

## Modi Becomes 2nd Longest Serving PM In A Row

KO Web Desk

New Delhi: Narendra Modi on Friday overtook Indira Gandhi to become the second longest serving prime minister of India in consecutive terms.

Modi, officials noted, completed 4,078 days in office on Friday. Gandhi was in the office in an unbroken stint for 4,077 days, from January 24, 1966, to March 24, 1977.

The record for the unbroken stint is held by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister. Both Modi and Nehru led their respective parties to victory in three consecutive Lok Sabha elections.

Nehru, who remained at the helm from August 15, 1947, till his death on May 27, 1964, had an uninterrupted tenure of 6,130 days.

As an elected head of a government, in state and at the



Centre, Modi already enjoys the longest stint.

He became Gujarat chief minister in 2001 and remained in office before taking over as prime minister in 2014.

Modi, the first prime minister born after Independence, is also the longest serving non-Congress PM. The officials noted that the Gujarat-born leader is the only non-Congress leader to complete two full terms as the head of the central government. "Modi is the | [More on P10](#)

## No US Role In Ceasefire With Pakistan: GOI Says Decision Taken After Direct Contact Between DGMOs

Observer News Service

New Delhi: The Government of India has dismissed claims of U.S. interference in the recent ceasefire between India and Pakistan, asserting that the decision to halt military operations was based on India's own strategic objectives, particularly targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK).

In a written response to the query in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said that India and Pakistan agreed on May 10



for a cessation of firing and military activity as a result of "direct contact" between the director generals of military operations (DGMOs) of both nations, which was "initiated

by the Pakistani side".

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was asked whether it is a fact that the "ceasefire between India and Pakistan was arrived at the

behest of the US interference just after three days of operations against Pakistan when the Indian Armed Forces had the upper hand in the conflict".

The reply said that India had destroyed the designated terror camps linked to the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, by May 8, two days before the ceasefire came into effect. This, the government said, was a "focused, measured and non-escalatory" response, carried out with clarity and restraint.

While the government acknowledged that diplomatic interactions took place with multiple | [More on P10](#)

## Employment-linked Incentive Scheme From Aug 1

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi:Employment-linked incentive scheme, PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, will come into effect from August 1, 2025, the Labour Ministry said on Friday.

Earlier, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approved the scheme, which is aimed at incentivising job creation in the country, the ministry said in a statement.

With an outlay of Rs 99,446 crore, the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PMVBRY) aims to incentivise the creation of more than 3.5 crore jobs over two years. Of these, 1.92 crore beneficiaries will be first timers, entering the workforce. The benefits of the scheme would be applicable to jobs created between | [More on P10](#)

## ₹1.44 Lakh/Day To Escort Er Rashid To Parliament

Delhi HC Asks NIA to Respond on Jailed MP's Plea

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In the legal battle surrounding incarcerated Member Parliament from Baramulla and President of Awami Itihaad Party (AIP) Engineer Rashid, the Delhi High Court on Friday sought

a response from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on a plea by jailed Lok Sabha MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid seeking interim bail to attend the ongoing Monsoon session of Parliament. The court issued notice to the SSP of the National | [More on P10](#)

## KILLING OF SUSPECTED DRUG-PEDDLER

### CM, Mehbooba Demand Probe

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday called for an investigation into the killing of an alleged drug-peddler in Jammu city and said that use of force by police has to be calibrated and not "indiscriminate".

He said that Jammu and Kashmir has paid a heavy price in the past due to such incidents.

In an X post, Omar said, "The killing of Mohd Parvez of Niki Tawi in Jammu is highly unfortunate and deeply regrettable. Use of force by the police has to be calibrated | [More on P10](#)

## JKB Q1 Net Profit Rises 17% YoY To ₹485 Cr

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Jammu & Kashmir Bank Friday posted a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 484.84 Cr for the April-June quarter of the current financial year (CFY), registering a 16.7% year on year (YoY) growth from Rs 415.49 Cr reported in the same period last year.

The Bank announced its Q1 results after the Board of Directors approved the quarterly numbers at a meeting held at the Bank's Corporate Headquarters.

Performance Highlights



Net Interest Income (NII) for the quarter grew 7% YoY to Rs 1465.43 Cr, while the other income jumped 29% to Rs 250.30 Cr from Rs 194.10 Cr recorded last year. Return on Assets (RoA) for the quarter improved

to 1.17% YoY from 1.08%, while as Net Interest Margin (NIM) for the quarter stood at 3.72% as against 3.86% recorded in Q4FY2025. Bank's Cost to income Ratio also improved to 60.78% YoY.

Operating profit witnessed a 13% YoY increase to Rs 672.84 Cr from Rs 594.67 Cr recorded for the corresponding period last year.

Commenting on the numbers, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "Despite tough situation on ground due to the Pahalgam terror attack | [More on P10](#)

## 26TH KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

### LG Pays Homage To Soldiers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Friday paid homage to the fallen heroes on the eve of "Kargil Vijay Diwas".

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor recalled the magnificent heroism and the spirit of sacrifice of valiant jawans and officers of Armed Forces during India's victory in 'Operation Vijay' in 1999, also known as Kargil War.

"On Kargil Vijay Diwas, I bow to our martyrs and salute their bravery, courage and sacrifice. Our heroes fought | [More on P10](#)

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FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2025

YOY RATIOS		Net Profit Growth	16.70 %	Net Interest Income	7.00 %	Cost to Income Ratio	60.78 %	Return on Assets	1.17 %	Other Income	29.00 %	(₹ in Lakh)			
S. No.	PARTICULARS	STANDALONE				CONSOLIDATED									
		QUARTER ENDED		YEAR ENDED		QUARTER ENDED		YEAR ENDED							
		30.06.2025	31.03.2025	30.06.2024	31.03.2025	30.06.2025	31.03.2025	30.06.2024	31.03.2025						
		(REVIEWED)	(AUDITED)	(REVIEWED)	(AUDITED)	(REVIEWED)	(AUDITED)	(REVIEWED)	(AUDITED)						
1	Total income from operations (net)	351,857	361,616	318,848	1,367,267	352,265	361,922	319,278	1,368,802						
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	65,775	80,918	61,215	293,370	65,936	80,967	61,372	293,868						
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before Tax, (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	65,775	80,918	61,215	293,370	65,936	80,967	61,372	293,868						
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after Tax, (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	48,484	58,454	41,549	208,246	48,453	58,191	41,850	208,179						
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period {Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)}	Refer Note No. 2				Refer Note No. 2									
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	11,013	11,013	11,013	11,013	11,013	11,013	11,013	11,013						
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of previous year				1,290,312				1,285,949						
8	Securities Premium Account	291,950	291,950	291,945	291,950	291,950	291,950	291,945	291,950						
9	Net Worth	1,354,962	1,301,326	1,146,471	1,301,326	1,330,506	1,296,962	1,142,477	1,296,962						
10	Paid up Debt Capital/Outstanding Debt	238,100	238,100	288,100	238,100										
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-	-	-										
12	Debt Equity Ratio	0.18	0.18	0.25	0.18										
13	Total Debts to total assets	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.01										
14	Operating Margin (%)	19.12%	22.12%	18.65%	21.43%										
15	Net Profit Margin (%)	13.78%	16.16%	13.03%	15.23%										
16	Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items) (₹ 1/- each) for continuing and discontinued operations														
	Basic : (* not annualized)	4.40*	5.31*	3.77*	18.91	4.40*	5.28*	3.80*	18.91						
	Diluted : (* not annualized)	4.40*	5.31*	3.77*	18.91	4.40*	5.28*	3.80*	18.91						
17	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-										
18	Debenture Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-										

Note:

1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarter ended Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing obligation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarter ended Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites. [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com), [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and on Bank's website <https://www.jkbank.com/Investor/financial-information/financial-results>

2. Information relating to Total comprehensive Income and Other Comprehensive Income is not furnished as Ind AS is not yet made applicable to Banks.

Place : Srinagar

Dated : 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2025

For and on behalf of the Board

AMITAVA CHATTERJEE

Managing Director & CEO

DIN : 07082989





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2

# Study Estimates Lightning Kills 320 Million Trees In World Yearly

Press Trust Of India

About 320 million trees could be getting killed by lightning strikes every year, accounting for about two to three per cent of the world's plant biomass loss, according to a study. The tree loss is further estimated to emit between 0.77 and 1.09 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide yearly, which researchers from the Technical University of Munich, Germany, said was comparable to 1.26 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide released every year from the burning of plants in wildfires.

The estimates of trees lost to lightning strikes, published in the journal Global Change Biology, do not include those lost in wildfires triggered by lightning, the team said. As the planet continues to warm, lightning strikes are expected to become more common, and "so, it's worth paying closer attention to this largely overlooked disturbance," lead author Andreas Krause, researcher at the chair of land surface-atmosphere interactions, Technical University of Munich, said. "Currently, lightning-induced tree mortality is highest in tropical regions. However, models suggest that lightning frequency

will increase primarily in middle- and high-latitude regions, meaning that lightning mortality could also become more relevant in temperate and boreal forests," Krause said. The findings support those from previous studies, indicating that lightning is an important cause of tree death in many forests, the authors said. Damage to forests due to lightning strikes is hard to detect and has only been systematically studied in select locations of the world, they said. The team added that the number of the world's trees directly damaged by lightning

strikes every year is unclear and that their research has developed the first method to help provide estimates. The ecological impact of lightning is underestimated, the researchers said. "We're now able not only to estimate how many trees die from lightning strikes annually, but also to identify the regions most affected and assess the implications for global carbon storage and forest structure," said Krause. The authors "find that lightning kills around 320 million trees each year, thereby causing (nearly) 0.25 (gigatonnes of carbon) of dead biomass."

Subject.Grant of registration of the proposed Travel unit under the name & Style of M/s.BOOKING EXPERT " situated at Pulwama Circular Road Pulwama Near Maizban Hotel

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I Mr Masroor Afzal S/o Mohd Afzal Mir R/o Achagoza Bamnool Pulw intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style" M/s. BOOKING EXPERT " situated at Pulwama Circular Road Pulwama Near Maizban Hotel Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas,I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate,Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department). Bank statement (minimum balance 1000),site plan, Affidavit,Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting),Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection,if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID-ddtreg123@ gmail. com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/newspaper of the valley.No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained fko

Subject.Grant of registration of the proposed Paying Guest house unit under the name & Style of M/s.PERFECT VIEW " situated at Abi Karpura Rainawari Srinagar

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas I Mr./Lateef Ahmad Qazi S/o Abdul Gani Qazi R/o Rainawari Qazi Mohalla Abi Karpura Srinagar Intends to apply in the Department of tourism for registration of my proposed Paying Guest house unit under the name and style" M/s. PERFECT VIEW" situated at Abi Kar pora Rainawari Srinagar Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas,I will submit state subject/Domicile certificate, Qualification Certificate,Pan card, Experience certificate (minimum 05 years), Character certificate (Police department). Bank statement (minimum balance 1000),site plan, Affidavit,Rent Deed duly attested sub-registrar, printing Material (Letter Head/Visiting),Photograph of the unit (indoor and Outdoor) and Two Passport size photograph to the department of tourism as prescribed checklist prior to registration of my unit as an Excursion Agency/Adventure tour operation. Now as per J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12, before my case is processed for registration by the competent Authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public/financial institutions/Ban/ Organisation, etc for objection,if any and the same should reach to the deputy director tourism Registration (e-mail ID-ddtreg123@ gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper/ newspaper of the valley.No objection beyond a period of 7 days shall be entertained fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is certified that my original name is Ashtoosh Trakroo, S/o Late Chaman Lal Trakroo. However, in my driving license bearing number JK0220070022980, issued by RTO Jammu, my name has been incorrectly written as Ashotoosh Trakroo. I am now applying for correction of my name. If anyone has any objection in this regard, they may contact RTO Jammu within 7 days of this publication.

