

VP Jagdeep Dhankhar Resigns



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday evening resigned from his post citing medical reasons.

He has sent his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu and said he was stepping down with immediate effect.

"To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," Dhankhar said in his letter to the President.

Dhankhar, 74, assumed office in August 2022.

Jagdeep Dhankhar, who once called himself a "reluctant politician", took on the Judiciary over the issue of separation of powers and had face-offs with the opposition in the Rajya Sabha virtually every day during his stint as the Vice President.

The 74-year-old leader, who cited medical reasons to resign from the Vice President's post after an eventful | [More on P6](#)

Pahalgam Attack Shocked World, Exposed Terror Hub: PM Modi

Says Forces Achieved 100% Objectives In Op Sindoor

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday declared the Monsoon Session of Parliament a "Vijay Utsav" (celebration of victory), asserting that the Indian armed forces had achieved 100% of their objectives during Operation Sindoor, a swift military response to the recent Pahalgam terror attack.

Speaking to reporters at the Parliament complex before the start of the session, Modi said,

"In Operation Sindoor, the Indian armed forces achieved their objectives 100 per cent. The armed forces, under 22 minutes, pulverised the masters of terrorism in their homes and reduced their hideouts to rubble."

He described the session



as a proud moment for the country, praising the strength of India's military and calling for a unified voice in Parliament to echo the nation's victory.

The Prime Minister also took note of other recent milestones, highlighting how the Indian flag was unfurled at the International Space Station,

a reference to astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla's historic visit. He credited the country's technological and economic growth for strengthening India's global position.

Pahalgam Attack and Global Response

Referring to | [More on P6](#)

PARLIAMENT MONSOON SESSION

Pahalgam, Op Sindoor Trigger Face-Off On Day 1

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: The Monsoon Session of Parliament began on Monday on a rocky note, as lawmakers from the Opposition benches created ruckus in the Lok Sabha, demanding a discussion on Operation Sindoor.

The day's proceedings were marked by intense sloganeering and heated exchanges, particularly over Trump's claim that he had brokered a peace

deal between India and Pakistan. The Lower House was adjourned twice within an hour, while the Rajya Sabha saw an intense exchange between Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and BJP president JP Nadda.

The first sitting of the Lok Sabha in the Monsoon Session was adjourned just 20 minutes after it began, amid slogans by opposition MPs demanding the prime minister's response to | [More on P6](#)

government representatives noted that PM Modi is leaving on a foreign visit this week, and a debate when he is present in the House is possible only next week. Asked if the government's stand means that Modi may speak on the issue in the House, official sources said | [More on P6](#)

Amarnath Yatra Crosses 3.21 Lakh Mark

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The annual Amarnath Yatra continued smoothly on Monday as over 17,000 pilgrims paid obeisance at the holy cave shrine in South Kashmir, taking the total number of devotees since the pilgrimage began on July 3 to over 3.21 lakh.

According to officials, 17,016 pilgrims performed darshan at the sacred cave on Monday alone. Among them were 12,757 men, 3,270 women, 150 children, 158 sadhus, 9 sadhvis, 3 transgender pilgrims, and 669 security personnel.

While the overall turnout at the cave remains steady, officials noted a consistent decline in the number of pilgrims departing from Jammu—the traditional starting point of the yatra. On July 18, 7,908 yatris left from Jammu; the number dropped to 6,365 on July 19, 4,388 on July 20, and hit a low of 3,791 on July 21 — the lowest daily departure recorded so far this year.

Despite the drop in new arrivals, authorities said the yatra is progressing peacefully, supported by robust logistical and security arrangements across all routes and base camps.

"A total of 3,791 pilgrims left Jammu for the twin base camps of Baltal and Pahalgam this morning under a tight security cover," an official said. "The group included 3,067 men, 522 women, 9 children, 192 sadhus and sadhvis, and one transgender devotee." | [More on P6](#)

IWT ABEYANCE

J&K Seeks Centre's Nod For 2 Key Projects

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed hope that the central government will approve two long-pending infrastructure projects, the Tulbul Navigation Project in Kashmir and the Chenab Water Lift Scheme in Jammu, which he considers vital for addressing water needs and regional development.

Following the Pahalgam terror attack in April that killed 26 people, mostly tourists, the Centre announced a set of retaliatory measures against Pakistan, including suspending key provisions of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty. The treaty allows India full use of the eastern rivers—Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi—while Pakistan receives the majority share from the western rivers—Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

In a recent interview, Omar reiterated his longstanding criticism of the treaty, calling it deeply unfair to Jammu and Kashmir. He said the agreement has deprived the region

of the right to store and regulate its own water and forced hydroelectric projects to follow run-of-the-river models, which limit their capacity.

While acknowledging that a complete reversal of the treaty will take time, Omar said his government is pushing for medium-term projects that can begin without delay. He pointed specifically to the Tulbul Navigation Project in Sopore, which has been stalled since 1987 due to Pakistani objections. The project, also known as the Wular Barrage, would help regulate the Jhelum River, improve navigation, and boost winter power generation at plants like Lower Jhelum and Uri.

India accelerated the project after the 2016 Uri attack but Pakistan refused to engage in dialogue over five meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission between 2017 and 2022. Indian officials argue that Tulbul does not violate the treaty since it is not meant for irrigation or storage but is a regulating structure for non-consumptive uses.

Omar has | [More on P6](#)

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Government on Monday agreed to a 16-hour discussion in the Lok Sabha on Operation Sindoor and Pahalgam terror attack, and it is likely to be taken up next week, even as the

opposition insisted that it should start this week itself and Prime Minister Narendra Modi must reply. At the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), attended by members of different parties and chaired by Speaker Om Birla, sources said that the

J&K Has Moved Beyond Its Troubled Past: LG

Says History Will Judge What Changed In 5 Years

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Asserting that people and history will judge what has changed in the last five years, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has said that Jammu and Kashmir has broken away from its troubled past and is now embracing a secure, peaceful, and development-driven future.

In an interview to a national news channel, LG Sinha—reflecting on his tenure since taking charge on August 7, 2020—said that the last five years have seen a fundamental transformation in the Union Territory. "Peace, prosperity, and a people-centric approach formed the bedrock of my administration," he said.

"Stone pelting and hartals are now history. Schools, colleges, and businesses function without disruption, and nightlife has made a comeback," LG Sinha noted, underlining the normalization of everyday life. "J&K's economy has doubled in the past five years," he added, signaling economic growth and revival.



6 UNDER PRIME MINISTER MODI'S LEADERSHIP, WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY achieved both goals," the situation has improved. Over two lakh pilgrims have already participated this year in a 38-day Yatra. Hotels in Pahalgam and Sonamarg are full, and Srinagar's hotel occupancy is at 40%.

Acknowledging that development is an ongoing process, he said, "People and history

will judge what has changed in five years compared to what used to happen earlier."

Touching upon the administration's outreach to victims of terrorism, LG Sinha recalled emotional encounters with affected families. In one instance, he recounted how a man with three children was killed in a terror attack, but only one of his sons was initially provided a government job. "These meetings moved me deeply, and we took decisions to ensure comprehensive rehabilitation of terror-hit families," he said. He admitted that outreach came late in some cases but emphasized that steps have now been taken to reopen old massacre cases, file FIRs, and return seized properties.

Responding to controversy around Chief Minister Omar Abdullah not being invited to certain security review meetings, LG Sinha clarified, "The State Reorganization Act, passed by Parliament, clearly defines the jurisdiction of all authorities." | [More on P6](#)

Tourist Footfall in J&K Crosses 7.6 Crore Since 2020: Govt



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Centre on Monday informed the Lok Sabha that Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a footfall of over 7.65 crore domestic and 1.47 lakh foreign tourists over the last five years, but admitted that no formal study has been conducted so far to assess how much employment this boom in tourism has generated in the region.

Responding to a question in the Monsoon Session, Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh

Shekhawat revealed that a total of 7,66,85,482 tourists visited the Union Territory between 2020 and 2024. This includes 76,537,741 domestic visitors and 147,741 foreign tourists.

The data shows a significant jump in tourist arrivals over the years.

In 2020, the region saw 25,19,524 domestic tourists and 5,317 foreign tourists.

In 2021, numbers surged to 1,13,14,920 domestic and 1,650 foreign visitors, marking an annual growth of 349.09% in domestic arrivals. | [More on P6](#)

Widespread Rainfall Soaks J&K, MeT Predicts More

Observer News Service

Srinagar: ammu and Kashmir witnessed fresh rainfall on Monday as the Meteorological Department (MeT) predicted more wet weather till July 23, issuing yellow and orange alerts across the region.

The fresh spell of rain has brought a marginal dip in daytime heat in parts of Kashmir, although the temperatures in several areas remained above normal. Srinagar, the summer capital, sizzled at 34.9°C—well above the seasonal average. Qazigund recorded 29.0°C, Pahalgam



28.0°C, and Kupwara topped the chart at 35.3°C. Kokernag and Gulmarg stood at 30.8°C and 23.5°C respectively.

In contrast, the Jammu region experienced cooler-than-usual temperatures following heavy rainfall in several areas. Katra recorded the highest precipitation in the last 24 hours, with 184.2 mm of rain, while Jammu city logged 31.6 mm since morning.

According to Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Director MeT, intermittent spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-showers are expected at many places across | [More on P6](#)

Landslides Kill 2, Injure 15 in J&K

Two persons, including a young schoolboy and a pilgrim from Maharashtra, lost their lives and at least 15 others sustained injuries after heavy rains triggered multiple landslides across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, disrupting normal life and forcing authorities to suspend the Vaishno Devi yatra. The 11-year-old boy, a resident | [More on P6](#)

Parliament 'Gherao'

J&K Congress Heads To Delhi Over Statehood



Observer News Service

Srinagar: As part of its 'Delhi Chalo' campaign, top Congress leaders from Jammu and Kashmir on Monday left for the national capital to mount pressure on the Centre for the restoration of statehood to J&K.

The delegation, led by Congress national general secretary Ghulam Ahmed Mir and J&K Pradesh Congress

Committee (JKPCC) president Tariq Hameed Karra, included over 160 members who boarded five double-decker buses from the party headquarters in Jammu.

Speaking to reporters before departure, Mir said the party will symbolically gherao Parliament to highlight what he called the Modi government's "failure" to restore statehood | [More on P6](#)

9 Notices To Air India In 6 Months For Safety Violations

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A total of nine show cause notices were issued to Air India in connection with five identified safety violations in the last six months and enforcement action has been completed with respect to one violation, the civil aviation ministry informed the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Last month, Air India's Boeing 787-8 aircraft enroute to London Gatwick from Ahmedabad crashed soon after take off, killing 260 people. Following the fatal accident, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordered additional checks of the airline's Boeing 787-8/9

aircraft. As many as 81 people were injured in the accident.

