push myself to the max here. It's an amazing feeling."

Gittens joined Dortmund in 2020 shortly after his 16th birthday and scored 12 times in all competitions last season, but was often dropped to the bench after coach Niko Kovac took over in February.

Known as Jamie Bynoe-Gittens when he made his Dortmund debut in 2022, the winger announced last year he wanted to be known simply as Jamie Gittens. He said he was following the example of his father, who also uses part of his full surname.

Chelsea has also signed strikers Joao Pedro and Liam Delap since the end of last season. (AP)

Bayern's Jamal Musiala Badly Injures His Leg At CWC



Bayern Munich midfielder Jamal Musiala badly injured his left leg and was forced to leave his team's match against Paris Saint-Germain on Saturday in the Club World Cup quarterfinals.

Musiala was hurt late in the first half following a 50-50 challenge with PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. The replay of the gruesome injury was not shown on the big screens at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

The 22-year-old Musiala entered Saturday's match with three goals in the tournament, one behind golden boot leaders Ángel Di María and Marcos Leonardo. His Club World Cup goals brought his tally to 20 this season, including 12 in the Bundesliga and three in the Champions League.

Musiala's injury came just before halftime. The referee whistled for the break as the midfielder received treatment on the field. (AP)