Ashtoosh Trakroo, S/o Late Chaman Lal Trakroo fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The father name of my ward namely Arhan Rayees, Azaan Rayees , Anas Rayees has been wrongly written as Rayees Ahmad Mir while the correct father name is Mir Rayees Ul Rahim. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the ZEO office Dangerpora within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Mir Rayees Ul Rahim F/o : Arhan Rayees, Azaan Rayees , Anas Rayees fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied for the issuanc of "D Class" contractor card. If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the R&B Division Sopore within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Mohammad Ishaq Lone S/o Mohammad Sultan Lone fko

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The name and DOB of my ward has been wrongly written in her DOB as Ayesha Jan, DOB 12-10-2018 while her correct name is Ayesha Maryam and Correct DOB is 12-03-2020. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the concern aadhar centre Jammu Srinagar within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained. Shahnawaz Ahmad Paul S/o Mushtaq Ahmad Paul R/O Molu Chitragram Shopian fko

## اطلاع عام

ہر خاص و عام کو اطلاع دی جاتی ہے کہ ہمارا والد العلام احمد شیخ ولد محمد رمضان شیخ مورخہ 25 جنوری 2025 کو فوت ہوا ہے لہذا ہمیں وراثت کا انتقال کرنا ہے۔ جبکہ ہم دو بانی ہے مشتاق احمد شیخ و فیاض احمد شیخ اور تیسرا کونینیا بی بی منین ہے لہذا ہر خاص و عام کو بذریعہ شہرہ راجہ مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی شخص یا انھیں کو کوئی نذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر متعلقہ سے رابطہ کریں۔ بعد گزرنے مابین کوئی بھی نذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔ مشتاق احمد شیخ و فیاض احمد شیخ پسران محمد رمضان شیخ ساکنہ مازہ ہامد ماگام bmg

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, SONAMARG Email:-sdaofficial@yahoo.com

### E-Bid Document (Auction ID:23475)

Outsourcing of lashpatri Resort with the facilities of 02 No. of Huts, 04 No. of Geodesic Dome type tents, Pre-fab Kiosk, PC Block and Camping siteat Lashpatri, Sonamarg"as is where is"basis for a period of 05 Years, through Gem Portal

No: CEO/SDA/2025/1284-91dated:24/07/2025.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-bids are invitedonline through Gem Portal forOutsourcing oflashpatri Resort with the facilities of 02 No. of Huts, 04 No. of Geodesic Dome type tents Pre-fab Kiosk PC Block and Camping site atLashpatri, Sonamarg"as is where is"basis. The details are as under:

S. No.	Particulars	Date/Time	Remarks
1.	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Submission Start Date	24/07/2025 at 10.00 AM	NIL-
2.	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Submission End Date	28/07/2025 at 04.00 PM	NIL-
3.	PQ (Pre-Qualification) Assessment End Date	28/07/2025 at 04.00 PM	NIL-
4.	EMD Start Date	30/07/2025 at 10.00 AM	NIL-
5.	EMD End Date	31/07/2025 at 4.00 PM	NIL-
6.	EMD (Bid Security) Amount in shape of CDR/ CDR DD	Rs. 50000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only)	To be pledged in favour of Accounts Of- ficer, Sonamarg Development Authority
7.	Bid Submission/Auction Start Date	01/08/2025 at 10.00 AM	NIL-
8.	Bid Submission/Auction End Date & Time	02/08/2025 at 4.00 PM	NIL-
9.	Reserve bid amount	Rs. 12,50,00 Lacs (Rupees Twelve Lac Fifty Thousand only)	NIL-

### PRE-QUALIFICATION (PQ) CRITERIA (TO BE UPLOADED ON GeM PORTAL)

- The bidder shall have to upload a Character Certificate from the concerned Police Station or alternatively copy of a valid Passport.
  - The bidder shall have to upload self-attested PAN Card & Aadhar Card.
  - The bidder shall upload Average Annual Financial Turnover Statement of last three years ending of previous financial year & should be at least 50% of basic bid amount.
  - The bidder shall have to upload Income Tax return of last three financial years.
  - The bidder shall have to upload undertaking that if found successful after the culmination of auction process as per following:
    - That I shall abide by all the terms & conditions of the contract.
    - That I will deposit the offered bid amount within a period 07 days after culmination of auction, failing which result in automatic cancellation without notice along with forfeiture of CDR.
    - That I will handover the asset in good condition as received from the department on the day of expiring of auction contract.
  - That I will not approach the Courts for extension of contract period.
  - The bidder has to upload FSSAI Certificate.
- Terms and Conditions:
- The interested parties should compulsorily visit & inspect the asset before participating in the e-bidding process and the physical position of the site/asset shall stand on "as is where is" basis. As such, no claim of any deficiency, addition, alteration, rectification in the asset would be entertained during/after bidding process.
  - The bidder participating in the e-bid process must apply in his name or the firmname dulyregistered in his name. There is no scope whatsoever of executing any partnership deed inthe outsourcee deed.
  - Eligible persons shall be allowed to participate in the e-bidding process only afteruploading of relevant documents mentioned in the Eligibility Criteria and EMD (afterqualifyingPre-Qualification) in the shape of CDR, amounting to Rs.50000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand Only) pledged in favour of Accounts Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority.
  - Previous defaulters shall not be allowed toparticipate in the bidding process.
  - The minimum reserve bid has been fixed at Rs. 12.50 Lacs (Rupees Twelve Lac Fifty).
  - There will be an escalation of 15% compounding on the offered bid amount of previous years for each successive year and thereafter to be deposited before two months from the start of every year. The bid offers should be above the minimum reserve bid.
  - The bid offers should be above the minimum reserve bid viz. Rs. 12.50 Lacs fixed for the job.
  - The successful bidder shall have to deposit 100% of the offered bid amount for the 1st year within a period of three days with 50% on the culmination of bidding process.
  - The licensee has to insure the property through any Nationalized Insurance Company in the name of the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority for which a letter of authority shall be issued by this office. The premium on this account shall be borne by the licensee.
  - The period of outsourcing shall be on license basis for a period of 05-years which will commence from the date ofissuance of the formal allotment letter.
  - The contract shall be awarded for one year in the first instance and renewal of the same shall be subject to depositing of rentals for the each successive year in advance including 15% escalation of the maximum bid before the expiry of the 1st year contract.
  - The successful bidder has to take prior permission before start of the operation regarding the type of business he/she

- intends to undertake in the asset. Withoutthe explicit permission of CEO Sonamarg Development Authority, the successful bidder will not be issued allotment order.
- The successful bidder shall have to use the asset only in the area as designated in the auction notice. Violation in this regard may invite cancellation of the contract.
  - In case the successful bidder fails to fulfill the term of contract, or leaves the contracthalf way or the contract is cancelled due to any disqualifications/non-payment of advancement, the CDR shall be forfeited.
  - The safety, security and upkeep and watch & ward of the asset shall be sole responsibility of outsourcee during the period of contract. The successful bidder shall ensure all safety measures like firefighting equipments, first aid kit etc. Sonamarg Development Authority shall not be responsible for any loss of life and property within the asset during the period of the contract.
  - The successful bidder shall have to charge rates for various allotted services as perapproval of the SDA from time to time.
  - The electric/water consumption charges shall be payable by the outsourcee& CDR shall be released after obtaining NOC from PHE & PDD.
  - The bidder should not be employee in any Govt. Deptt. or a Public Sector undertaking.
  - The out-sourcing committee reserves the right to reject any or all the e-bids without assigning any reason thereof.
  - The successful bidder shall have to execute an agreement with CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority regarding adherence to the terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Department during the course of the contract period. The bidder shall have to bear all the costs and expenses for executing this agreement/ license deed.
  - The successful bidder shall have to handover the asset to the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority after completion of contract period with the list of inventory, received by him at the timeof allotment/ taking over.
  - The licensee shall not make any alterations or additions to the space/ unit allotted,without seeking written permission from the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority.
  - The successful bidder shall arrange on his own all necessary stationery, staff or any otherrequirements for providing efficient services to the clients.
  - The Licensee shall provide necessary uniform & name plates to the staff working in thepremises & shall be responsible for any unfair act of the staff member for which, he shall bebeliable for criminal/ civil action under rules/law if any required..
  - The licensee shall not, in any case, sub-let the asset to any other party.
  - The successful bidder shall have to provide services to the best satisfaction of tourists/ locals. The bidder shall have to ensure that there isn't any complaint of misbehavior with the visitors/ locals or by any of the staff member employed by the bidder in this regard. In case any complaint is received, action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against the bidder and penalty shall be imposed upon the defaulters.
  - In case of any negligence in running the service or compliant pertaining to badperformance, the contract shall be terminated without any notice by the department.
  - The allotted asset shall be inspected periodically by the departmentally authorizedofficers and in case the services of the licensee are not found satisfactory, the contract shallbe liable for cancellation without any notice.
  - Any damage caused to the Government property at the site will invite penalty amountingto double the cost of damage or replacement of the same whatever the case may be, as perassessment to be made by the CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority.
  - The Department shall reserve the right for using the asset for any purpose or function or event, as it may deem fit and no fee shall charged by the licensee in this regard.
  - The successful bidder will have to abide by all the orders/communications issued byDepartment from time to time during the period of contract as may necessitated in light ofpublic unrest and law& order, security and in case of any other Administrative requirements.
  - The successful bidder shall ensure arrangement of furniture, electricity back up andavailability of standard crockery/ cutlery in the unit, on his own.
  - During the contract period the maintenance of the asset/ area, watch and ward as well as upkeep and daily cleaning/ sweeping shall be the sole responsibility of the licensee.
  - Any dispute arising out of or in connection with the contract, including any question regarding its existence, validity or termination, shall be referred Arbitration of Administrative Secretary incharge Tourism Department, Government of J&K, whose decision shall be final & binding upon the parties. The proceedings of the Arbitration shall be conducted under the provisions of the J&K, Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1997 & rules and its amendment if any, framed there under.
  - If the bidder intends to withdraw the agreed contract, he shall have to notify the Chief Executive Officer, Sonamarg Development Authority before three months without claim for refund of existing contract year.
  - If any minor repairs of the Departmental assets such as electrification, sanitarymaintenance etc are to be done and these will be carried out by the licensee at his own cost, however, after seeking permission from the competent authority as per the direction ofthe inspecting authority from time to time which will help in maintenance of the asset.
  - No extensions shall be granted. The asset shall be outsourced afresh at the end of thelicense term.
  - The successful bidder has to run theasset as per the norms and conditions as prescribed within Tourist Trade Act in vogue.
  - The successful bidder shall follow the regulations of FSSAI and any other regulations framed in this regard.
  - The Authority shall not be responsible for any monetary loss due to any climate untowardness or due to any other reason

DIPK-NB-1333/25

dated: 25-07-2025

Sd/-  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sonamarg Development Authority

## Office Of The Principal Sheikh-Ul-Alam Memorial Govt. Degree College

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No. SAM/DC/423

Dated: 25-07-2025

Sub.: Visit of Director Colleges, Director Planning Higher Education Department J&K UT

## BRIEF REPORT



Today, on 25th July, 2025, Director Colleges, Higher Education Department Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Aijaz Bashir, and Ms. Sukhleen Kour, Director Planning, Higher Education Department, accompanied by other officials, visited Sheikh Ul Alam Memorial Degree College, Budgam, to assess the progress of ongoing construction works within the campus. The dignitaries were warmly received by the Principal of the College, Prof. (Dr.) Mohd Amin Malik along with other Faculty members, officials from R&B Department Budgam were also present on the occasion. A detailed meeting was held in the office Chamber of the Principal, during which the status of various infrastructure projects, technical issues and delays were thoroughly discussed.