"Out of total 33 aircraft, 31 operational aircraft have been inspected wherein minor findings were observed in 8 aircraft. These aircraft have been released for operation post rectification. The remaining 2 aircraft are under scheduled maintenance," Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said in a written reply.

He was responding to a question from BJP member Ashokrao Shankarrao Chavan. Meanwhile, in a separate written reply, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said that during the | [More on P6](#)

SKUAST-K Launches Capacity-Building Training For FPO Leaders

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) Monday inaugurated a comprehensive capacity-building program for the Chief Executive Officers, Chairmen, and Board of Directors of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) operating in the Kashmir division. This vital initiative, part of the HADP Project 20: 'Innovative Extension Approaches for Promoting Agriculture in J&K', is being conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad.

The inaugural function, held at the Registrar Meeting Hall Shalimar campus, saw the enthusiastic participation of FPO leaders poised to drive agricultural transformation in Jammu & Kashmir. Prof Masood Saleem Mir, Associate Director and Principal Investigator HADP-20, provided insights into the broader objectives of the project and its anticipated impact on the agricultural landscape, while extending a warm welcome to the attendees and emphasising the critical role of well-managed FPOs in enhancing farmers' livelihoods

and fostering sustainable agricultural practices.

This intensive program, with each batch running for one week, is the first of two batches, with 35 participants in each batch, designed to equip FPO leaders with essential knowledge and skills. The training curriculum, meticulously developed by SKUAST-K's Directorate of Research and the Department of Agriculture Production, Kashmir, in collaboration with MANAGE, Hyderabad, covers a wide array of topics crucial for effective FPO management and business sustainability.

Day one of the training, led by Sushant Kulkarni, Company Secretary, focused on the legal and compliance aspects of FPOs. Participants delved into topics such as the registration of FPOs under Company Law 2019 versus the Self Reliant Cooperative Act 1999, the drafting of Articles of Association (AoA) and Memorandum of Association (MoA), and the process of identifying promoters and directors. Crucially, the session addressed the roles and responsibilities of directors, share issuance, share-holder rights, and the intricacies of Annual General Meetings and quorum requirements.

Training For Internal Assessors Begins At IMPA Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A three-day training programme for Internal Assessors-cum-Service Providers (IA cum SPT) under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) commenced today at the Institute of Management & Public Administration (IMPA), Srinagar.

The training will continue until July 23, 2025, and is being conducted by the National Health Mission (NHM), J&K, in partnership with

the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

The inaugural session was inaugurated by Bas-eer ul Haq Chaudhary, Mission Director, NHM J&K, in presence of Dr. Bakshi Jehangir, Director Health Services Kashmir. Dr. Vineeta Dhankhar, Consultant, Quality Promotion and Standards (QPS) Division, NHSRC, MoH&FW is the chief resource person for the training.



"Let Her Be Song": Danish Renzu Pays Tribute To Kashmir With A Musical Ode

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: In the winding alleys of Nowhatta, cameras are quietly capturing a different Kashmir. One not of conflict, but of connection. One not of grief, but of grace. Acclaimed filmmaker Danish Renzu, whose cinematic journey has taken him from Hollywood to the Himalayas, is back in the Kashmir Valley—this time, to tell a story of love, longing, and a home that breathes through silence.

Titled Mouj Kashir—literally, "Mother Kashmir"—his latest music video is currently being shot in the heart of Srinagar. With the city as both canvas and character, Renzu's new project dares to challenge the long-worn narrative of Kashmir as merely a land of tragedy.

"My latest music video seeks to challenge the tired tropes of violence and victimhood by spotlighting the emotional heart of Kashmir," Renzu said.

Backed by his independent label, Renzu Music, the video began filming on Sunday in Nowhatta and will continue across various iconic locations in Srinagar.

Filmmaker Danish Renzu's latest project, Mouj Kashir, tells a story that is at once intimate and expansive—a visual ballad about return, loss, and rediscovery. At the heart of the video lies the journey of a Kashmiri man



who comes back to his homeland after ten long years, only to find that his mother is no more. What he finds instead is something deeper—the land itself stepping into the role of the lost mother, offering silent comfort, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

"The idea is not to drape Kashmir in grief," Renzu explains. "But to let it sing with the strength of those who stay, and those who return."

Renzu, whose work includes the Oscar-shortlisted The Illegal and critically acclaimed films like Half Widow and The Good News, has long focused on stories of separation and survival. Yet, with Mouj Kashir, he turns the

lens inward—toward a place that remains central to his artistic compass.

"I don't want Kashmir to be reduced to either beauty or suffering," he says. "I want it to breathe on screen, to speak through its people, its silence, its music."

Having helmed nearly 50 music videos in the last few years, Renzu calls this one different. Not just a project—it's a return to the roots. A cinematic tribute to a homeland that continues to live within every displaced Kashmiri.

"This is not just my homecoming," he reflects. "It's for every Kashmiri who has ever left and still carried the scent of the soil with them."

Renzu's return comes at a time when local voices are seeking space beyond the shadow of sensationalism. Through Renzu Music, he aims to empower Kashmiri artists, composers, and lyricists, and create stories that resonate globally—without erasing the local pulse.

"Frankly, we are done with the gun-and-grief lens. It's time the world sees the poetry in our people," he says.

As shooting continues and the Valley watches with curiosity, Mouj Kashir promises to be more than just a music video—it is a cinematic balm, and perhaps, a bold first note in a new symphony of storytelling from Kashmir.

Srinagar Weaver Selected For National Handloom Award 2024

Agencies

Srinagar: As a proud moment for Kashmir's artisan community, Bashir Ahmad Ganie, a skilled weaver from Srinagar, has been selected for the National Handloom Award 2024 for his exceptional craftsmanship in Kani shawl weaving.

According to the details, his name figures among 19 national awardees from across the country in the official list released by the Ministry of Textiles. The award will be presented by the President of India on August 7, 2025, during the 11th National Handloom Day celebrations at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

The National Handloom Awards are part of the Handloom Marketing Assistance (HMA) component under the National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP). They aim to recognise and encourage exemplary talent in the sector and promote traditional weaving practices across India.

Bashir Ahmad Ganie, known for his mastery in Kani shawl weaving, has upheld the centuries-old Kashmiri handloom tradition through intricate and labour-intensive designs that reflect both heritage and innovation.

Meanwhile, the event will also be attended by Union Minister of Textiles, Giriraj Singh, along with MPs, designers, in-

dustry leaders, officials, and over 500 weavers from across the country.

It is worth mentioning, Kani shawl, originating from the Kanihama area of Kashmir, is woven using small wooden sticks called kanis instead of the traditional shuttle. Each design is based on a coded pattern called Talim, which guides the artisan in creating complex and colourful motifs.

The Kani weaving is considered one of the most time-consuming forms of handloom craftsmanship, often taking months to complete a single shawl. It is a symbol of Kashmir's rich cultural legacy and has received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for its authenticity—(KNO)

Fire Incidents Render Several Families Homeless In 24 Hours

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A wave of fire incidents across Srinagar in the last 24 hours has left several families homeless, as the blazes damaged residential structures in Nawa Kadal, Rajbagh, Golden Lake of Dal Lake and Safa Kadal Srinagar.

As per the details collected by KNO, in Nawa Kadal, three houses were reduced to ashes in an overnight fire, rendering multiple families shelterless.

Bilal Ahmed, a local from the area, describing the horrors of the night, shared they could not save anything. "Just the clothes we were wearing have been

with us," said Bilal, adding that everything, including documents, memories, all got burned in front of their eyes and became ashes.

Earlier on Sunday night, two houses in Rajbagh Srinagar were damaged in a similar fire incident. The locals from the area also shared details as they heard a few blasts.

اظہار تعزیت

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



"ہم سب اللہ کے ہیں اور اسی کی طرف لوٹ کر جانے والے ہیں۔" (سورہ بقرہ: 156)

یہ خبر سن کر ہمیں بہت صدمہ پہنچا کہ جناب بشیر احمد شیخ بن غلام حیدر شیخ، ساکن سید میرک شاہ کالونی حبک، آج مورخہ 21 جولائی 2025ء کو اس دار فانی سے کوچ کر گئے۔ مرحوم نہایت شریف النفس، محتئی، دیندار اور منسلک شخصیت کے حامل تھے۔ ان کی سادگی، خدمت خلق اور خلوص ہمیشہ یاد رکھا جائے گا۔

قال امیر المؤمنین علیہ السلام:

"الْمَوْتُ طَائِفَةٌ كَثْرَى، وَرَزِيَّةٌ عَظْمَى، لَا يَغْوِدُ مَنْ فَاتَ، وَلَا يُدْرِكُ مَنْ مَاتَ."

"موت سب سے بڑی مصیبت اور سب سے بڑا سانحہ ہے، جو جا چکا وہ واپس نہیں آتا، اور جو مر گیا اسے پھر نہیں پایا جا سکتا۔"

موت ایک اتل حقیقت ہے جس سے کسی کو مفر نہیں۔ یہ زندگی کی انتہا نہیں بلکہ ایک نئی اور دائمی زندگی کا دروازہ ہے۔ مومن کی موت اس کے رب سے ملاقات کا وسیلہ ہوتی ہے، اور یہی عقیدہ ہمیں صبر و تسلیم کی دولت عطا کرتا ہے۔ دنیا فانی ہے، اصل منزل آخرت ہے، جہاں اعمال کے مطابق فیصلے ہوں گے۔

فرمان حضرت امیر المؤمنین علی علیہ السلام:

"إِذَا مَاتَ الْإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَمَلُهُ إِلَّا مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ: صَدَقَةٌ جَارِيَةٍ، أَوْ عِلْمٌ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ، أَوْ وَلَدٌ صَالِحٌ يَدْعُو لَهُ"

"جب انسان مر جاتا ہے تو اس کے اعمال ختم ہو جاتے ہیں، سوائے تین چیزوں کے: جاری صدقہ، وہ علم جس سے فائدہ اٹھایا جائے، اور نیک اولاد جو اس کے لیے دعا کرے۔"

ہم، انتظامیہ مسجد امام مہدی علیہ السلام سید میرک شاہ کالونی کی جانب سے، مرحوم کے تمام بازماندگان، بالخصوص غلام محمد شیخ، محمد شفیع شیخ اور دیگر اہل خانہ و اقرباء کی خدمت میں دلی تعزیت و تسلیت پیش کرتے ہیں۔

ہم بارگاہ الہی میں دعاگو ہیں:

□ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کی مغفرت فرمائے،

□ ان کے گناہوں کو معاف فرمائے،

□ ان کی قبر کو نور سے بھر دے،

□ انہیں جنت الفردوس میں اعلیٰ مقام عطا فرمائے،

□ محمد و آل محمد علیہم السلام کی شفاعت نصیب کرے،

□ اور پسماندگان کو صبر جمیل، استقامت اور اجر عظیم سے نوازے۔

آمین یا رب العالمین۔

□ والسلام علیکم و رحمۃ اللہ و برکاتہ

انتظامیہ مسجد امام مہدی (علیہ السلام)
سید میرک شاہ کالونی، حبک، سرینگر

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI
CALENDAR

26 Muharram
1447

PRAYERS

| | |
|--------|-------|
| FAJR | 3: 54 |
| ZUHR | 12:37 |
| ASR | 5: 34 |
| Magrib | 7:43 |
| ISHA | 9: 19 |

This Day In History

- 1456 - Battle at Nandorfehervar (Belgrade): Hungarian army under Janos Hunyadi beats Sultan Murad II
- 1691 - Battle at Aghrim: English/Dutch army beats France
- 1731 - Spain signs Treaty of Vienna
- 1739 - Ottoman Empire defeats Austria at Crocyka (Krotzka) in Serbia & subsequently successfully laid seige to Belgrade
- 1793 - Alexander Mackenzie reaches the Pacific Ocean, becoming the first Euro-American to complete a transcontinental crossing of Canada.
- 1864 - Battle of Atlanta-Hood attacks Sherman, 8,449 Confederate and 3,641 US soldiers die
- 1942 - 4th Soviet army forms with 80 tanks
- 1946 - Militant Zionist organisation Irgun bombs the British administrative headquarters for Palestine in the southern wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, killing 91 people of various nationalities and injuring 46.
- 1955 - Richard Nixon becomes the first US Vice President to preside over a cabinet meeting
- 1963 - Sarawak achieves independence from British colonial rule
- 1969 - USSR launches Sputnik 50 & Molniya 1-12 communications satellite
- 1971 - Sudanese military counter-coup under premier Numeiry
- 1987 - Soyuz TM-3 launched with 3 cosmonauts (1 Syrian)
- 1987 - US began escorting re-flagged Kuwaiti tankers in Persian Gulf
- 1988 - 500 US scientists pledge to boycott Pentagon germ-warfare research
- 1992 - Soyuz TM-15 launches
- 1993 - Soyuz TM-17 lands
- 1994 - 23rd & last part of Comet Shoemaker-Levy hit Jupiter (since July 16th)
- 1995 - Space shuttle STS-70 (Discovery 20), lands
- 1997 - The second Blue Water Bridge opens between Port Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Ontario.
- 2002 - Israel assassinates Salah Shahade, the Commander-in-Chief of Hamas's military arm, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, along with 14 civilians.

From KO Archives

Turned Down VP's Post For NC's Sake: Farooq

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- The chief patron of the National Conference, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, today disclosed that to ensure the victory of his party in the coming elections he had turned down the offer of becoming the vice-president of the country.

Addressing a public function in Hazratbal, Dr. Abdullah said that cross border efforts were on resolve the issue "though the peace process was temporarily stalled because of the recent events in Pakistan."

He said that everyone would have to extend co-operation to strengthen the peace process to restore peace in the state.

"I was offered the post of the vice-president of the country, but I turned it down because I want to strengthen my party and see it victorious in the coming elections," he said.

He said that the offer had been made by the central government when he was in Delhi, but during consultation with his party colleagues on his return he was advised that the party needed him in the forthcoming elections

"My colleagues told me that in the 2002 election I had stayed away from the party and the state because of presidential aspirations, and that had contributed to the NC's defeat," he said.

He said that the NC had not taken any decision so far in joining the emerging Third Front at the Centre. "The final decision will be taken by the executive committee which is meeting on July 17," he said. Criticising the coalition government on the law and order situation, Dr. Abdullah said that all sorts of slogans were being used to fool the public while no attention was being paid to development and the multitude of issues facing the people.

(Kashmir Observer, 22 July, 2007)

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KO VIEW

Re-invent Public Education System

Across the Valley, government school buildings are standing but the system is collapsing. The latest data paints a grim picture of disillusionment with Kashmir's public education sector. And it's not just about the numbers. It's about what they signal: a growing vote of no confidence by students, parents, and even teachers themselves.

Nearly 119 government schools now have zero students. And yet, more than 200 teachers continue to draw salaries in these ghost institutions. Dropout rates at the secondary level are soaring. Even in schools that remain open, classrooms are half-empty, learning outcomes are falling, and trust has all but vanished.

The reasons are both systemic and social. Infrastructure gaps persist despite years of central schemes and big promises. Thousands of schools lack science labs, libraries, electricity, or clean toilets. In many rural schools, even a subject teacher is a luxury. Unsurprisingly, over 50% of Class 8 students in government schools cannot read a Class 2-level text, as per the latest ASER report. Only 63% can recognize two-digit numbers.

But perhaps the most tragic dimension is this: teachers themselves are opting out of the system they serve. Many government school educators quietly admit their own children study in private schools because they know what's broken inside.

That is the crisis situation. To fix this, we don't need more slogans. We need political will and honest accountability. First, attendance systems for both students and teachers must be made foolproof via biometrics and public dashboards. Second, teaching must shift from rote to activity-based learning. Third, recruitment and training must be made rigorous and ongoing. Fourth ministers, bureaucrats, principals must lead by example: send your children to public schools. If you won't, why should anyone else?

At the same time, the crisis goes beyond the declining student admissions and attendance. The ongoing technological disruption is transforming the concept of schools, schooling, and education as a whole. And this is true for both government and private schools. What is being taught at schools is now available for learning on computers and phones. So, to stay relevant, the schools need to reinvent themselves and become more and more activity-centric. The students should learn by doing than by simply listening to theoretical lectures. Sooner the schools make these reforms, better it is for their survival.

Most importantly, we must remember that a public education system isn't just a service, it's a social contract. When that contract breaks, as it is breaking in Kashmir, we risk creating a society where opportunity is inherited, not earned.

FINANCIAL FIX

Learn or Lose

For Kashmiri youth, awareness is the only defense.

Irshad Mushtaq

Young Kashmiris are under pressure from drugs, deceit, and despair. Many retreat, some fight, but most drift. What's missing isn't potential. It's preparation. Education changes that. But it's not about degrees, it's about diligence. It's about knowing how systems work, spotting a scam, filing a complaint, and saying no, with facts, not fear.

Today, legal spats choke courts. Tiny disputes spiral. Trust has thinned. In this noise, tools like RTI and JK Samadhan lie unused. The reason is no one taught them how.

Without knowledge, youth get played by bosses, brokers, even by buddies. With it, they stay sharp, alert, and unshaken.

Education builds more than skill. It builds spine, emotional strength, clarity, and the power to walk away from chaos without collapsing.

The crisis is silent but deep. Gaming isn't just fun, it's escape. Drugs don't start with thrill, they start with stress, isolation and shame.

To fix it, start early, and teach rights like we teach road rules. Make school less about marks, more about meaning. Show them the system, then show them how to work it.

Kashmir doesn't need another scheme. It needs youth who know their worth, and won't sell it cheap.

Give them that, or watch them fall, as learning isn't optional for Kashmir. It's survival.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.



Enter to Learn. Then What?

Generations raised on a noble school slogan now face a harsh question: what were they really prepared to serve or change?

Iqbal Mehraj

For years, schools in Kashmir welcomed children with a promise painted above the gates: Enter to learn, leave to serve.

The slogan was meant to inspire, and imbue purpose. But it hangs heavier now, like a faded oath.

Many students don't leave to serve. Some linger in waiting rooms of bureaucracy, scores vanish into silence, and others wander from one exam to the next, hoping something will click. The failure of that promise isn't hard to trace.

It begins in the classroom, the first place in Kashmir where dreams often start to shrink.

From early school years to university corridors, students are nudged into a single lane. They're mostly taught there is one respectable destination: the government job - Medicine, Engineering, or Civil Services. Anything else is seen as a compromise.

It has already become an inheritance: what one generation believed, the next is expected to follow.

Ask a parent what they hope their child becomes, and the answer is likely scripted. Ask the student, and it will mirror that hope, because no other possibility was offered.

Careers in art, writing, coding, design, craft, or entrepreneurship are still treated as last options. Real jobs are salaried and secure. That is the measure.

This mindset, repeated across households and classrooms, has created a generation stranded in between: overeducated for work that no longer exists in its traditional form, underprepared for the work today's world demands.

Thousands of Kashmiri graduates sit at home, clutching degrees like passports to countries that never arrived. The system promised mobility, but delivered a loop.

And that system wasn't broken by students.

For years, the valley's academic model has been built on repetition. Teachers, schools, and universities upheld a narrow definition of excellence.

Rote learning, exam scores, classroom obedience were rewarded. Curiosity, deviation, or slowness were treated as faults.

A student who thought too long before answering was dismissed. One who asked too many questions was labeled a distraction.

Average students were warned of their fate: "You'll end up a kallbaaf."

It was said with contempt, the implication being that weaving carpets, one of Kashmir's oldest and most intricate crafts, was something to be ashamed of.

Few teachers mentioned that those very carpets once brought global acclaim to the valley. That artisans, often unlettered, created pieces that ended up in royal palaces and global showrooms.

Inside our own schools, the legacy of Kashmir Arts was erased.

A big part of the problem lies in who's teaching.

For many, teaching in Kashmir became a profession of default. It wasn't a calling. It was what followed when nothing else did.

The lack of conviction shows. Teachers who arrived by accident rarely carry the fire to guide. Many weren't trained beyond basic pedagogy. They didn't know how to nurture potential that didn't fit into neat categories.

When educators lack vision, they cannot offer any.

The result is a culture that favours speed

There are teachers in Kashmir who push beyond these limits. They question the script. They make space for ideas. They teach not just for exams, but for life. These are the rare ones. They don't just teach subjects. They teach possibility. But they are exceptions.

If the valley wants a future that looks different, it has to begin by auditing its academic ecosystem.

We need an audit of impact. Are students being introduced to new tools, new careers, new definitions of success?

Are they taught that a career in coding, craft, climate science, media, music, or AI is just as noble, and perhaps more relevant, as one behind a government desk?

We also need to restore dignity to the hands that work. Farming, weaving, fixing, carving are not symbols of failure. They are the founda-

It's no longer enough to measure education by marksheets or attendance registers. We need to ask deeper questions: What are these students being prepared for? Are they being equipped to think, build, fail, rise?

and sound over thought.

Kashmiri classrooms still reward the fastest speakers, the loudest answerers, the best memorizers.

Those who hesitate, and sit in silence, are forgotten. They carry their confusion like weight. They begin to believe they aren't good enough for the very world that never made space for their type of intelligence.

Meanwhile, the world outside is moving. AI is rewriting industries. The internet has turned the planet into one sprawling, borderless campus. But inside many classrooms in Kashmir, nothing has changed.

The methods are old, the syllabi older, and the aspirations handed to students even older than that.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam once said we must "catch them young." But what happens when those catching them don't recognize their light?

It's no longer enough to measure education by marksheets or attendance registers. We need to ask deeper questions: What are these students being prepared for? Are they being equipped to think, build, fail, rise?