The team subsequently inspected the infrastructure projects, including the newly constructed eight-class room block, the Library block, and the Indoor Stadium which are currently under construction. After the on-site inspection, engineers were given clear-cut instructions to expedite the completion of all pending works and to rectify identified deficiencies in the construction process. Specific directives were issued to ensure timely execution and adherence to quality standards. The team also reviewed the PM-USHA renovation works of the main building. The executing agency was categorically instructed that any further delays would be unacceptable and that all remaining work under PM-USHA must be completed in one month's time slot.

Mr. Tarsaim Sharma, Section Officer, Planning Department, higher education recorded all the direction on the spot. Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Aijaz Bashir lauded the college administration for its dedicated efforts in raising both academic and non-academic standards of the institution and emphasized the importance of timely infrastructure development to support the academic ecosystem.

Media Secretary  
PRINCIPAL

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I want to change my name on my passport bearing NO. V1682050 from shabnam Maqbool to Shabnam Mustafa as per my Aadhaar details (Aadhar NO. 593170744355). If anybody having any objection can report to passport office within 7 days of issue of this notice. jm

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my back side number plate of my vehicle under registration number jk01AA 4412 Alto 800 from Rampora to zampa kadal jk bank now it's important to get a duplicate of it so if anybody have any objection submit your objection to the RTO office within 7 day's

Yours faithfully

Abdul Majeed Malik  
S/o Abdul Rahim Malik  
R/O Maisuma gawkadal srinagar  
Mobile no.7780809631 fko

# NOTICE

I have changed my name from VINEETA SINGH to VINITA SINGH. In future I will be known as VINITA SINGH. If anybody is having any objection he/she may contact Passport Office Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

VINITA SINGH  
47-A Gogji Bagh  
Near Amar Singh College  
Srinagar 190008  
Jammu & Kashmir





## ORATORIA 2025: DPS Srinagar Triumphs with Talent, Teamwork & Tenacity

Observer News Service

The Delhi Public School Society recently organised its highly anticipated Inter DPS English Literary Festival (National Level) titled "Oratoria – Where Words Breathe and Voices Rise", on July 19, 2025. This prestigious event was hosted by DPS Navi Mumbai and brought together brilliant young minds from Delhi Public Schools across India to showcase their literary flair, creativity, and eloquence.

The festival unfolded in two phases—an initial online round followed by the final on-site round. Delhi Public School, Srinagar, emerged among the top contenders and was shortlisted for the final round based on the exceptional performance of its students in the first phase. Three students—Sania Zehra (Grade VII), Sheikh Ahmad Sabir (Grade X), and Minhā Bilal Wani (Grade XII)—displayed remarkable literary skills that secured their school's position in the national finals.

In the second round of the competition, six students from DPS Srinagar—Zaynab Shabir Deva and Dayaan Murtaza (Grade VIII), Sheikh Ahmad Sabir (Grade X), Ahmad Abrar Giri, Hadi bin Imtiyaz, and Manahel Khan (all from Grade XI)—represented their school in Phase II. Accompanied by their escort teacher, Ms. Rehana Tabassum, Coordinator of the English Department, the team travelled to Navi Mumbai on July 18, 2025. The students competed in diverse categories including TED-style talks, debate sessions, and poetry competitions.

This participation was not just a reflection of individual talent but a testament to the school's commitment to a well-rounded educational philosophy. DPS Srinagar continues to nurture excellence across all domains—be it academics, sports, arts, or public speaking—ensuring its students are equipped to face future challenges with confidence and competence.

The event officially commenced with registration at 7:30 AM on July 19, followed by competitions beginning at 9:00 AM. The entire day was a rich amalgamation of creative expression, critical thinking, imagination, and effective argumentation. The students of DPS Srinagar brought with them a spirit of enthusiasm, hard work, and collaboration, which was evident in their presentations. A proud moment for the school was the achievement of a Grade X student who secured third position in the "Sinister Stand" category—an accomplishment that stands out especially considering the stiff competition from 28 DPS schools nationwide. Witnessing the confidence, clarity, and poise with which DPS Srinagar's students competed on a national platform was indeed a moment of great pride.

More than a competition, Oratoria 2025 was a celebration of shared learning, idea exchange, and teamwork. It provided an enriching experience for every participant, offering insights that go beyond textbooks and classrooms. The incident occurred while he was reportedly performing routine maintenance on his service weapon. Police sources confirmed that Mehraj was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared his condition as stable. An official inquiry into the incident has been initiated to ascertain the precise circumstances that led to the accidental discharge. [KNT]

## Cop Posted At Ex-MLA's House Injured In Accidental Fire

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** A Jammu and Kashmir Police head constable was injured on Friday after his service rifle went off accidentally while he was cleaning it at the residence of former MLA Muhammad Ashraf in the Pantha Chowk area of Srinagar, officials said.

The injured policeman, identified as Head Constable Mehraj-ud-din, sustained a

bullet injury in his leg. The incident occurred while he was reportedly performing routine maintenance on his service weapon.

Police sources confirmed that Mehraj was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared his condition as stable.

An official inquiry into the incident has been initiated to ascertain the precise circumstances that led to the accidental discharge. [KNT]

## انتقال

یہ خبر نہایت دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی کہ ہماری والدہ محترمہ شہزادہ سلطان المیہ مرحوم بشیر احمد نقاش ساکنہ بوچھوارہ ڈال گیٹ سری گروہ 25 جولائی 2025 بروز جمعہ 29 محرم 1447ھ) کو محض رعالت کے بعد انتقال کر گئیں۔ مرحومہ انتہائی شریف انفس خاتون تھیں۔ اللہ پاک جنت الفردوس میں اعلیٰ مقام عطا فرمائے۔ مرحومہ کے لیے فاتحہ خوانی 27 جولائی 2025 بروز اتوار صبح 10:30 بجے نزدیک زیارت شریف خواجہ یوسف مانچوٹائی عرف خواجہ باب صاحب پچھواڑا میں ہوگی۔ اس کے بعد ہمارے گھر پر تہذیبی مجلس منعقد ہوگی۔

سوگوار

شجاعت بشیر نقاش

اعزاز بشیر نقاش 7006078959

حیدر خان (9796700388) 9796700388) ٹٹا احمد نقاش (9419766989)

فیاض عبداللہ نقاش انظر شفاعت احمدوانی

Info

## انتقال پر ملال

المیہ محترمہ عبدالرشید پرے ساکنہ فیصل آباد پانچ گاندھریل 25 جولائی 2025 کو انتقال کر گئیں، اللہ تعالیٰ مرحومہ کو جوار رحمت میں جگہ دے اور لواحقین کو یہ صدمہ برداشت کرنے کی توفیق عطا کرے، مرحومہ کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 28 جولائی 2025ء آن کے آبائی مقبرہ سید فیصل آباد پانچ گاندھریل نزد یک مسجد عمر پرائیڈ سٹیج آئٹھ سبے انجام دی جائے گی

سوگواران: عبدالرشید پرے، شوکت احمد پرے، جاوید احمد پرے

9596518449

# SDA Launches Shehjar Heights Phase-II

112 Residential Apartments To Be Constructed Within 2 Years



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) has announced the launch of Phase-II of the Shehjar Heights project at Bemina envisaging construction of 112 more residential apartments, including 56 each 2-BHK and 3-BHK flats.

Shehjar Apartments is a flagship Vertical Housing project of SDA in Srinagar involving construction of around 450 residential apartments comprising around 13 towers. The Phase-I of the project completed with the construction of 140 apartments, is fully sold-out.

Given the overwhelming demand for quality residential apartments in Srinagar, SDA has expedited the execution of the project and has started the process for construction of 112 more flats under Phase-II after the Phase-I was fully sold out, said Mohammad Rafi, Vice-Chairman SDA adding that the possession of flats in Phase-II is likely to be handed over to the prospective allottees within 2 years.

He said vertical housing has become a necessity to ensure economical use of land in the fast-expanding Srinagar city. "Given the scarce land resources and sky-rocketing land prices in Srinagar, time has come for SDA to promote the concept of flatted accommodation in the city in a big way," Mr Rafi said. HUDCO, he said, are the projects

**GIVEN THE SCARCE LAND RESOURCES AND SKY-ROCKETING LAND PRICES IN SRINAGAR, time has come for SDA to promote the concept of flatted accommodation in the city in a big way"**

consultants for the Shehjar Heights, who have formulated the overall layout plan and design of towers and individual residential units.

Mr Rafi said that Shehjar Heights are spread over around 100 kanals of land with 40 ft wide main road and 36 ft wide internal roads transecting various apartment blocks located adjacent to Srinagar-Baramulla highway in Bemina near Hajj House.

The Vice-Chairman said that the project has been provided with adequate parking facility including surface parking for around 550 vehicles and covered parking for around 220 vehicles. Besides it will have parks, community hall, children's play area, tennis court, amphitheatre, health club, community market, gym, food court and a dedicated STP.

He said the best thing about Shehjar Project is that it is suitably located on National Highway in easily accessible and buzzing Bemina area of Srinagar, with remarkable proximity to urban amenities like hospitals, schools and markets with hassle-free to Srinagar International Airport and Nowgam Railway Station.

He said adequate and latest tech-

nological interventions have been ensured to make the structures earthquake resistant and HUDCO has got the structural design of the project approved by IIT Kanpur. "For the first time Liquefaction Resistance technology is being used in the construction of Phase-II to make the towers earth-quake resistant," he said and added that HUDCO is also providing consultancy for drainage, water supply and sewerage design, energy management, communication system, fire detection, fire protection and security systems for the Shehjar Apartments.

The Vice-Chairman said that each 3-BHK flat is spread over a net surface area of 1250 sft with 3 bedrooms, Drawing Room, Living Room, Kitchen, 3 washrooms, utility and veranda while 2-BHK flat has a surface area of 1012 sft comprising 2 bedrooms, drawing room, living room, 2 washrooms, kitchen, utility and veranda.

Rafi said the tendering process of Phase-II has been initiated and SDA is going to soon announce the booking for Phase-II with flexible payment mode.

# DC Hands Over Sanction Letters To Mission YUVA Beneficiaries

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant move towards youth empowerment and promoting self-reliance, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, handed over Sanction Letters to the beneficiaries of Mission YUVA initiative aimed to support entrepreneurs in establishing self-employment generating units in the district.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner handed over the 201 sanction letters to aspiring entrepreneurs under Mission YUVA initiative whose proposals had been approved after thorough evaluation by the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) marking a significant moment in the district administration's efforts to empower youth through sustainable self-employment ventures and foster economic growth

by enabling youth to earn their livelihood in a dignified manner.

Speaking on the occasion, DC underlined that the Administration is working hard to create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Srinagar District. He urged upon expeditious disposal of all Mission YUVA cases so that maximum benefits reach the aspiring entrepreneurs swiftly.

He emphasized that the scheme is designed in a clear cut manner for easy access, enabling beneficiaries to receive benefits in a hassle free mode directly without unnecessary visits to different Government Offices.

The DC also commended the inter-departmental cooperation involving DIC, Employment, JKEDI, NRLM, and Banks to facilitate quick processing of cases & sanctioning and credit disbursement. He stated that the progress achieved in Srinagar is a

promising sign for promoting self-employment and boosting the local economy by generating jobs.

The senior Officers of Jammu & Kashmir Bank while speaking on the occasion, described the "Mission YUVA a unique flagship programme launched by the Government that has witnessed support of entire government machinery right from the conception to implementation to ensure that youth can avail maximum benefits without hassles. They assured that the Bank will make every possible effort to make the Mission YUVA a success initiative to empower youth through sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Earlier, Deputy Director Employment noted the enthusiastic response from the district's youth to Mission YUVA, which aims to empower them through self-employment opportunities.

COLORING DREAMS:

# Youth Merges Science With Soul Through Art

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Shahran Fayaz Dahlani, a 27-year-old from Umerabad HMT Srinagar, is charting a path shaped by determination, talent, and the strokes of a paintbrush.

A PhD scholar in Statistics at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST), Shahran is also an accomplished self-taught painting artist whose work is now in demand across the valley.

"I've been passionate about painting since childhood—it never allowed me to go away from it," Shahran said, speaking to KNO.

His journey began humbly—painting in small notebooks, experimenting with forms and colours. Slowly, his work started appearing in shops and restaur-

rants, catching the eye of art lovers and customers.

Since 2016, he has been painting professionally, earning accolades at the college, university, state, and even national levels. "I never had formal training. Whatever I've achieved is through continuous practice and hard work," he says.

Shahran is a proud alumnus of Tyndale Biscoe School, Srinagar, and credits his family—especially his father, Dr Fayaz—for their unwavering support.

"I find peace of mind in this work. I'm doing it wholeheartedly," he shared, adding that his team has now grown to eight people, who are both working and learning with him.

Responding to growing interest, he now plans to start art classes for aspiring artists. "Many people are

contacting me for guidance. I want to help those who are genuinely interested," he said.

"Today, many young people fall into drug addiction. It's easy to enter, but extremely difficult to leave. Instead, if you have even a little talent, work on it—you can find both peace and livelihood," he advised.

Dahlani recalls how people once taunted him for his artistic aspirations. Now, the same people seek his help to guide their children.

"I'm proud of my work. The same people who mocked me are now appreciating my efforts," he says with a sense of satisfaction.

To those waiting endlessly for government jobs, Shahran said that ups and downs are part of life. "Don't sit idle. Use your talent, stay focused, and success will follow".

- 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
- BIJBHERA: 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

30 Muharram  
1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	3:59
ZUHR	12:37
ASR	5:33
Magrib	7:40
ISHA	9:15

## This Day In History

- 657- Battle of Siffin during the first Muslim civil war between Ali ibn Abi Talib and Muawiyah I beside Euphrates River
- 920- Rout of an alliance of Christian troops from Navarre and Léon against the Muslims at Pamplona.
- 1469- Wars of the Roses: Battle of Edgecote Moor - Pitting the forces of Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick against those of King Edward IV.
- 1678- England & Netherlands signs treaty: sending ultimatum to France
- 1803- The Surrey Iron Railway, arguably the world's first public railway, opens in south London.
- 1847- The Liberian Declaration of Independence is signed making Liberia a sovereign nation, independent from the American Colonization Society
- 1891- France annexes Tahiti.
- 1936- The Axis Powers decide to intervene in the Spanish Civil War.
- 1941- US embargo on oil-export to Japan
- 1944- Japanese suicide attack on US lines in Guam
- 1944- Russian troops arrive in Weichsel
- 1944- The first German V-2 rocket hits Great Britain (nicknamed "gasometer").
- 1945- Declaration of Potsdam: US, Britain and China demand the Japanese surrender during WWII
- 1945- Japanese government disregards US ultimatum
- 1945- US cruiser Indianapolis reaches Tinian with atom bomb
- 1945- Physicist Raemer Schreiber and Lieutenant Colonel Peer de Silva depart Kirtland Army Air Field to transport the plutonium core for the Fat Man bomb (bombing of Nagasaki) to the island of Tinian where the bomb is assembled
- 1947- President Truman signs National Security Act (1947), establishing Department of Defense, CIA, National Security Council and Joint Chiefs of Staff
- 1951- Netherlands ends state of war with Germany
- 1952- King Farouk I of Egypt abdicates [Black Saturday]
- 1956- Egypt seizes the Suez Canal
- 1957- USSR launches 1st intercontinental multistage ballistic missile
- 1963-Skopje, Yugoslavia, destroyed by earthquake, kills 1,000+
- 1963 -US Syncom 2, 1st geosynchronous communications satellite, launched
- 1963- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development votes to admit Japan.
- 1965- Republic of Maldives gains independence from Britain (National Day)
- 1971- Apollo 15 launched (Scott & Irwin) to 4th manned landing on Moon
- 1974- USSR's Soyuz fails to dock with Salyut 3
- 1975- Soyuz 18B returns to Earth
- 1982- Canada's Anik D1 Comsat launched by US Delta rocket
- 1993- Boeing 737-500 crashes in South Korea, 66 killed
- 1993 -Mars Observer takes 1st photo of Mars, from 5 billion km
- 2005- Space Shuttle program: STS-114 Mission - Launch of Discovery, NASA's first scheduled flight mission after the Columbia Disaster in 2003.
- 2012- At least 200 people are killed in a day of violence in Syria



## Defence Chief: Stay Alert as Op Sindoor Continues

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Asserting that Operation Sindoor "still continues", Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan on Friday said the country's military preparedness must remain at a "very high" level, round-the-clock and throughout the year.



In his address at a defence seminar hosted at Subroto Park here, he also said the military in future will also need "information warriors, technology warriors and scholar warriors." And, in a merging landscape of warfare, a future soldier will need to be a mix of all three "info, tech and scholar warriors," the CDS said.

The seminar on 'Aero-

space Power: Preserving India's Sovereignty and Furthering National Interests' was held under the aegis of the 'No.4 Warfare and Aerospace Strategy Programme'.

The CDS said there are no runners-up in a war, and any military must be constantly alert and maintain a high degree of operational preparedness.

"An example is Operation Sindoor, which still continues. Our preparedness level has to be very high, 24x7, 365 days (a year)," Gen Chauhan said.

India launched Operation Sindoor early on May 7 and decimated multiple terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK).

Pakistan also launched offensives against India, and all subsequent counter-offensives by India were also carried out under Operation Sindoor.

The military conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours halted after they reached an understanding on the evening of May 10.

The CDS also emphasised the importance of learning about both 'Shastra' (warfare) and 'Shaastra' (knowledge system).

## Rs 295 Crore Spent On PM Modi's Foreign Visits From 2021 To 2024: Centre

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Over Rs 67 crore was incurred on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to five countries, including the US and France, in 2025, while the total expenditure figures related to his foreign trips from 2021 till 2024 stood at nearly Rs 295 crore, according to data shared by the government.

As per the country-wise and year-wise data, the corresponding figures for PM Modi's visits to Mauritius, Cyprus, Canada and Croatia, and Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, Brazil and Namibia this year were not available.

For these visits, the column for 'total expenditure' in the data shared by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh on Thursday, in his written response to a query by Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien in Rajya Sabha, said - "Bills under settlement. Total expenditure not yet available."

Of these visits, the costliest one was to France, which incurred over Rs 25 crore, while the one PM Modi undertook to the US in June 2023 incurred over Rs 22 crore.

On March 20, the ministry had shared data in in Rajya Sabha, according to which nearly Rs 258 crore was incurred on 38 foreign visits of PM Modi between May 2022 and December 2024.

In 2025, PM Modi had travelled to France and the US from February 10-13.

In Paris, he held bilateral

talks with President Emmanuel Macron and attended an AI Summit, while in the US he met and held talks with President Donald Trump, among other engagements.

According to the data shared, the country-wise figures for these five countries PM Modi visited in 2025 are - Rs 25,59,82,902 (France); Rs 16,54,84,302 (US); Rs 4,92,81,208 (Thailand); Rs 4,46,21,690 (Sri Lanka) and Rs 15,54,03,792.47 (Saudi Arabia).

The cumulative figures for the preceding four years are - about Rs 109 crore (2024) spanning 16 countries including Russia, Ukraine, the US and Brazil; nearly 93 crore (2023); Rs 55.82 crore (2022) and about Rs 36 crore (2021).

In 2021, PM Modi visited Bangladesh (Rs 1,00,71,288 - total expenditure); the US (Rs 19,63,27,806); Italy (Rs 6,90,49,376); and the UK (Rs 8,57,41,408) according to data shared by Singh in his response. His trips in 2022 included visits to Germany (Rs 9,44,41,562 - total expenditure); Denmark (Rs 5,47,46,921); France (Rs 1,95,03,918); Nepal (Rs 80,01,483) and Japan (Rs 8,68,99,372), it said.

The details related to public engagements, number of attendees, and expenditure on advertising and broadcasting of engagements were also shared in another set of tabulated data.

For PM Modi's 2023 visit to Egypt, the expenditure on advertising and broadcasting was Rs 11.90 lakh, according to the data.

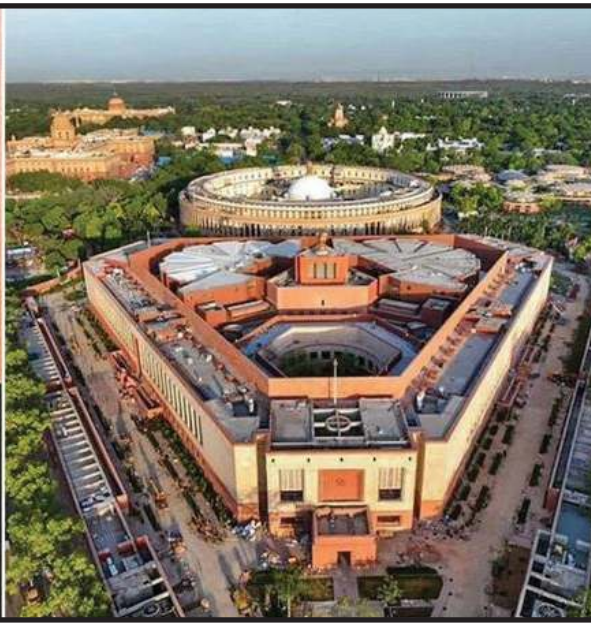
Initial suspicions suggest that the gold was left behind by a passenger who arrived on the Dubai flight.

The case remains under scrutiny.



tiny by the Customs department, sources said.

PTI



## Justice Varma Ouster: LS Moves, RS Rejects

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha will take up a bipartisan motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma, who is embroiled in a suspected corruption case, as the Opposition-sponsored notice for a similar motion in the Rajya Sabha was not admitted.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Friday that it was a unanimous decision of all political parties to move unitedly in a case of perceived corruption in judiciary, asserting that the Lok Sabha would take up the motion, which was signed by 152 MPs from the ruling alliance and the Opposition.