Or are they simply being prepared to wait, for results, job lists, and calls that never come?

tions of Kashmir's cultural identity.

We need to teach our children that there is power in skill, and pride in precision.

The purpose of education isn't to produce sameness. It's to recognize potential and expand it.

Kashmiri schools should not be places where students come to narrow themselves into socially acceptable careers. They should be places where young minds unfold.

This change begins with teachers, the training they receive, the stories they tell, and the futures they encourage.

We can no longer afford to let our classrooms function on autopilot while the world speeds ahead.

The slogan still hangs at the entrance: Enter to learn, leave to serve. It is worth asking: serve what? And serve how?

Until those answers change, the exits will keep looking like dead ends.

The author, a "proud son" of a Kashmiri skillman, runs his own business unit in Srinagar. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy.

Letter to Editor

Doesn't Rural Kashmir Have a Right to Health?

On the morning of July 21, 2025, I felt too sick to sit up. Hours of vomiting, diarrhea, and sharp stomach pain had left me drained. My mother insisted we get some medical help. So, we went to Sub-District Hospital Tral, hoping it would be a place of healing.

We weren't prepared for what followed.

Outside the hospital, the parking lot was chaos. Inside, lines stretched endlessly through the corridors. The ticket counter was swarming with people. I could barely stand, but there was no arrangement for emergencies. My mother moved between counters, trying to

get me registered while also supporting my collapsing body.

Eventually, we reached a doctor. He didn't ask questions or examine me closely. He asked us to get an admission file, as if urgency didn't matter. The process dragged on. My mother pleaded for help. I was too weak to speak.

The doctor finally recommended admission, but when we looked for a bed, there was nothing. Patients were doubled up on single beds. Some lay on the floor. Others waited, eyes scanning the hallways for someone to notice.

We left, and went to a nearby private clinic. It turned us away due to paucity of space. So we drove to the

Primary Health Centre in Hariparigam. I drove the car myself, holding my stomach. The centre was open, but no doctor was on duty. The staff had no idea what to do. I waited in the car while my mother ran to a pharmacy to get medicines.

This was not a natural disaster or a war zone. This was a normal day in rural Kashmir. If I, someone with access to transport and understanding of the system, couldn't find basic care, what happens to those without either?

Tral Hospital serves a large population, yet is always overwhelmed. Village health centres barely function. Doctors are missing. Beds are few. Even basic dig-

nity feels out of reach.

We talk a lot about rights in this country: the right to life, and the right to health. But those promises fade quickly when your hospital can't admit you, and your village clinic is empty.

This is more than my personal ordeal. It's a sign of a larger failure, one we keep ignoring. The cracks in our system are not small anymore. They are wide enough to swallow lives.

If we want to stop that from happening, we need to act now.

Sincerely,

Dawood Amin Bhat
Advocate/ Lecturer
Pulwama.

Grace in Grief

In the valley where silence sinks deeper than time, a young woman disappears into herself, and finds a voice on the page.

Kabra Altaf

She was the type of girl who didn't look away from truth.

Even when it trembled in her throat and emptied rooms, she carried it like something sacred. Something that might keep her honest, even if it couldn't keep her safe. Truth was how she stayed upright. It shaped her spine.

At home, school, and crowded lanes, she moved with a grace that masks exhaustion and comes from years of holding yourself together. She smiled at the right times, apologized quickly, and asked for little.

Her tribe in Kashmir grow up with this unspoken script: Be good, kind, and careful. She followed it like a second language. She believed that if she did things right, if she stayed spirited and strong, life would unfold gently.

Then came the season.

The ground beneath her shifted. People vanished. Familiar rhythms lost their meaning.

She didn't fall apart, she faded.

Words stopped coming, and thought became fog. She drifted through her own life like a stranger in borrowed clothes.

Beyond signature sadness, it was something emptier, like waking in a house stripped of furniture, like standing in a mirror that no longer reflects.

In her homeland, seasons take over, like her own season of grief.

Spring slips in like rumour. Summer lingers like ache. Autumn sheds without apology. Winter comes to stay.

We don't greet seasons here, we prepare for them like they're trials.

In July, we dry tomatoes like we're hoarding time. By September, woolens come out of trunks like old instincts. By November, the valley braces, for absence. Taps freeze, roads vanish, and warmth becomes memory.

We burn kangris in winter, their heat close, their bite closer. The poor sit with nothing but fire between their hunger and the cold. Some carry warmth in their arms. Others only carry through.

This is how we survive with habit. We carry centuries in our bones, and wear pain under pherans stitched with patience. We don't speak of

wounds, we function around them.

She was one of us.

She believed if she stayed good, things would stay steady. That's how we're raised, hopeful, even when the valley teaches us otherwise. When everything fell apart, she didn't ask for help. She didn't know how.

Instead, she turned inward.

She stood in fogged-up rooms, and sat through days that blurred. Her ribs ached from holding back what couldn't be spoken. She smiled at neighbours, passed exams, and ate what she could.

And still, she stood, and began to write.

At first, her words were scattered, notes left behind like footprints on snow. There were no poems, only

season left behind.

Grief hides in daily things in Kashmir.

It lives in the way we salt vegetables, stack firewood, light stoves before dawn. It hides in prayers stitched into old quilts, in the smell of damp wool, in radio songs crackling through power cuts.

The world doesn't ask about this. It moves on, but some of us don't. We write, slowly, painfully, with fingers stiff from cold, with voices that first return as whispers. We don't want applause, and pity. We want to breathe again.

We want to feel the words move through us, like thaw, like the first drop from a melting icicle.

She didn't disappear to be found.



pieces. But those pieces carried heat, a language returning.

"With burned hands, I still hold the kangri," she wrote. "With broken ribs, I still smile. With a broken heart, I still hope.

With a broken hand, I still write my soul."

This was a girl picking up what the

She went missing inside herself because the world had nothing left to offer.

Now, she is returning, and that, too, is a Kashmiri story.

The author is a noted sportsperson of Kashmir. She can be reached at kabraaltaf55@gmail.com

The Girl on the Bus

This is a story about a sock, a stare, and the wounds society never counts but everyone carries in Kashmir.



Nusrat Hassan

It was a regular day. I was getting ready for my coaching class, flipping through notes, fixing my attire. My socks, as usual, were mismatched.

One had a tear on the side. I noticed it briefly, shrugged it off. After all, we'd worn worse during winters when snow leaked through shoes and water froze in taps. Torn socks felt ordinary.

Until someone laughed.

It came with a smirk and a comment about "poverty parades." That sentence, tossed like a pebble, struck me like a stone. I felt the heat rise in my cheeks. My eyes dropped to the floor. I wanted the earth to open.

I was sixteen, an age when girls in Kashmir juggle schoolbooks and entrance forms, when everything feels fragile, like frost on a window. One word, one stare, can shatter it.

That night, I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking: Why did it hurt so much? It wasn't the sock. It was the reminder that people look at your struggle and call it shame.

Some of us in Kashmir have become skilled at masking pain. We carry trauma in the marrow of our bones. We survive on stitched-up routines: power cuts, political uncertainty, daily struggles. The numbers are always grim.

Youth unemployment hovers above 18%. According to the Nation-

al Family Health Survey, over 30% of girls in the valley face anemia. Mental health services are so thin that one psychiatrist sometimes serves an entire district. And yet, the pain that breaks us isn't always found in statistics.

It's in moments like mine, or hers.

She was on a public bus, maybe my age. She wore a faded kameez, the type handed down from cousins. She stared out of the window, her hand clenched around a cracked phone. Someone behind her made a cruel joke about "secondhand girls."

She didn't react, and got off at the next stop, face tight with something between shame and rage. No one said a word. The bus rolled on like nothing had happened.

I couldn't forget her face.

This is what society teaches us: endure, adjust, don't speak and draw attention.

But these little wounds, humiliations we shrug off, add up. They change how a girl sees herself. They teach her to hide, and make her realise she's alone.

We need to stop calling them "little" things.

I've seen boys teased for their stammer, broken sandals, and the smell of diesel on their hands after working their father's autorickshaw. I've seen girls mocked for walking alone, reading too much, and wanting to leave the valley for

college.

And all of us, at some point, carry the ache of being looked down on for things beyond our control.

Kashmir doesn't need another campaign on empathy. We need people who notice the faces that drop in shame, the shoulders that sink in public spaces, and the hands that tremble while counting rupee coins at a bakery.

Change doesn't always come with a bill in Parliament. Sometimes it begins when one person says: "That's not okay."

What's small to one person is devastating to another. And in a place like Kashmir, where conflict already eats away at confidence, these everyday humiliations are a second wound.

We can't heal by ignoring them.

If we learn to respond with kindness, not pity, and with solidarity, not silence, then maybe the next girl on the bus won't have to leave in tears.

Maybe someone will say, "You're enough," and mean it. Maybe someone will sit next to her.

The torn sock that once made me feel less now reminds me to feel more: To listen, speak, and write.

Kashmir has carried pain for decades. But it's time we carry each other.

The author is an undergraduate student at GDC Ganderbal.

The Silence Between Us

Once, Kashmir celebrated every joy and mourned every loss together. Today, even grief is a private affair.

Abid Hussain Rather

I was raised in a different Kashmir where every house on the street felt like a part of mine. A child's first step was everyone's celebration. And a neighbour's grief brought the whole lane to a hush.

In my hometown in South Kashmir, you didn't need to own a radio to hear the news. Your neighbour's expression would tell you everything you needed to know.

We shared more than walls. We shared life.

If someone's cow gave birth, the fresh colostrum cheese would be passed around in small plates before the sun even set. And when someone cleared an exam, it felt like the entire street had passed.

If a tragedy struck, weddings were postponed, songs stopped mid-air, and even televisions fell silent.

These were the small, invisible threads that stitched our lives together.

Now I live in an entirely different Kashmir, where houses are taller, fences stronger, and streets disturbingly silent.

We keep to ourselves, and pride ourselves on doing so. "I mind my own business," we say, as though that's a virtue. "It's none of their concern," we repeat, while something within us begins to ache without explanation.

We call it privacy and progress, but I often wonder what we've really achieved.

Inside these walls, people are hurting: A young widow cries alone at night, a boy scrolls through his phone to distract



from the ache of loneliness, and an elderly man sitting on a bench all morning, hoping someone will ask about his health.

The truth is, they're surrounded by people. But they feel invisible.

Even our joys are jinxed now.

Pregnancies, promotions, weddings come and go without the shared warmth they once carried. It's as if we're afraid of

letting too many people in, and save our happy moments from an evil eye.

And then there's grief. That has changed too. Funerals used to be crowded affairs. People from villages far away would arrive, bearing prayers and stories.

Now, these condolence moments and meets are over in an hour: A handful of people, a few short verses, and a lonely grave.

What changed us?