Official sources said the Opposition-sponsored notice for a similar motion in the Rajya Sabha, which received it on the same day when the bipartisan notice was submitted to the Lok Sabha on July 21, has not been admitted.

This ends speculation about the fate of the notice signed by 63 Rajya Sabha members of Opposition parties. Then Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar had

mentioned receiving it in the House, alarming the government and triggering a chain of events that led to his abrupt resignation on the same night.

Rijiju said all political parties had agreed that the removal of Varma should be a joint call, adding that the proceedings will be taken up in the Lok Sabha and then move to the Rajya Sabha in line with the Judges (Enquiry) Act.

"We shouldn't remain in any doubt, proceedings will begin in the Lok Sabha," he said.

Speaker Om Birla is expected to announce the three-member inquiry committee to probe the charge against the Allahabad High Court judge.

Dhankhar had on July 21 cited the Judges (Inquiry) Act in Rajya Sabha to assert that when notices of a motion are submitted on the same day in both the Houses of Parliament, a committee to examine the charges levelled against the judge will be constituted by the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

However, official sources claimed that the notice was not admitted in the Up-

per House.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh is now the officiating presiding officer and has been part of the consultation with the government and within Parliament over the issue.

The three-member committee, which will include either the Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge, a High Court Chief Justice and a distinguished jurist.

A fire incident at the outside of Varma's residence in the National Capital had led to the discovery of half-burnt wads of currency, leading to then-Supreme Court Chief Justice Sanjeev Khanna setting up a three-judge committee which had indicted him.

As Varma, who was repatriated from Delhi High Court to his parent Allahabad High Court, declined to heed Khanna's suggestion to resign, the then chief justice of India sent the committee report to the President and the Prime Minister, recommending his removal.

Varma, who has protested his innocence, has moved the Supreme Court against the findings of the committee.

## India's Actions Were Measured, Non-Escalatory: Centre On Op Sindoor

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: Operation Sindoor was launched in response to a "barbaric" attack by "Pakistan-sponsored terrorists", and the action focussed on dismantling terror infrastructure and neutralising terrorists likely to be sent across to India, the government said on Thursday.

In a written response to a query in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh also said India's actions were "focussed, measured and non-escalatory".

The Ministry of External Affairs was asked whether it is a fact that Operation Sindoor was "announced under international pressure", and the "factual position" in this regard.

Rajya Sabha MP Ramji Lal Suman also asked about the impact of "sudden announcement of ceasefire in Operation Sindoor" on the morale of the Indian forces which were "achieving significant success", but suddenly "declaring ceasefire was against their morale and the sentiments of the people of the country".

Union Minister said Operation Sindoor was launched to respond to a "barbaric cross-border terror attack by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists. It focussed on dismantling terrorist infrastructure and neutralising terrorists likely to be sent across to India".

Pakistan, however, attempted targeting Indian civilian areas, in addition to some military facilities, he said.

"These provocations and escalatory actions by Paki-

stan were met with a strong and decisive response from the Indian armed forces, inflicting significant damage on the Pakistani military. Subsequently, on 10 May 2025, the Director General of Military Operations of Pakistan approached his Indian counterpart to request cessation of firing and military activities, which was agreed to later that day," the MoS said.

Under Operation Sindoor, India had decimated nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) on May 7 in pre-dawn precision strikes. It was carried out to avenge the April 22 Pahalgam terror strike.

In a separate query, the MEA was also asked whether the ministry had taken efforts to "alienate" Pakistan in the world forum.

## Bomb Hoaxes Hit 69 Flights in 2025, 728 in 2024: Govt

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Airlines received 69 hoax bomb threats this year till July 20, the government said on Thursday.

As per data from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), a total of 881 hoax bomb threats have been received by airlines from 2022 to July 20, 2025.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said BCAS has mandated robust protocols for handling such threats in coordination with law enforcement agencies, central security agencies, CISF and stakeholders, leading to minimal impact on flight operations.

A total of 69 hoax bomb threats have been received

by airlines this year till July 20, and the count was at 728 in 2024.

There were 71 and 13 hoax bomb threats in 2023 and 2022, respectively, according to the data shared as part of the written reply.

The minister said, "94 hoax bomb threats were received by airline operators in Karnataka from 2021 till 20th July, 2025. No arrests have been made for making hoax bomb threats to airlines in Karnataka." He was responding to a query from a Lok Sabha member asking about the number of bomb threats reported at airports in Karnataka during the last five years and the number of individuals arrested in connection with the same, along with the legal actions taken against them.

## Centre Bans OTT Platforms Ullu, ALTT, Desiflix For Obscene Content

Indo-Asian News Service

New Delhi: In a bid to crack down on unlawful and obscene content, the government has directed Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to disable public access to 25 OTT platforms, including big and popular names like Ullu,

neo, ShowX, Sol Talkies, Adda TV, HotX VIP, Hulchul App, MoodX, NeonX VIP, Fugli, Mojflix, Triflicks.

These have been found in violation of various laws, including Section 67 and Section 67A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, Section 294 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita,



**The banned apps include Big Shots App, Boomex, Navarasa Lite, Gulab App, Kangan App, Bull App, Jalva App, Wow Entertainment, Look Entertainment, Hitprime, Feneo, ShowX, Sol Talkies, Adda TV, HotX VIP, Hulchul App, MoodX, NeonX VIP, Fugli, Mojflix, Triflicks**

ALTT, and Desiflix.

A notification issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) emphasised that the intermediaries are responsible for removing or disabling access to unlawful information under the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

It said the move is aimed at curbing the dissemination of content that is deemed sexually explicit and violative of Indian legal and cultural standards.

The banned apps include Big Shots App, Boomex, Navarasa Lite, Gulab App, Kangan App, Bull App, Jalva App, Wow Entertainment, Look Entertainment, Hitprime, Fe-

2023, and Section 4 of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

The government has explicitly directed Internet Service Providers to disable or remove public access to these websites within India.

"MIB has also intimated to the Director (DS-II), Department of Telecommunications, with a request to facilitate compliance by the ISPs," as per media reports, and the action shows the government's commitment to enforcing digital content regulations and ensuring adherence to the laws in the country.

In April, the Supreme Court responded to a petition calling for a ban on sexually explicit content on OTT and social media.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Dubai Flyer Hides Gold in Another's Trolley at Bengaluru Airport

Customs officials on Friday foiled a gold smuggling attempt at the Kempegowda International Airport here, sources said.

A passenger arriving from Dubai allegedly tried to evade customs checks by placing a bag containing 3.5 kg of gold biscuits in a co-passenger's luggage trolley, they said.

The unsuspecting passenger, seeing the bag in his trolley, alerted airport security. Following this, Customs officials seized the gold, which is estimated to be worth crores of rupees.

An investigation is underway, and officials are reviewing CCTV footage to identify the individual who placed the bag.

tiny by the Customs department, sources said.

PTI

## Sunjay Kapur's Mother Is Not A Shareholder, Says Company Amid Family Feud

New Delhi: The feud brewing within the Kapur family-owned Sona Group - an empire worth Rs 30,000 crore - took a sharp turn Friday evening after the flagship company, Sona BLW Precision Forgings Ltd, said Rani Kapur, the former Chairman Sunjay Kapur's mother, is not a shareholder, and has not been since 2019.

Hours earlier Ms Kapur wrote to the board, identifying herself as a majority shareholder and demanding an Annual General Meeting scheduled for this afternoon be postponed.

She said she had been coerced into signing documents and questioned the decision to appoint "certain people (i.e., Priya Sachdev Kapur, her daughter-in-law) who claimed to speak for the family.



The company responded with a market filing that said in May 2019 a "declaration of significant beneficial ownership" was received that identified Sunjay Kapur as the "sole beneficial owner...".

As a result, the company

said, Ms Kapur had "not been a shareholder since 2019".

On the appointment of Priya Sachdev Kapur as a non-executive director, the filing said her name had been proposed and her appointment "duly reviewed... and approved".

And on Ms Kapur's claim about being "forced to sign documents behind locked doors", the board stressed that no documents had been signed or obtained from her since Mr Kapur's death.

The family row broke after an email from Rani Kapur late Thursday that requested the deferment of the AGM. The board said it took legal advice on how to proceed "out of respect" for Ms Kapur.

"Based on the legal counsel and the fact Rani Kapur is not a shareholder of the Company, the Company concluded that it could not defer the AGM," the exchange filing said.

AGENCIES



## Smart Public Distribution System To Go Live By Mid August 2025: Sharma



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Information Technology, Transport, and Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma on Friday said that the much-anticipated Smart Public Distribution System (Smart PDS) will be made functional across Jammu and Kashmir by mid August 2025.

The Minister was reviewing the progress on Smart PDS implementation in the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA, Saurabh Bhagat, along with other senior officers and technical teams involved in the migration process.

The Minister stated that Jammu and Kashmir is on track to become the first Union Territory in the country to fully migrate to the Smart PDS under the national RCMS (Ration Card Management System) framework, as directed by the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.

"Smart PDS is a transformative reform in food distribution that ensures transparency, efficiency and portability of services. With this shift, over 25 lakh ration card holders and approximately 1.02 crore ration beneficiaries in J&K will experience a seamless and more awccountable system," the Minister said.

The meeting was told that

under the Smart PDS system and under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) the beneficiaries from Jammu and Kashmir can now avail their entitled ration PAN India and vice-versa.

Similarly, it was also informed that all the feeding of the Smart PDS is under testing phase and optimization for unique needs of Jammu and Kashmir and would also include various categories like SAAY, NFSA and PMSES. The automation shall democratize the entire PDS system and beneficiaries can use applications like Mera Ration and Annapurna to get real time information about his ration quota.

It was also given out that all the ration distribution shall be based on Aadhar enabled POS machines of LI configuration which are 4G enabled. This shall help the department in improving the storage efficiency, economize transportation and provide effective services to the Consumer. It was also clarified that all the other allied services like ration distribution, Ayushman card will not be effected by this transition.

The Minister directed the concerned officers to expedite testing, ensure training of FPS (Fair Price Shop) dealers and launch public awareness campaigns ahead of the rollout. He emphasized that the success of Smart PDS depends on its accessibility to even the remotest parts of the Union Territory.

## Tariff Protection For Apples Secured In India-UK FTA After JKPICCA Advocacy

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a move widely celebrated by farmers and industry stakeholders alike, the Government of India has decided to retain tariff protection on apple imports under the upcoming India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This crucial policy decision comes as a major relief to millions of apple growers across the Himalayan states, and is being credited largely to the Jammu & Kashmir Fruits and Vegetables Processing and Integrated Cold Chain Association (JKPICCA) for its strategic and persistent advocacy.

JKPICCA, under the dynamic leadership of Chairman Bashir Ahmad Naik, played a pivotal role in bringing the concerns of domestic apple growers to the national stage. The association made a compelling case during a high-level interaction with Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, held recently in Srinagar, where it highlighted the challenges faced by Indian apple farmers – including shrinking land holdings, rising input costs, traditional farming limitations, and the threat posed by low-cost foreign imports.

Labelled by many in the horticulture community as a "historic victory", the decision is seen as more than a trade regulation – it is being hailed as a defense of the Indian farmer's dignity, rural economy, and traditional knowledge systems.