Some blame the internet. Others point to migration, conflict, or urbanization. But I think something deeper is at play.

Somewhere along the line, we confused silence for strength and secrecy for sophistication.

We stopped knocking. A study by the World Health Organization shows loneliness now rivals obesity and smoking in its impact on health.

Depression and anxiety are on the rise across Kashmir too, especially among the young.

And while there are many reasons, like joblessness, trauma, conflict, one thread connects them all: disconnection.

We're wired, but we're not connected. Our phones are full of people, but our hearts are running empty.

I teach geography at a college in Kulgam. My students are

smart, alert, curious. But there's something else I've noticed.

Many of them are guarded. Their triumphs are whispered. Their worries, kept hidden. They hesitate before sharing. They wait to be asked. And sometimes, even when they are, they shrug and say, "I'm fine," because that's what they've learned to do.

I'm not suggesting we return to a world without boundaries.

Privacy has its place, so does discretion. But when privacy becomes a wall and not a door, it stops being protective and starts being painful.

What we need is balance.

We can keep our secrets and still share our lives. We can respect each other's space and still care enough to check in. We can be private and present at the same time.

The solution doesn't need a government policy or a million-dollar app. It begins with one knock, one shared cup of tea, one real conversation without filters or fear.

Ask your neighbour how they are. Visit the sick, even if only for five minutes. Take your child along when you greet someone on Eid. Share good news as well as bad one. But, show up, and share.

If we don't, we risk raising a generation that sees connection as a risk, not a reward.

I miss the Kashmir where even a stranger's grief felt personal, where someone's joy lit up ten homes. I miss the taste of firmi passed over the fence and the sound of shared laughter echoing down an alley.

But more than missing it, I want us to rebuild it, before another memory fades, another heart isolates, and the silence becomes permanent.

So today, perhaps, we can start with a knock. Someone might be waiting.

The author teaches Geography at GDC Kulgam and can be reached at: rather1294@gmail.com

Custodial Torture Case of J&K Cop SC Orders CBI Probe, ₹50 Lakh Compensation

KO WEB DESK

New Delhi: Reinforcing constitutional safeguards against custodial violence, the Supreme Court today ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged custodial torture of a police constable at the Joint Interrogation Centre ("JIC") in Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Court directed immediate arrest of the police officers of the J&K police who were responsible for the abuse and ordered the Union Territory of J&K to pay a compensation of Rs. 50,00,000/- (Rupees

Fifty Lakhs) to the appellant-victim Khurshheed Ahmed Chauhan as restitution for the gross violation of his fundamental rights.

Live Law reported that the bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta heard the case where the Appellant, a police constable, had approached the Supreme Court against the High Court's refusal to quash FIR registered against him under Section 309 IPC (attempt to commit suicide). He alleged that he was subjected to inhuman and degrading torture, including mutilation of his

private parts, during a six-day illegal detention from February 20 to 26, 2023, at JIC Kupwara.

According to Live Law, Setting aside the High Court's decision, the judgment authored by Justice Mehta noted that the continuation of the criminal proceedings of the alleged offence under Section 309 IPC would be travesty of justice, and hence quashed the FIR. However, it took strong exception to the custodial violence suffered by the Appellant during the illegal detention.

Apart from conducting a detailed inquiry about the officers

responsible for the abuse, the CBI was directed to also conduct an inquiry into "systemic issues" prevailing at the Joint Interrogation Centre in Kupwara. The court underscored the need to assess whether structural or institutional failings enabled a climate of impunity that led to the custodial abuse.

The Court further mandated that the police officers allegedly involved in the torture be arrested forthwith, within a period of one month, and that the investigation be completed within three months from the date of FIR registration.

Delhi-Srinagar Airfares Fell To Rs 10K On Govt Intervention Post Pahalgam Terror Attack

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Airfare for Srinagar-Delhi flight fell from Rs 20,000 on April 21 to less than Rs 10,000 on April 24 following government intervention to curb surge pricing in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack.

In the aftermath of the Pahalgam incident, "there was an apprehension of a mass exodus of tourists from J&K", which would have, in the normal course, led to a surge in airfares. Airlines were also urged to desist from surge pricing, and for this purpose, they were directed to cap airfares for two

major sectors -- Srinagar-Delhi (under Rs 10,000) and Srinagar-Mumbai (under Rs 13,000), the civil aviation ministry told the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Any airline breaching this cap was to be subjected to regulatory action.

"Taking proactive action not only the number of flights To/From Srinagar were increased from 51 on 22/04/25 to 56 on 23/04/25, but also the prices were kept in control. As a result of these interventions, a notable reduction in airfares from Srinagar was observed and helped to ensure that the stranded tourists at Srinagar can return home safely.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Pahalgam Attack

the Pahalgam terror strike, which killed 26 civilians, Modi said the tragedy had drawn global attention to the epicentre of terrorism. He lauded the multi-party Indian delegations that travelled abroad post-Operation Sindoor to present a united national front.

"I want to praise all MPs and parties who contributed in national interest by taking India's stand to the world and exposing the face of the terror masterminds -- Pakistan," he said.

Amid pressure from the INDIA bloc for a discussion on Operation Sindoor and the Pahalgam incident, Modi called for unity in national matters, stating that while parties may differ politically, their stand on security and sovereignty must be one.

Red Zones Turning Green

Modi also pointed to the rapid decline in nexalism and left-wing extremism, saying,

"Red corridors are now turning into green growth zones."

He asserted that several districts once plagued by Maoist violence had now emerged free and peaceful, thanks to a focused security strategy and development efforts.

"The country has been suffering from terrorism and nexalism for decades. But today, these threats are shrinking at a fast rate. Our Constitution is winning," he added.

Economic Progress and Global Recognition

Highlighting India's transformation over the past decade, Modi noted that the country, once part of the 'Fragile Five', was now on track to become the third-largest global economy. He cited low inflation, high growth, and rising ease of living as key signs of progress.

"Before 2014, inflation was in double digits. Now it hovers around 2 per cent. Twenty-five crore people have come out of poverty, and our digital platforms like UPI are gaining global interest," he said.

He also welcomed the ILO's report stating that over 90 crore Indians are now covered under social security, and mentioned the WHO's declaration that India is now free of trachoma, calling it a significant public health achievement.

Pahalgam, Op Sindoor

US President Donald Trump's claims of brokering a peace deal between India and Pakistan.

The session began with tributes to the victims of the Pahalgam terrorist attack and the Air India AI-171 plane crash. However, opposition members soon began chanting slogans of "PM Modi jawab do" and demanded an immediate discussion on Operation Sindoor.

Speaker Om Birla assured the House that he would allow a discussion on the matter after Question Hour, but opposition MPs continued protesting from the well, prompting an adjournment until 12 noon.

"You should give notice, and whatever the issue is, it will be discussed after Question Hour. The House should function on the first day, and there should be a good discussion. I will give proper time and opportunity to every MP," Birla said.

"The government wants to answer every issue. The House should function. You have not come here to raise slogans. The House functions as per the rules and regulations. All the issues raised according to the rules will be discussed," he added.

Reacting to the protests, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee has been scheduled to decide the agenda for discussion.

"The government is ready for a discussion, but Opposition MPs are protesting in the Well of the House. It is not appropriate to begin the session like this," Rijiju said.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, questioned the government over its response to the Pahalgam terror attack and asked for clarity on the current status of the militants involved.

Kharge said the Opposition had extended full support to the Centre following the incident but emphasized the need for accountability, especially in light of the acknowledged

intelligence failure. "Even the Army chief and the government have admitted lapses. The country deserves to know what went wrong," he told the House.

He also took sharp exception to recent comments by former US President Donald Trump, who reportedly spoke of mediating a ceasefire between India and Pakistan after Operation Sindoor. "It's unacceptable for any outsider to make such claims. This is an insult to our sovereignty," Kharge said.

Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, BJP leader and Union Minister JP Nadda said the government was fully prepared to hold a detailed discussion on Operation Sindoor.

"We are willing and ready to talk about it. There should be no perception that we are avoiding a debate," Nadda said, adding that the scale and execution of the operation under Prime Minister Modi's leadership was unprecedented. "This kind of mission has never been carried out before. We will share every detail," he told the House.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, alleged that the ruling party was preventing him from speaking in Parliament.

"The question is -- while the Defence Minister is allowed to speak in the House, Opposition members, including myself as the Leader of Opposition, are being denied that opportunity," Rahul said.

"This is a new approach. As per parliamentary convention, if members from the government are allowed to speak, then the Opposition should also be given equal space to express their views," he added.

16-Hour Debate

no decision has been taken yet.

The prime minister met his senior Cabinet colleagues who later held deliberations among themselves on the ruling alliance's strategy.

Opposition members protested at the BAC meeting that the government's agenda for this week did not mention their demand for a debate on the issue.

They said the home minister and the defence minister should also be present during the discussion.

Some opposition members also called for a debate on the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar and the situation in Manipur.

With the impasse continuing, the Lower House was adjourned for the day as protesting opposition members disrupted proceedings.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi later slammed the government for not including the opposition's demand for a discussion on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor in this week's agenda.

Speaking to reporters, he accused the government of double standards, saying it does not follow what it claims in public.

"The government is listing its bills but is not ready to prioritise an issue on which the entire nation wants to hear from Parliament," he said.

Amarnath Yatra

The pilgrims were divided into two convoys. The Baltal-bound convoy included 1,208 pilgrims traveling in 52 vehicles, while the Pahalgam-bound convoy carried 2,583 pilgrims in 96 vehicles.

Officials attributed the slight decline in turnout to weather concerns, fatigue among earlier batches, and the natural tapering that occurs as the yatra nears its conclusion.

"All essential services -- including accommodation, food, health care, and route security -- are fully operational. The pilgrimage is being conducted in a safe and orderly manner," the official added.

This year's Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to conclude on August 9 and is being held under an elaborate security setup involving drone surveillance, RFID tracking of pilgrims, and multi-layered deployment of security forces.

VP Jagdeep Dhankhar

day in Rajya Sabha under his chairmanship, had said this month only at an event that he would retire at the "right time", subject to "divine interventions".

While he was admitted to AIIMS for a few days in March this year and

appeared not so well at a few occasions, he has been mostly seen as lively and energetic in his public appearances, including in Parliament.

Dhankhar's abrupt resignation nearly two years before his tenure was to end followed a day of surprising developments in the Rajya Sabha for the government, as an opposition-sponsored notice for a motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma was submitted to him and he mentioned it in the House.

The development came as a jolt to the ruling alliance, which had sponsored a similar notice in the Lok Sabha and taken the opposition on board.

Dhankhar was the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance's candidate in the 2022 election for Vice President, who is the ex-officio Chair of the Rajya Sabha.

He is the third Vice President of India after V V Giri and R Venkataraman to resign during tenure. Giri and Venkataraman had resigned from the post of Vice President to contest the presidential election.