In a significant move, the FTA also recognizes "traditional farming knowledge" as a form of patent protection, a step JKPICCA lauded as visionary. This inclusion not only validates the indigenous agricultural practices of Indian growers but also paves the way for their preservation and respect on global platforms.

Farmers across Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand welcomed the announcement with enthusiasm. Many credited JKPICCA for acting as a powerful and pragmatic voice for growers, ensuring their interests were safeguarded at a crucial stage of international trade negotiations.

In a statement, JKPICCA reaffirmed its commitment to serve as a vital bridge between government, industry, and the farming community. The association vowed to continue its efforts to enhance the global competitiveness of Indian apples, drive innovation in cold-chain infrastructure, and promote sustainable growth in India's horticulture sector.

JKPICCA has also urged the Government of India to sustain this farmer-first approach in future FTAs, especially in sectors such as horticulture, which are integral to employment, food security, and rural livelihood.

"This is not just a trade safeguard. It's a recognition of the hard work, resilience, and heritage of the Indian apple grower," said Chairman Bashir Ahmad Naik.

SMHS ROW

## Negligence In Patient Care Won't Be Tolerated: Itoo

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Health Minister Sakina Itoo on Friday condemned the strike by doctors at SMHS hospital, stating that such actions by which poor patients are made to suffer and move from pillar to post for no fault is "unacceptable" and "not tolerable" at all.

Speaking to media persons at SMHS hospital, Sakina Itoo described the incident as deeply unfortunate, emphasising that such situations should never arise, particularly within hospitals.

She said if any wrongdoing occurs, there are established rules and laws for investigation and action, and these must be strictly followed. "The closure of hospital services and denial of care to patients as a form of protest is both unjustified and unacceptable."

"Patients who had appointments had to suffer and could not receive treatment because of the closure. In my opinion, this should not happen. There will certainly be an investigation and action will be taken," she questioned.

She also said all such matters be resolved strictly within legal and procedural frameworks, involving departmental or police intervention if necessary.

The minister criticised the closure of the operation theatre, emergency services, and patient care wards, terming this as intolerable and contrary to the principles of public health.

She also acknowledged the pressure and challenges faced



**PATIENTS WHO HAD APPOINTMENTS HAD TO SUFFER AND COULD NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT BECAUSE OF THE CLOSURE.** In my opinion, this should not happen. There will certainly be an investigation and action will be taken,"

by doctors, however, stressed the expectation that medical staff maintain professional conduct and proper behavior at all times, especially towards patients and attendants who are already under distress.

She expressed regret that there are currently insufficient statutory measures to hold doctors accountable for medical negligence, and called for the development of proper legal frameworks to ensure prompt investigation and action in such cases.

She also referenced an incident involving media personnel, emphasising that all complaints, whether from doctors, patients, or journalists, should be sub-

jected to thorough investigation.

To improve transparency and accountability, she said the department will soon issue an order mandating all doctors wear a nameplate clearly indicating their name and specialty—whether they are surgeons, physicians, orthopedists, or otherwise.

She stressed that wearing an apron and identification is essential for both patient reassurance and operational clarity within hospitals.

She also said the government will establish a formal grievance cell at the secretariat level, where both patients and medical professionals can register complaints

## CM Omar Chairs Meeting Of Building & Construction Workers Welfare Board

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah On Friday chaired the 22nd meeting of the Jammu & Kashmir Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (JKBOWWB) here at the Civil Secretariat.

The aim of the meeting was to comprehensively review the implementation of various welfare measures and approve key initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for construction workers and their families across Jammu and Kashmir.

Appreciating the strides made by the Board, the Chief Minister lauded its efforts in expanding welfare coverage to over 2.85 lakh active construction workers.

He underscored the importance of transparent, timely and targeted delivery of benefits and directed officials to widen the outreach mechanisms, streamline application procedures, and ensure that no eligible worker is excluded from availing the Board's benefits.

The Chief Minister also called for a broader and more inclusive definition of "construction worker" to bring within the fold all vulnerable and unorganized sector labourers.

He urged the Board to explore policy mechanisms that would maximize coverage and enhance financial security for workers, in alignment with national best practices and labour welfare standards.

Secretary Labour & Employment Kumar Rajiv Ranjan gave a detailed presentation highlighting the Board's key achievements, policy reforms and financial progress.

He informed the members that the Board continues to operate in accordance with the legislative mandate of



the BOCW (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996. Under this mandate, the Board has been providing a wide range of benefits including ex-gratia relief in cases of accidental deaths, financial support for both permanent and temporary disabilities, and educational assistance for the wards of registered workers. It also offers one-time meritorious scholarships of ₹50,000 to students securing 90% and above in Class 10 and 12, in addition to marriage and maternity assistance, aid for chronic illnesses, and funeral expense coverage.

To ensure transparency and efficiency, the Board has implemented significant digital reforms. These include 100% Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for all financial assistance, Aadhaar integration to eliminate bogus registrations, an online portal for registration and renewals, and OTP-based authentication along with SMS alerts to keep workers informed about key deadlines and updates.

The Board generates income through cess collections and accrued interest. At present, ₹1082.58 crore is currently held as corpus in fixed deposits and savings accounts across various banks.

The Board discussed and approved a comprehensive set of agenda items during the

meeting. These included the approval of scheme-wise budget proposals for the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26, and the transfer of ₹17.24 crore to the Union Territory of Ladakh, in accordance with SO 339 dated October 30, 2020. The audited accounts for FY 2022-23 and 2023-24 were approved and will be forwarded to the Accountant General for certification.

The meeting also approved the integration of the Board's initiatives with broader social security and financial inclusion schemes to maximize the impact of benefits.

In a significant move towards digital governance, the issuance of smart cards to all registered workers was approved, with a proposed budget of ₹10 crore.

To improve workplace safety, the Board sanctioned ₹60 crore for the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and tools to construction workers, especially in rural areas. Recognizing the need for skill development, the Board approved short-term training programs for 10,000 workers under NSDC norms, with a budget of ₹10 crore.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in his concluding remarks, reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that welfare benefits trickle down to every deserving worker.

Apple Plant Scheme Turns Scam

## Anantnag Man Cheats Farmers Of Crores, Goes Missing

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a significant crack-down on white-collar crime, the Economic Offences Wing (Crime Branch Kashmir) has registered a case against a man from South Kashmir's Anantnag district for allegedly cheating scores of farmers and agri-entrepreneurs in a multi-crore High-Density Apple Plant scam.

The accused, Shahid Rehman Bhat, son of Abdul Rehman Bhat and resident of Tulbagh Shangus in Anantnag, is the proprietor of M/S AR Trading Agri Services Pvt. Ltd. According to officials, Bhat convinced farmers to pay him hefty sums with promises of delivering High-Density Apple Plants — a popular and high-yield variety increasingly adopted by orchardists in the region.

However, after collecting crores of rupees, Bhat allegedly failed to deliver the plants or refund the money. When he went

off the radar, the victims — mostly small farmers and agribusiness men — approached the Crime Branch with formal complaints.

Preliminary investigation, including scrutiny of bank transactions, revealed that Bhat had received substantial deposits from multiple individuals across Kashmir. Despite repeated attempts, the victims were unable to contact him — with officials confirming that the accused had gone into hiding.

The evidence, officials said, points to a "clear case of cheating and criminal breach of trust." A case has been registered under Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 at the Economic Offences Wing Police Station in Srinagar.

Authorities have launched a manhunt to trace Bhat and have urged other possible victims to come forward and assist in the ongoing investigation.

## Gaming Chats New Tool For Terror Communication: Officials

Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** Online war games akin to PUBG requiring chats with partners anonymous or otherwise have emerged as a key communication channel for terror groups and Pakistan's ISI to convey messages to their recruits in Jammu and Kashmir, officials here said.

As terror groups operating across the border seek to bypass social media and conventional channels of communication and escape scrutiny by security agencies, it is a virtual battleground and in some cases a real one too. Four cases have been identified, the officials said.

In one case, an underage boy was being radicalised by his gaming partner sitting across the border. The boy was handed over to parents after proper counselling of the entire family.

The gaming chat applications allow players to communicate with each other in real time in the guise of playing online games, the officials explained without going into details of which game and how.

These applications, which facilitate voice, video, and text-based communication to enhance teamwork, strategy discussions and social interaction among players, are being used for different purposes, they said.

The prospective recruits are identified during playing.

The gaming applications have been increasingly incorporating encryption to protect user communications but the level of security varies widely. So, some games use basic encryption for in-game voice chat and others offer more robust end-to-end encryption for text and voice. There are also applications that allow for self-destructing messages.

Though several of these gaming applications are banned in India, they are downloaded using Virtual Private Network (VPN) illegally. A VPN creates a secure and encrypted connection over the internet by

masking Internet Protocol addresses and encrypts online traffic, making it more difficult to track online activity and access data.

In the past, messaging platforms like WhatsApp were delinked by terror groups and their handlers from Pakistan and they switched to other applications to communicate with each other. The included one developed by a Turkish company is being used by terror group handlers and their prospective recruits in the Valley, the officials said.

The new applications have the ability to work with the slowest internet connections where Enhanced Data for Global Evolution (EDGE), used in the late 2000s, or 2G is in operation.

The Central government had suspended the internet across Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of the special status of the erstwhile state on August 5, 2019.

All encryption and decryption happen directly on the devices, therefore reducing third party intervention at any point. These new apps use encryption algorithm RSA-2048 which was adopted as the most secure encrypted platform, officials said.

RSA is an American Network Security and Authentication company founded in 1982 by US-born Ron Rivest and Leonard Adleman and Israeli-born Adi Shamir. The acronym RSA is used worldwide as the foundation key in the cryptosystem.

One new messaging app used by terrorists to radicalise youth in the Valley does not even ask for phone numbers or emails, therefore enabling complete user anonymity, the officials said.

The latest challenge in tracking terror activity comes just as security agencies in the Valley are fighting the menace of virtual SIM cards. Terror groups have been increasingly using these to connect with their handlers in Pakistan. Virtual SIM cards are generated by a service provider based in a foreign country.

INDIA'S TRIUMPH IN KARGIL

## MY Bharat Youth Volunteers To Organise Kargil Vijay Diwas Padyatra

Observer News Service

**NEW DELHI:** MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat), under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, will organise 'Kargil Vijay Diwas Padyatra' on 26th July 2025 in Drass, Kargil to mark the 26th anniversary of India's victory in the 1999 Kargil War.

Led by Union Minister of

Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Manoj Mandaviya, the padyatra will also witness the participation of Union Minister of State for Defence, Shri Sanjay Sethi, alongside over 1,000 youth, veterans, armed forces personnel, families of martyrs, and civil society members.

The Padyatra, covering a

distance of 1.5 kilometers, will commence at 7:00 a.m. from the grounds of Himabass Public High School, Drass, and will conclude at the grounds of Government Higher Secondary School, Bhimber.

Subsequent to the Padyatra, Union Ministers, accompanied by 100 youth volunteers, will proceed to the Kargil War

Memorial to lay wreaths and offer homage to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the 1999 Kargil conflict.

On this occasion, the Hon'ble Minister will also felicitate 26 women bikers of the Shakti Udghosh Foundation, who will arrive at the War Memorial after completing a long-distance

motorbike rally undertaken as a tribute to the martyrs.

The padyatra will also feature a plantation drive under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, underscoring the alignment of patriotic duty with environmental consciousness and a commitment towards sustainable development in a Viksit Bharat @2047.



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KO VIEW

Counterfeit Cashmere

Inside a carpet showroom in Tangmarg, a tourist lately paid 2.55 lakh for what was promised as a handmade Kashmiri rug. It came with a GI tag, a certification mark, and a story of tradition. None of it was real. The rug was machine-made. The QR code was forged. And the deception was deliberate.

This isn't an isolated scam. It's a pattern of betrayal across Kashmir's handicraft market, and it's finally being called out.

The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, has issued a firm notice to all registered dealers. They have seven days to remove every machine-made item from their showrooms or face blacklisting, deregistration, and legal action. The warning also applies to faked QR labels, misbranding, and tampered tags. Showrooms found violating the Jammu & Kashmir Tourist Trade Act will be dealt with under the law.

It should never have come to this.

Dealers had signed affidavits promising to sell only genuine, handmade crafts. Still, inspections revealed showrooms across Kashmir showcasing machine-loomed products, falsely marketed as local artisanal work. These aren't small infractions. They are calculated moves to cheat buyers and choke the region's oldest economy.

Kashmir crafts are not souvenirs, they're livelihoods. Over 400 training centres across the valley are producing fine pashmina, crewel, Sozni, chain stitch, and hand-knotted carpets. The government recently recorded over 1.07 crore in revenue from trainee sales alone. That figure represents more than earnings. It reflects potential. And that potential is at risk every time a fake product is sold in the name of Kashmir.

This business of counterfeits is turning tourists into skeptics and artisans into casualties. One rug with a fake QR code may look harmless on the shelf, but behind it is the slow erosion of trust that took centuries to build. Kashmir's GI tags are meant to guard this trust. They can't protect anything if they're forged.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has stepped in. After meeting with exporters, he assured strict enforcement and policy review. The industry wants an enforcement task force, mandatory signage, tighter import rules, and harsher penalties. These steps aren't ambitious. They are overdue.

No machine can replicate the soul of a hand-knotted carpet. No shortcut can replace generations of skill. Dealers who want to profit from Kashmir's craft must honour it. That means pulling machine-made goods off the shelves, displaying real labels, and respecting the identity they claim to sell.

The clock is ticking. Kashmir crafts are on the line. It's time to choose truth over tricks.

Kashmir's Crisis of Trust

At the intersection of medicine, media, and power, a hospital strike in Srinagar reveals deeper fractures in Kashmir's public institutions.

Qazi Shibli

At SMHS Hospital in Srinagar, clinical care gave way to institutional collapse. What should have remained an internal strike spiraled into a public confrontation, exposing the fragile scaffolding of Kashmir's public institutions.

Doctors, attendants, and journalists weren't allies. They stood opposed, caught in conflict.

Outside the emergency ward, a father carried his electrocuted son, pleading for attention. A doctor, without meeting his eyes, motioned them to leave. Inside, a journalist was physically restrained by an angry doctor.

In that moment, the hospital became a theatre of disorder. The professional codes that normally hold such institutions together seemed to vanish.

All that remained was a struggle, for space, control, meaning, and narrative.

Patients alleged the hospital gates had been shut. Eyewitnesses and video footage supported their claims. Journalists reported what they saw. In response, the institution issued an unequivocal denial during a press conference.

Doctors rejected the coverage as "misrepresentation" and an "attempt to discredit" the profession, instead of starting a discussion about systemic failure.

The reaction echoed what Bourdieu warned of: when credibility becomes the monopoly of the powerful, any challenge is dismissed as defamation.

That evening, a public debate unfolded in real time on Twitter-turned-X. Physicians spoke of exhaustion, assaults by attendants, and hostile media scrutiny. Attendants described being dehumanised, treated not as people but as obstacles.

Journalists defended their role, arguing that reporting from the margins is not bias. It is duty, especially in a place where the voiceless rarely find amplification.

The trolling journalists faced after the incident wasn't about media ethics. It was about discomfort.

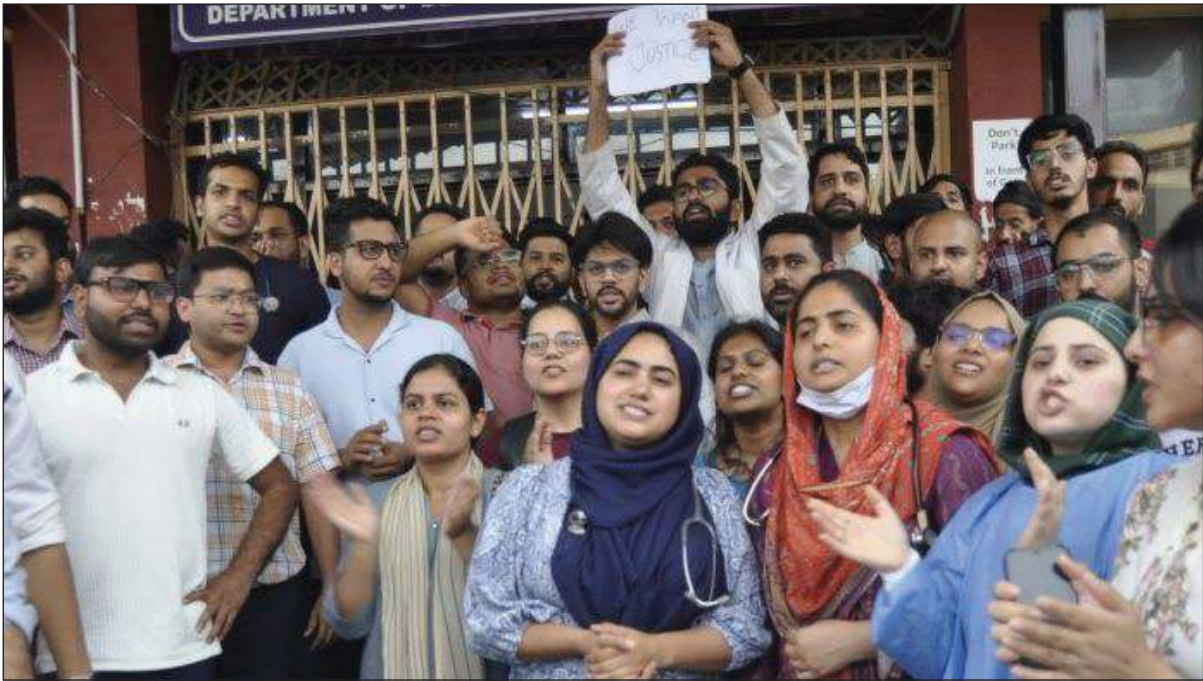
For years, Kashmir's public discourse has been dominated by "high priests of public opinion", those who decided what could be said, and by whom.

When reporters began spotlighting the pain of patients and attendants, rather than officials, that order was disrupted.

This shift wasn't incidental. In recent years, Kashmir's public discourse has begun to fracture along deeper, more complex lines.

Beyond a single question, people now speak about caste, class, gender, and the rural-urban divide. This isn't mere evolution. It's rupture.

And rupture, by nature, unsettles those used to narrative control.



What followed the SMHS strike revealed something more dangerous than temporary chaos. The protest may be justified. But the refusal to even consider medical negligence points to deeper institutional decay.

It is within this unease that journalism in Kashmir is being vilified, since it decouples truth from power. A journalist's duty is not to bolster institutional confidence, but to interrogate it. Yes, bad journalists exist. But the backlash rarely targets

unethical reporting. It targets ethical reporting that centers the margins.

Equally important is to examine the imperial hangover in how we view professional hierarchies.

The belief that some jobs, especially those requiring Western-certified education, are more 'noble' than others stems from colonial thinking.

The British empire's bureaucratic logic ranked and moralised professions: clerks above cultivators, doctors above carpenters, English above local knowledge.

This legacy still shapes perceptions in postcolonial societies like ours.

When doctors demand unconditional respect, they unwittingly echo this colonial language. But in a civilised, postcolonial society, no profession holds moral supremacy.

A mason builds your home. A plumber gives you water. A journalist gives you voice. A doctor saves lives. Dignity belongs to labour, not to the uniform it wears.

Looking down on attendants - many of whom are uneducated, working-class, and poorly paid - because they lack the symbolic capital of education is not only elitist, it is structurally violent.

Education is often about access, not merit. In societies shaped by historical and political marginalisation, the absence of formal education should never be mistaken for the absence of dignity or truth.

This, of course, does not absolve attendants of criticism. There are real-life instances of doctors being attacked. A doctor being assaulted at SMHS is indefensible. In another 2023 incident in Anantnag, a surgical team was threatened following a patient's death.

Public introspection, legal action, and censure are essential responses. Any form of violence, civilian or institutional, undermines trust itself.

But what followed the SMHS strike revealed something more dangerous than temporary chaos. The protest may be justified. But the refusal to even consider medical negligence points to deeper institutional decay.

An institution that won't examine itself isn't defending truth. It's simply shielding itself from accountability.

The notion that doctors are morally superior has been dismantled in many societies.

In Sweden, Canada, and New Zealand, medical professionals are respected but not revered. They are held to high standards and treated as doing a job, not fulfilling a sacred duty.

This shift creates space for both gratitude and critique, for praise and accountability.

What unfolded at SMHS was not about a single patient, video, or complaint. It was about a system at its operational and moral limits.

It was about a public that feels increasingly abandoned. It was equally about a professional elite afraid of losing its uncontested authority.

And above all, it was about institutions that prefer denial to reform.

Everyone came out wounded. Not all bore visible bruises. But all carried the scars of a trust broken in real time.

As James Baldwin wrote, "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."

It's time Kashmir faces this.

The author is a senior editor from Anantnag. He can be reached at qshib.gs@gmail.com. Views expressed in this article are author's own and don't necessarily reflect KO's editorial policy

Fear In The Emergency Room

As trust breaks down between caregivers and the public, hospitals are turning into places of fear instead of healing.

Dr. Rizwan Roomi

Kashmir has seen enough loss. We cannot afford to turn our hospitals into battlegrounds. Doctors need protection. Patients need care. The state must step in, not only with laws, but with trained security, better communication systems, and fast legal response when things go wrong.

At Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu, the emergency ward is always loud. Monitors beep, stretchers roll in, and voices rise with panic or prayer. But on July 16, that signature shrill shifted.

After a critically-ill patient died, his attendants turned their grief into fury. A female postgraduate doctor was kicked in the abdomen. Her colleague was also attacked. It was all caught on CCTV. Within hours, the footage was on every phone in the region.

The next morning, doctors went on strike. Emergency services slowed, surgeries were cancelled, and exhausted consultants were left to hold up a crumbling system.

Then, just a week later, a similar scene unfolded at SMHS Hospital in Srinagar. A doctor was slapped to the ground while doing his job. He was trying to help.

These incidents are not anomalies. They are signals. They tell us something is deeply wrong, with how society is failing the people inside them.

Doctors are seen as privileged. That's the assumption. The truth is different.

In Kashmir's government hospitals, young doctors routinely work 18 to 20 hours without proper food, rest, or even security. They manage hundreds of patients a day in poorly equipped wards. They face questions they can't always answer.

And when a life slips away, they are often the first ones blamed. And sometimes, they are assaulted. These assaults don't happen in a vacuum.

When families bring loved ones to a hospital, they bring fear, desperation, and in many cases, years of built-up frustration with a system that feels distant and confusing.

They wait for hours with no update. They don't know what's happening inside the ICU. No one explains the odds. And when the worst happens, something inside them snaps. Violence takes the place of grief.