Dhankhar will also go down in history as the only vice president against whom the opposition brought a notice of removal for "partisan" conduct as the chairman of the Upper House.

Unmindful of the notice, which was rejected by Deputy Chair Harivansh, Dhankhar had dubbed it as a "rusted" vegetable-cutting knife which was used for a bypass surgery.

Dhankhar, who had been associated with the Janata Dal and the Congress, joined the BJP only in 2008 after a hiatus of nearly a decade.

He championed issues related to the Other Backward Classes, including the grant of OBC status to the Jat community in Rajasthan.

While his surprise appointment as the West Bengal governor in 2019 brought him back to the political limelight, he did not shy away from the hurly-burly of politics and was caught in frequent run-ins with the state's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC).

As the vice president and Chair of the Rajya Sabha, his frequent verbal clashes went beyond the TMC. On a variety of issues, from House disruptions to allegations of bills being passed with little discussion, he took on the opposition.

Dhankhar, in particular, targeted top lawyers who are also Rajya Sabha members representing opposition parties, especially the Congress.

A lawyer by profession, Dhankhar took on the Judiciary, especially on the issue of separation of powers.

He was harsh in his criticism of the Supreme Court decision to strike down the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act which sought to overturn the collegium system of appointing SC and high court judges.

In the presence of then Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, he had questioned the top court for striking down a law passed with near unanimity by the two Houses.

He had also slammed MPs, saying when the law was struck down, there was "not even a whisper" of protest by the lawmakers.

Designated as Senior Advocate by the Rajasthan High Court in 1990, Dhankhar had practised primarily in the Supreme Court and his focus area of litigation was steel, coal, mining and international commercial arbitration, amongst others.

As a lawyer, he was associated with the black buck case involving actor Salman Khan and had played a key role in getting him bail.

He appeared in various high courts in the country till assuming the office of the West Bengal governor in July 2019.

Dhankhar, who took to cricket in his school days and also had keen interest in spirituality and meditation, began his political journey with the Janata Dal and won the Lok Sabha elections in 1989, held under the shadow of the Bofors scandal, from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

He had a brief stint as Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs under Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar.

In his initial journey as a politician, Dhankhar was influenced by Devi Lal and later shifted to the Congress during the tenure of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao.

After hanging up his boots as a member of the Rajasthan legislative

assembly, Dhankhar focused on his legal career, practising as a lawyer in the Supreme Court.

While naming him as the NDA candidate for the vice president's post, BJP had described him as "Kisan putra", a move seen in the political circles aimed at reaching out to the politically significant Jat community which had participated in huge numbers in the year-long farmers' protests against agriculture reform measures unveiled in June 2020.

After his election as the vice president, Dhankhar met several groups of farmers in the national capital, Haryana and Rajasthan, urging them to go beyond agriculture and get into food processing and marketing to increase income.

On one occasion, his words sounded like a harsh criticism of the Modi government.

Speaking at a ceremony to mark the centenary of ICAR-CIRCOT in Mumbai in December 2024, Dhankhar had said, "Agriculture minister, I request you to please tell me, what was promised to the farmer? Why was the promise not fulfilled? What should we do to fulfil the promise?"

"There was a movement last year, there is a movement this year, too,"

"The wheel of time is turning, we are not doing anything. For the first time, I have seen India changing. For the first time, I am realising that developing India is not our dream but our goal. India was never at such heights in the world.

"When this is happening, then why is my farmer worried and suffering? The farmer is the only one who is helpless," Dhankhar had said, reaching out to the farmers.

Born on May 18, 1951, in village Kithana in Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan, Dhankhar went to Sainik School, Chittorgarh on full scholarship.

J&K Seeks Centre's

proposed building drop gates at Tulbul to manage water levels more effectively. He emphasized that the project would support year-round flow into Wular Lake, aiding both tourism and employment in Kashmir. He called it a long-overdue development measure, not a political one.

The second project, the Chenab Water Lift Scheme, aims to address growing water shortages in Jammu by drawing drinking water from the Chenab River. First conceptualized in 2008, the scheme would support several drought-prone areas in the region. Omar said the Chenab could serve as a reliable source for the next two to three decades.

He confirmed that a proposal has already been discussed with the Centre and noted that a senior advisor to the Prime Minister recently visited the region to assess these projects. The Jammu and Kashmir government is also seeking approval to engage an international funding agency for the Chenab scheme.

J&K Has Moved

I work within my boundaries and enjoy a cordial relationship with the CM. Whenever we have differences, we resolve them through dialogue."

Describing the most critical challenge of his tenure, LG Sinha said it was the complete integration of J&K with the Indian state and the establishment of Indian sovereignty and authority. "Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, we have successfully achieved both goals," he asserted.

Speaking about the ongoing Amarnath Yatra and tourism, he acknowledged a temporary dip in visitors after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. "However, the situation has improved. Over two lakh pilgrims have already participated this year in a 38-day Yatra. Hotels in Pahalgam and Sonamarg are full, and Srinagar's hotel occupancy is at 40%," he said, crediting the people of Kashmir for warmly welcoming the yatriis.

On the suspension of helicopter services to the Amarnath shrine this year, LG Sinha said the move was driven by national security concerns and past aviation accidents. "Decisions were made keeping safety and emerging drone threats in mind," he said.

Tourist Footfall

The upward trend continued: In 2022, 1,84,99,332 domestic and

19,985 foreign tourists arrived.

In 2023, domestic tourist arrivals touched 2,06,79,336, with 55,337 foreigners.

In 2024, the numbers peaked at 2,35,24,629 domestic and 65,452 foreign tourists.

On infrastructure development, Shekhawat informed that under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the Ministry sanctioned six tourism-related projects for J&K in 2016-17, with a total outlay of Rs 519.58 crore. All projects have been physically completed, the reply stated.

The completed projects include:

Development of tourist circuits covering Jammu, Srinagar, Pahalgam, Anantnag, Uri, Kargil, and Leh

Tourist facility development at Jammu-Rajouri-Shopian-Pulwama

Reconstruction of assets destroyed in the 2014 floods under the PM Development Package

Development at Mantalai and Sudhmahadev

Facilities in Anantnag, Kishtwar, Pahalgam, Zanskar Padum, and Ranjit Sagar Dam

Tourist infrastructure in Gulmarg, Baramulla, Kupwara, Kargil, and Leh

However, the ministry clarified that no formal study has been conducted so far to assess the direct or indirect employment generated through these projects over the last five years.

Widespread Rainfall

J&K till July 23. "Intense showers are likely at a few places, while heavy rainfall is expected in isolated pockets," he said.

The MeT has issued an advisory warning of potential flash floods, landslides, mudslides, and shooting stones in vulnerable areas. A rise in the water level of rivers, streams, and local nallahs is anticipated, with waterlogging likely in low-lying areas.

Looking ahead, the weather from July 24 to 27 is expected to remain unsettled, with brief showers possible at scattered locations.

Authorities have urged people living in landslide-prone areas and near water bodies to remain vigilant and avoid unnecessary travel during intense rainfall periods.

LG Grieved Over Loss Of Lives

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has expressed grief over the tragic landslide incident at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in which a devotee lost his life and a few others were injured.

The Lieutenant Governor is closely monitoring the situation. He has directed the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board to provide best possible medical care and support to the injured pilgrims.

The Lieutenant Governor has posted on X: "I am deeply saddened by the tragic landslide incident at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine in which a devotee unfortunately lost his life. Directed Shrine Board to provide best possible medical care and support to the injured pilgrims. I'm constantly monitoring the situation."

Lieutenant Governor has also consoled the tragic death of a schoolboy due to rockslide which crashed into Primary School, Kalsian in District Poonch.

The Lieutenant Governor has conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family in this hour of grief.

"The news of the death of a 5-year-old child due to rockslide which crashed into Primary School, Kalsian, Poonch is heart-rending. May God give strength to the bereaved parents to bear this shock. I pray for the speedy recovery of other children injured in this incident", the Lieutenant Governor said.

Landslides Kill 2

of Saujiyan in Poonch district, died after a landslide hit a school bus near Bufliaz. Officials said the bus was ferrying students to a nearby private school when debris from a hillock suddenly fell on the vehicle, injuring several children. "The boy was declared dead at the hospital. Seven other students are under treatment," a local official said.

In another tragic incident, a 45-year-old pilgrim from Maharashtra was killed and eight others were injured in a landslide near the Adhkuwari area along the Vaishno Devi route in Katra. Authorities immediately suspended the yatra as rescue teams rushed to the spot. "The yatra will remain suspended

until the weather improves," said an official of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board.

The Jammu-Srinagar national highway, a critical lifeline connecting the valley with the rest of the country, also remained blocked at several stretches due to landslides and shooting stones in Ramban and Udhampur districts, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded. Officials said restoration work was underway but warned of further disruptions.

The weather office had already issued an orange alert for Jammu and a yellow alert for Kashmir, forecasting heavy rainfall between July 21 and 23. Director of the Meteorological Department, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, said, "Intermittent moderate rain and thundershowers are expected to continue, with the possibility of intense showers and flash floods in vulnerable areas."

Katra recorded the highest rainfall of the day with 184.2 mm, while Jammu city received 31.6 mm. Kashmir too witnessed a dip in temperature as rainfall lashed several areas in the evening. Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 34.9°C, with MeT officials warning of possible waterlogging, mudslides, and landslips in hilly terrain.

In view of the forecast, authorities have advised people in vulnerable areas to remain cautious and avoid venturing near hilly slopes and water bodies.

The administration has put disaster response teams on alert as the region braces for two more days of volatile weather.

J&K Congress

to J&K despite repeated promises. "The prime minister has made the promise on several platforms. But even after the Lok Sabha elections and the formation of a new government, there is still no word on it," Mir said.

Karra said that Congress was not demanding anything beyond the constitutional rights of the people of J&K. "We held the 'Srinagar Chal' programme, followed by 'Jammu Chal'. Now we are heading to Delhi. We want to wake up this deaf and blind government," he said.

The Congress had earlier submitted memorandums to the Lieutenant Governor during its protests in Srinagar and Jammu. On July 20, Karra and Mir were among those detained during a protest march to Raj Bhawan.

Party workers on Monday shouted slogans demanding immediate statehood and democratic rights. The buses carrying Congress members headed to Delhi amid tight security arrangements.

9 Notices To

last six months, no adverse trend was reported in reliability reports of Air India in respect of crashed aircraft.

However, he said that during the last six months, a total of nine show cause notices have been issued to Air India in connection with five identified safety violations.

"Enforcement action has been completed in respect of one violation," Mohol said in response to queries from CPI(M) member John Brittas.

Specific details were not disclosed. Mohol, in another written reply, said that every aspect is being looked into for determining the probable causes/contributory factors leading to the accident.

His answer was to DMK leader Kanimozhi NVN Somu's queries, including whether any sabotage by any person or any agency has come to the light.

In another written reply to RJD member Manoj Kumar Jha, Naidu said DGCA has a structured surveillance and audit framework in place.

These include planned and unplanned surveillance of organisation /aircraft such as regular and periodic audits, spot checks, night surveillance and ramp inspections across all operators and maintenance organisations.

DGCA has done 254 enforcement actions this year till April while there were 673 such actions in 2024. There were 542 enforcement actions in 2023, the minister said.

The enforcement action may include warning, suspension, cancellation and imposition of financial penalty.

This year, the regulator has planned a total of 56 regulatory audits.

25th Muharram Observed with Majalis, Processions Across Kashmir

► Biggest Gathering in Shalimar, Zuljinah Procession in Chenabal, Zadibal

► Large Number of Mourners Join Majlis at Mirgund Despite Restrictions



Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR- Martyrdom anniversary of Imam Zain-ul-Abedin also known as Imam Sajjad, the only male survivor from the household of Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) in the Karbala carnage was observed on Monday across Kashmir with Majalis and processions.

Thousands of mourners joined day-long Majalis followed by processions in Srinagar and other districts to pay tributes to the martyred Imam. Also known as Syed al Sajideen (AS) Imam was the son of Imam Hussain (AS) and was 22 and severely ill during the battle of Karbala. He was later taken prisoner and eventually martyred in Madina on 25th of Muharram 95AH at the age 54 by Caliph Al Waleed bin Marwan.

Syed al Sajideen (AS), despite being extremely unwell, followed the call of his father Imam Hussain (A.S.) when no one was



left for his assistance on the day of Ashura. But head of the ravaged caravan lady Zainab (SA) stopped him because he was the only male member of the family of the Prophet (pbuh) left alive.

The largest public gathering on the occasion was held at Shalimar in the Srinagar city outskirts where thousands of black-clad mourners marched beating their chests and reciting soul-stirring elegies for the martyrs of Karbala.

The procession commenced from Chandpora and passed through Arabal and later culminated at Imambargah Gulshan Ali, Shalimar late in the night. Aga Syed Mujtaba Musavi delivered a sermon at the Majlis held at Bagh-e-Zainab.

An impressive Majlis was held at Mirgund in Pattan despite restrictions. Here Maulana Masroor Abbas Ansari delivered a lecture on the life and martyrdom of the 4th Shia Imam.



No Zuljinah or Alam Sharif procession was allowed in Mirgund as authorities imposed restrictions fearing attacks by a rival Shia group on mourners there. Traditionally the Zuljinah procession would be taken out from Mirchmar to Imambargah Mirgund. Majlis was held under heavy security there.

Maulana Masroor denounced curbs on Zuljinah procession questioning "how a mourning procession in a small village

posed threat to anyone?"

In nearby Chenabal Molvi Imran Reza Ansari led a procession which culminated in Kakarpora village on the national highway. He also delivered a sermon at Chenabal where several thousand had gathered to hear him.

A procession led by Aga Syed Muhammad Hadi was taken out from Doonipora to Mir Shamsuddin Araki shrine in Zadibal during the evening in which hundreds of mourners participated.

Govt Denies Deforestation In Tosamaidan, Gulmarg

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has refuted allegations of mass deforestation in the ecologically sensitive zones of Tosamaidan in Budgam and Gulmarg in Baramulla, asserting that recent claims of illegal logging and environmental degradation are unfounded.

The matter came under the scanner of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) through Original Application No. 913/2024, after environmental advocate Ashiq Ahmad Magray presented video and photographic evidence alleging indiscriminate tree felling and ecological damage, largely attributed to unchecked tourism and infrastructure development, including the Gulmarg Gondola project.

In its official reply, the Forest Department stated that no recent deforestation activities have taken place in either location. Officials attributed Tosamaidan's ecological decline to its previous use as a military firing range between 1986 and 2014, during which forest protection activities were suspended.

Since the area was vacated by the Army, authorities claim to have undertaken comprehensive eco-restoration work under the Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) scheme—planting 1.49 lakh saplings across 207 hectares between 2018 and 2024. Additional measures include setting up the Tosamaidan Development

Authority, booking 43 timber smugglers under the Public Safety Act (PSA), and establishing control rooms to monitor forest activity.

In Gulmarg, the government clarified that just 0.125 hectares of forest land had been transferred to the Gulmarg Development Authority (GDA) for building a solid waste treatment facility. It emphasized that all tourism-related construction is regulated under the J&K Building Operations Act, 1998, and denied that any forest land was diverted for the Gondola project.

Despite these clarifications, the NGT expressed dissatisfaction with the state's response, particularly its failure to address the recent visual documentation submitted by the petitioner. The Tribunal has granted the government time to amend its report and has directed that a copy be shared with the applicant for a rejoinder.

Interestingly, the Forest Department conceded shortfalls in solid waste management in Gulmarg, especially during tourist influx. The existing 3 MT capacity plant has been deemed insufficient. A new proposal for a 25 MT facility at a cost of ₹14.4 crore is under consideration. Efforts to reduce plastic waste and raise awareness among tourism stakeholders are also reportedly underway.

The case continues to be monitored closely by the NGT as environmentalists call for accountability and sustainable tourism policies to protect Kashmir's fragile ecosystems.

Centre Allocates Over ₹1,880 Crore To J&K, Ladakh For Education Upliftment

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Government has allocated a total of ₹1,881 crore to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh under key education sector schemes aimed at strengthening school infrastructure and implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

On the opening day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan informed the Lok Sabha that the twin Union Territories have received the funds under Samagra Shiksha and PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) schemes for the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Break-up of Funds:

Jammu and Kashmir received ₹865.44 crore in 2023-24 and ₹823.49 crore for the current fiscal under Samagra Shiksha, the Centre's flagship programme to improve school education. In addition, under the PM-SHRI initiative, the region was granted ₹52.39 crore in 2023-24 and ₹99.72 crore for 2024-25.

Ladakh was allocated ₹52.23 crore and ₹140 crore under Samagra Shiksha for the two consecutive years, while it also received ₹4.04 crore and ₹11.91 crore respectively under PM-SHRI.

Pradhan noted that Samagra Shiksha is implemented in partnership with states and Union Territories and is contingent upon approved annual

work plans and compliance with financial norms.

"The PM-SHRI scheme is designed to transform select schools into model institutions aligned with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020," the Minister stated. He added that 33 out of the 36 states and Union Territories have already signed the necessary Memorandum of Understanding to roll out the scheme.

However, West Bengal and Kerala are yet to sign the MoU, he informed the House.

The substantial funding, officials say, is expected to enhance infrastructure, quality of education, and learning outcomes in schools across the two UTs.

J&K, Ladakh Witness Dip in Govt School Enrolments

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Government school enrolments have witnessed a noticeable dip in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh during the academic year 2023-24, official figures tabled in Parliament reveal.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, responding to a query in the Lok Sabha, said that Jammu and Kashmir registered a drop in enrolment from 14,54,668 students in 2022-23 to 14,21,643 in 2023-24. Similarly, Ladakh

saw its student numbers fall from 28,667 to 26,275 over the same period.

Explaining the apparent decline, the minister pointed to a change in data collection methodology. "The reduction in some states and Union Territories, including J&K and Ladakh, could be attributed to a transition in the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), which has moved from aggregated to individual student-level data collection since 2022-23," he said.

To counter the challenge of

falling enrolments, the Centre has continued implementing a range of interventions under the Samagra Shiksha scheme. These include establishing residential schools, distributing free textbooks and uniforms, offering transport assistance, setting up special hostels, and providing meals through the PM POSHAN programme.

Pradhan assured that financial assistance is being consistently extended to states and UTs to bolster these initiatives and promote greater school participation across government-run institutions.

Indian Embassy In Niger Working To Secure Release Of Ramban Man

Agencies

JAMMU: The Indian Embassy in Niamey, Niger, has been actively working with local authorities to secure the safe release of Ranjit Singh, a resident of Chakka Kundi village in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, who was abducted during a terror attack in Niger's Dosso region on July 15.

The attack, which also claimed the lives of two Indian nationals, occurred when unidentified armed assailants ambushed a Nigerian army unit guarding an electrical line construction project, approximately 100 kilometres from Niamey.

According to details obtained, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh provided an update about the situation on social media site X, saying, "Following continuous follow-up by my office, the Ministry of External Affairs has informed that the Indian Embassy in Niamey is actively pursuing the release of Ranjit Singh, a resident of Ramban district, who was abducted in Niger. The embassy is in constant communication with local authorities to ensure his safe return."

Earlier, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed deep concern over the abduction, urging swift intervention by the Ministry of



External Affairs.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister's office stated, "Chief Minister has expressed concern over the abduction of Ranjeet Singh, a resident of Ramban, in Niger. He urges the Hon'ble EAM @DrSJaishankar and @MEAIndia to urgently intervene to secure Ranjit's safe and swift return."

The Indian Embassy in Niger confirmed the incident in a statement posted on X on July 18, 2025, saying, "In a heinous terror attack on 15 July in Niger's Dosso region, two Indian nationals tragically lost their lives, and one was abducted. Our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The Mission in Niamey is in touch with local authorities to repatriate mortal remains and ensure the safe release of the abducted Indian. All Indians in Niger are advised to remain vigilant."

Ranjit Singh, a senior safety officer with Transrail Lighting Limited, a power transmission and distribution company, was working at the construction site when the attack occurred. His family lost contact with him on July 15, and his wife, Sheela Devi, was informed of his abduction by his colleagues on July 16.

In a heartfelt appeal, Sheela Devi said, "My entire life is at stake. I have three young children and elderly parents to care for. I appeal to the Government of India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to bring my husband back home safely."

She met with Ramban Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan, who assured her that the matter had been escalated to the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy in Niger. (KNO)

Arrest Kingpins To End Drug Scourge In J&K: Itoo

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Minister Sakina Itoo on Monday called for decisive action against major players involved in the drug trade in Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that cosmetic measures won't suffice to protect the region's youth from falling prey to addiction.

Speaking on the sidelines of an awareness event, Itoo said drug abuse has become a grave societal threat that cannot be tackled by government departments alone. "This is a crisis that demands joint ownership. Police and health departments are doing their part, but to truly dismantle this network, we need to go after the big fish. Nabbing only the street-level offenders will not solve the problem," she said.

The minister urged society at large to shoulder the responsibility and play a proactive role in uprooting the menace. "Un-



less every segment of society—be it families, communities, or religious scholars—takes this as a personal mission, we will not be able to overcome it," she asserted.

Itoo was addressing students at an event titled Drug-Free Kashmir, organised by the Voice of Weekly Newspaper Kashmir in collaboration with A.R. Azad Memorial Foundation. She emphasized the pivotal role religious leaders and community influencers must play in creating awareness and resistance against drug abuse.

Kashmir's Healthcare Challenges Part-1

19 Doctor Posts Leave 100,000 Without Proper Healthcare In Karnah

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Sub-District Hospital (SDH) of Karnah and its associated healthcare centers are grappling with an acute crisis, as a debilitating shortage of specialist doctors and medical staff has left an estimated 100,000 residents in the region without adequate healthcare support.

Despite registering dozens of OPD patients and around 20 emergency cases daily, the hospital currently operates without a single gynaecology specialist, chief specialist, surgeon, general physician, or consultant doctor.

The absence of these critical personnel has severely compromised healthcare delivery, with far-reaching consequences for the local population.

The gravity of the situation is underscored by the fact that, since April 2025, at least 90 pregnant women have been referred to hospitals in the Valley for treatment and care—an arduous journey in itself. Due to the unavailability of a gynaecologist, at least two women are sent to Valley hospitals every day as their treatment cannot be managed locally. The hospital's operation theatre, too, has become non-functional in the absence of specialist doctors.

A detailed assessment of the Karnah health block reveals a stark reality: out of 31 sanctioned doctor posts, only 12 are filled, leaving 19 vacancies unaddressed. At Tehsil Hospital Tangdhar, only six doctors serve against the requirement of 27. The entire block has 214 sanctioned posts for medical and paramedical staff—including permanent and National Health Mission staff—yet only 83 are filled, with 103 vacant. Since 2015, 22 employees have retired and five have died in

service, but their positions remain vacant to this day.

The Karnah health block comprises one sub-district hospital, four primary health centers, five new-type primary health centers, and 29 health sub-centers. Many of these centers are either closed or functioning at a bare minimum due to the chronic staff shortage. Locals shared with KNO that, while medical camps have been organized in recent months to provide some relief, having to wait weeks for such camps—especially in emergencies—poses serious risks and cannot substitute for a permanent solution.

The existing staff is reportedly working under tremendous pressure, clocking up to 160 hours a week—four times the standard workload—leading to concerns about both staff welfare and quality of care. "There are no proper arrangements for us. We bear our own accommodation expenses, and there is no additional compensation for working in this border area, whereas earlier there was a border allowance," a doctor said.

He added that adequate staffing would allow for a fairer distribution of work and relieve the extraordinary burden on the current team.

The local community has issued an urgent appeal to the Health Department and the government, demanding that all vacant positions be filled, specialist doctors be appointed, border area staff be provided with suitable incentives, and all health centers be made fully functional. Residents stress that this is not just a health crisis but a serious question about governmental priorities.

They warn that, unless swift action is taken, the current neglect could endanger hundreds of precious lives.

Cold Storage Units Prove Boon For Plum Growers

Agencies

SRINAGAR: After transforming Kashmir's apple trade along with cherry, cold storage units are now turning into a lifeline for plum growers in the Valley.

Traditionally constrained by the perishability of their produce, farmers are now tapping into markets across India—thanks to the rapidly growing cold chain infrastructure.

Farmers from different parts of Kashmir said that fruits like plums used to be sold under pressure due to their limited shelf life—often just 2 to 5 days without refrigeration. This resulted in significant post-harvest losses and forced distress sales at throwaway prices.

"Earlier, we had to dispose of plums within a couple of days, sometimes at very low rates. But this year, cold storage has been a game-changer," said Javid Ahmad, a plum grower from Shopian. "We have been able to store our fruit longer and supply it gradually to markets like Delhi, Mumbai and even Bengaluru. Most of my produce is sold already, and the rest is safely stored."

"For the first time, I stored my plums in cold storage. The returns have improved and we are seeing minimal wastage," said Mohammad Ashraf, a plum grower.

Growers said that rates are almost double as compared to last year and cold storage units

are helping to send produce to markets as per demand.

Officials said that the move is part of a broader strategy to enhance Kashmir's fruit supply chain. "Short shelf life has been the biggest hurdle for growers of soft fruits like cherries and plums. Cold storage helps overcome that and opens up new market opportunities," said an official of the horticulture department.

Earlier, plums would rot before reaching distant cities. Now, we can ensure quality and freshness even when sending them as far as Kolkata," said Riyaz Dar, a fruit exporter from Srinagar. "The market has opened up—the returns are higher and the reputation of Kashmiri produce is growing."

The Horticulture Planning and Marketing Department is actively working on strengthening the cold storage network across the Valley under various central schemes. Experts believe this infrastructural support could redefine the dynamics of Kashmir's horticulture sector.

"If this trend continues, Kashmir can go beyond apples and emerge as a significant supplier of cherries and plums to the rest of India," they said.

With the success of this season, growers and traders are hopeful that the Valley's perishable fruit sector is headed toward a more profitable and sustainable future. —(KNO)

Bumrah Will Play, Confirms Siraj Ahead Of Manchester Test

Press Trust f India

MANCHESTER: India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Monday confirmed Jasprit Bumrah's participation in the fourth Test beginning at Old Trafford on Wednesday. Bumrah, who has been earmarked to play in three Tests out of five due to workload management, had missed the second Test at Edgbaston that India won handsomely before returning for the following game at Lord's which was lost by 22 runs. With India trailing 1-2 and series on the line, former India captain Anil Kumble had recently spoken about the need to play the star pacer in the last two Tests.



Following the team's first out-door session in Manchester, Siraj

at least cleared the suspense over Bumrah's availability for the fourth Test. "Jassi bhai will play as far as I know, our combination is changing day by day (due to injuries)," Siraj told reporters. Asked about the plans specific to next game, he replied: "Our plan is to keep bowling in good areas considering how England play. We want them to play with patience like they played in the last match. We felt good about playing proper Test cricket." With Arshdeep Singh ruled out of the Manchester Test due to a hand injury, India have added seamer Anshul Kamboj to the squad. Nitish Reddy has also been

ruled out of the entire series due to a knee injury, forcing the team to rejig its combination. Akash Deep, nursing a groin injury, did not bowl in the main nets on Monday. "Akash Deep, he has a groin issue, physios are examining. He bowled in the morning as well. Yet to get feedback from physio. Anshul has come in now that Arshdeep is injured. Good luck to him," Siraj didn't reveal much about the combination. India's pace spearhead Bumrah did not bowl long in the nets due to slippery nature of the surface before moving to the field of play for more overs under his belt.

England Replace Shoaib Bashir For 4th Test

England on Monday replaced off-spinner Shoaib Bashir with slow left-arm orthodox bowler Liam Dawson as their only change in the playing eleven for the fourth Test against India which starts here on July 23. England lead 2-1 in the five-match Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy having won the first and the third Tests at the Headingley and Lord's respectively. India won the second Test at Edgbaston. Bashir was ruled out of the remainder of the series after suffering fracture on the left hand's index finger on the third day of the third Test trying to stop a powerful drive from Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja. Bashir had since then undergone a surgery. But the off-spinner had taken the final wicket of the third Test to give England a 22-run narrow win in the third Test. Bashir's exit led to the recall of 35-year-old Dawson, who last played the third of his three Tests so far in July 2017 against South Africa. England XI: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope (vc), Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (c), Jamie Smith (wk), Liam Dawson, Chris Woakes, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer.

Kashmir Super League: United Elegant Defeat Greenend Heroes 1-0



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: United Elegant FC defeated Greenend Heroes FC 1-0 in the 2025 Kashmir Super League on Monday at TRC Ground here. The tightly-contested matchup was bound to be settled by a solitary goal. And it came from top J&K forward Akif Reshi. After a 0-0 first half, Akif pounced on an opportunity to make it 1-0 for United Elegant in the 52nd minute. The team

hung on as Greenend Heroes looked for a way back into the game. In the postmatch honours, Akif Reshi was awarded Player of the Match, while Shabir Sheikh won the Game Changer of the Match. Sowban Hilal took the Golden Moment award and the X-Factor Excellence award went to Basit Ahmad Bhat. In Tuesday's contest, Athwas India XI will lock horns against Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC at 7:00 PM.

Provincial Level U-19 Boys Volleyball Tourney Begins In Budgam

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam on Monday inaugurated the Inter-District Provincial Level Volleyball Tournament for Boys Under-19 at the Sports Stadium Chrar-e-Sharief. The event witnessed participation from all 10 districts of Kashmir. Organised under guidance of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone, the tournament aims to provide

a competitive platform for young volleyball players and to foster sportsmanship, discipline and physical fitness among school-going youth. The event marks yet another milestone in DYSS Budgam's continuous efforts to promote youth engagement through sports and to identify budding talent for higher levels of competition. The matches will continue over the coming days, culminating in the final showdown between the top-performing teams.



Kho-Kho, Cricket & Other Events Held In Anantnag Zones



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Anantnag organised various events at District and Zonal Level. In Zone Bijbehara, the Inter-School Zonal Level Kho-Kho Tournament (U-17 Boys) concluded at PM Shri Government Middle School Pazalpura. Organised by the Zonal Physical Education Office Bijbehara, the tournament witnessed the participation of around 50 students from various High and Higher Secondary Schools. After intense competition, Oxford High School Bijbehara lifted the winners' trophy, while HSS Marhama finished as the runner-up. Simultaneously, in Zone Doru, the semi-final and final matches of the U-14 Inter-School Cricket Tournament were held at Kabamarg Playfield. A total of 64 players

across four teams participated in the tournament. In the first semi-final, Whiz Kids Larkipora defeated HS Shangran, while Mehmoodabad edged past HS Deheruna in the second semi-final. The final clash between Whiz Kids Larkipora and Mehmoodabad is currently underway. At District Level, under the supervision of experienced mentors and Physical Education experts, the coaching camp of Kabaddi for AAG Boys aimed at preparing selected athletes for upcoming inter-zonal and state-level competitions. The coaching sessions are being held in a structured manner focusing on physical conditioning, technical drills, team coordination, and tactical skills in Kabaddi, the initiative is being seen as a vital step toward strengthening grass-roots sports.

Nitish Kumar Reddy Ruled Out Of England Tour

India all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy has been ruled out of the remainder of the series against England due to a knee injury, while injured pacer Arshdeep Singh will be unavailable for selection for the fourth Test, the BCCI said on Monday. Reddy, who featured in the second and third Tests, picked up the injury while training in the gym on Sunday, with scans revealing ligament damage. Arshdeep, who is yet to feature in the series, sustained an impact injury to his left thumb while bowling in the nets during a training session in Beckenham last week.

Marcus Rashford In Barcelona To Complete Loan Move

Barcelona's already impressive front line is about to be boosted by the signing of Marcus Rashford. Rashford is in Barcelona to complete a move from Manchester United, a person with knowledge of the transfer told The Associated Press on Monday. The person did not want to be named because they were not authorized to speak about it publicly. The loan deal would give the 27-year-old England forward, once considered among Europe's top talents, a chance to revive a career that stalled in recent years after falling out of favor at United and ending last season on loan at Aston Villa. Spanish media said the one-year loan agreement with United would give Barcelona an option to buy Rashford for about 30 million euros (\$35 million).

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