This doesn't justify the attacks. Nothing does. But

it does show how thin the thread is that ties together caregivers and the people they serve. Once broken, it's hard to mend.

When doctors strike, they're asking for something basic: the right to work without fear. That demand is valid.

Yet every protest comes with collateral damage. For every doctor refusing service, there is a patient waiting in the corridor, unaware the hospital has shut down.

A woman in labour, turned away. A man clutching his chest, told to try elsewhere. These poor patients suffer in silence.

Kashmir's public health system is already stretched to its limits. Most government hospitals are understaffed and overcrowded. Security is either poorly trained or absent.

Critical areas like emergency rooms turn chaotic the moment multiple attendants push their way in. No real protocol exists for breaking bad news.

Doctors are left to play multiple roles, like physician, counsellor, mediator, while the clock ticks on another patient down the hallway.

What's worse is the failure to deliver consequences. Laws exist to protect medical professionals from assault, but in reality, very few attackers are arrested. Even fewer are prosecuted.

The message is clear: you can hit a doctor and walk away. This breeds more rage, fear, and silence.

Yet this is not only a crisis of law or logistics. It's a crisis of compassion. A profession built on trust is now struggling to survive in an atmosphere of suspicion and anger.

And in that struggle, both the doctor and the patient lose.

The young woman doctor who was lately assaulted at GMC Jammu didn't stay home. She returned the next day to treat patients. Her bruises invisible beneath her white coat.

The patients who came in during the doctor strike didn't go back either. They waited, hoping someone would eventually look their way.

In those parallel acts of endurance lies the tragedy, and the possibility.

Kashmir has seen enough loss. We cannot afford to turn our hospitals into battlegrounds.

Doctors need protection. Patients need care. The state must step in, not only with laws, but with trained security, better communication systems, and fast legal response when things go wrong.

We need hospitals where a patient's attendant can cry without being feared, and where a doctor can treat without looking over their shoulder.

The choice is no longer between protest and silence. It is between reform and collapse.

And if we let this moment pass, the next headline won't just be about a doctor who was assaulted. It may be about a patient who died waiting.

It's time to rebuild that fragile trust, before more lives fall through the cracks.

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# The Wait at the Station

The Srinagar-Katra train was meant to unite Kashmir with the rest of India. But for thousands like Danish, it remains a promise unfulfilled.



Muhammed Rameez Kumar

When Danish Habib lately stepped off the plane in Jammu, his heart beat with something more than homecoming.

After two long years working in Saudi Arabia, he had returned to Kashmir and was determined to take the new train to Srinagar.

It was all anyone talked about while he was away. Videos, speeches, and the way the Vande Bharat Express curved through tunnels and mountains looked like Kashmir was finally on the move.

But at the railway station, Danish was met with something else: a screen flashing lost out.

For the next day, the day after, and every day after that, there were no general seats. The train he had waited so long for had already pulled away without him.

That moment at the counter stayed with him. "I never thought I'd come home and still be stuck," he told me, bags in hand, shoulders slumped.

Danish isn't alone. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link, or USBRL, was built on decades of planning and hope. It cut through some of India's toughest terrain and cost thousands of crores. It's an engineering marvel.

And for a place as long isolated as Kashmir, it was meant to be more than just steel and stone. It was supposed to be belonging and ease.

For a few hours on a summer day in June, it felt like all of that had arrived. The Prime Minister flagged off the train, speeches were made, flowers were thrown, and for once, it felt like the valley had been placed on the same tracks as the rest of India.

But when the cameras left, Kashmiris began queuing, and waiting.



**ACROSS BARAMULLA AND BUDGAM, IN KUPWARA AND ANANTNAG, you hear the same story: We tried to book a ticket, nothing was available. The handful of reserved seats are snapped up early. The fares for premium classes are unaffordable for many.**

Only two trains run each way daily on this new route. Just two, and they are booked weeks in advance.

Among stranded, and searching for a seat, is a mother with a referral slip in hand trying to reach a hospital in Katra. There's a student with an admit card for an exam in Jammu, and a labourer heading to earn a day's wage.

The new rail line exists, but access to it does not.

This isn't a complaint about construction. The completion of USBRL is historic. It has bridged regions, tunneled through mountains, and brought Kashmir into a new conversation around mobility and inclusion.

But a railway is only as meaningful as the people it moves. A train becomes transformative not when it runs, but when it carries the weight of daily lives.

Right now, that weight is falling through the gaps.

Across Baramulla and Budgam, in Kupwara and Anantnag, you hear the

same story: We tried to book a ticket, nothing was available.

The handful of reserved seats are snapped up early. The fares for premium classes are unaffordable for many.

And those who need to travel most - patients, students, workers - are left scrambling for alternatives that cost more, take longer, and offer less safety.

We don't need a once-a-day headline. We need everyday trains. Trains that start early and run late. That connect villages to towns, towns to cities, and cities to futures.

We need local services, affordable tickets, and enough frequency to make this railway more than ceremonial.

There's a tendency to celebrate the first ride. But the real success of a railway is in the fifth ride, the fiftieth, the five-thousandth.

It lies in the child who makes it to school on time, the family that reaches a hospital safely, the migrant worker who returns home without sleeping on a bus floor.

None of that is possible if the train keeps passing by without stopping for them.

Danish eventually took a cab, split with four strangers, over winding roads that made him carsick by dusk. He reached Baramulla the next morning - exhausted, disappointed, and still holding the memory of the train he couldn't board.

"There was a time I'd have given anything to come home by train," he said, unpacking in his house. "Now that it's here, it feels like we're still waiting."

The journey, it seems, isn't over yet.

- The author is a postgraduate student of Social Work at the University of Kashmir.

# Soundtrack Over Story

As Kashmiri artists help shape Bollywood's biggest emotional hit, the stories they live remain untold.

Ansar Hussain Dar

It begins with a song. A haunting tune, wrapped in longing, plays as two lovers part ways at a misty train station.

That song, Saiyaara's title track, has become the heartbeat of a film that has swept the Indian imagination. Millions have heard it. Millions more have wept with it.

Its composer, Faheem Abdullah, is from Srinagar. Soft-spoken and sincere, he said in an interview, "I wanted people to feel something deeply. I put my soul into it."

And the country felt it, across timelines, reels, playlists, car radios.

But what they felt wasn't Faheem's Kashmir.

His home doesn't make it to the screen, except in the snow-covered postcard shots that Bollywood uses like wallpaper. The life behind the lens remains untouched.

Faheem wasn't the only Kashmiri behind Saiyaara. The film's striking aesthetic - golden dusk shots, flowing fabrics, soft interiors - came from the eye of cinematographer Rayees Ganaie and the imagination of costume designer Mahira Qadri.

All three, in their own way, brought emotion to life. Their fingerprints are on every frame. And yet, the story they helped tell was someone else's. It was a story that sold.

Saiyaara is now one of the biggest romantic hits of the year. Its plot - familiar, formulaic, tear-stained - is less important than its feeling. It delivered the one thing Indian cinema can always count on: escape.

In contrast, 12th Fail, the film that dared to show struggle without spectacle, sits in the shadow. Despite glowing reviews and a performance by Vikrant Massey that broke hearts with its honesty, the film made modest business. It told the story of a boy who failed, again and again, until he didn't. There were no dream sequences, no love songs in Europe, no dramatic reunions at airports.

There was just effort. And the country looked away.

In a place like Kashmir, where life often feels like a script no studio would dare touch, 12th Fail should have felt familiar. Many here know what it means to restart, rebuild, retake. They've stood in long queues for entrance exams, studied under candlelight, and waited for interview calls that never came. In 12th Fail, they could have seen themselves.

Instead, they sang along to Saiyaara.

And who can blame them, when real life offers little comfort, even the illusion of it can feel like medicine.

Maybe that's why Saiyaara worked. It didn't ask questions. It gave answers: beautiful, aching, artificial ones.

But in doing so, it revealed something deeper about the Indian film audience. We crave feeling more than truth. Films grounded in reality - Masaan, Chhapaak, Aligarh - get applause but rarely audience. Films wrapped in heartbreak

and harmony rake in crores.

As director Hansal Mehta once said, "Real stories make people think. Unfortunately, people go to theatres to stop thinking."

The problem is sharper in a place like Kashmir. Our stories are either softened into tragic romance or hardened into terror tropes. There's rarely room for the everyday: the daughter waiting for her father to come home from court, the poet who teaches part-time to fund his manuscript, the fruit vendor's son who studies coding between harvests.

These are stories waiting to be told. But they don't "sell."

Streaming platforms once gave hope. Film-makers dreamed of bypassing Bollywood's formulas. But even there, the tide is turning. Series set in real-life complexities now compete with glossy dramas built to be bingeable. One producer from Delhi told me, "We love Kashmir, but only when it bleeds or falls in love."

And so, Kashmir's talent continues to colour other people's stories. Faheem's music moves hearts across India. Rayees's camera captures longing. Mahira's costumes help define characters who look nothing like the women of Pulwama or Sopore.

What if these artists turned the lens on their own lives?

Would a film about a Kupwara dropout making it to a UPSC exam go viral? Would a script about a Kashmiri girl running a coding bootcamp get a theatrical release? Would a love story that ends in reality, without tragedy, without triumph, be enough?

Faheem once said his music was meant to make people "feel something deeply." It did. But maybe the question is what we choose to feel, and why.

Emotion isn't the enemy. It's the most powerful tool cinema has. But when it's used to avoid truth rather than explore it, we lose something vital.

Cinema could've been a window in Kashmir, where truth is already muffled by narrative fatigue. It could have let the world in, to understand and care.

Instead, we get the same story: A boy meets girl, a heartbreak blooms, and a song plays.

And yes, sometimes that song is perfect.

But Kashmir deserves more than a soundtrack. Its people deserve the screen, as humans: Struggling, stumbling, surviving.

Someday, the reels will stop spinning, the applause will fade, and the story that remains won't be the one that made us cry. It will be the one that told the truth.

And maybe, just maybe, that truth will sound a lot like Saiyaara, if only we let Kashmir write the lyrics.

The author is a Multimedia Editor at Kashmir Observer .

# Streams Without Mills

Once vital to village life and powered by nothing but gravity and glacier-fed streams, Kashmir's traditional water mills are collapsing under the weight of climate change, apathy, and modern flour.

Shereen Naman

In the village of Rafiabad, near the lower slopes of north Kashmir, mornings once began with the sound of water meeting wood. It was not a roar or rush, but a reliable creak, the sound that told you the day had started, and bread was on its way.

Sara, now in her thirties, remembers those mornings clearly. Her grandfather would rise before the sun, sling a jute bag of maize or rice over his shoulder, and head to the village Aab-e-Gratte, a traditional water-powered flour mill built on the stream that ran through the valley. He returned with freshly ground flour, warm from the friction of stone on stone, ready to be kneaded into kulchas and roti.

Today, the stream still flows, but the wheel doesn't turn. The millstone is split. The wooden sluice gate has caved in. Moss coats the fallen beams, and thorny shrubs fill the hollow where the flour was once collected.

The Aab-e-Gratte, meaning "water flour mill" in Kashmiri, was once a fixture in almost every village of the valley. Designed without motors, fuel, and fuss, it relied entirely on the natural gradient of mountain water.

Water was channeled from a stream to strike a wooden wheel, which turned a vertical shaft, rotating two stones, the top one (runner) spinning over the lower (bed), to grind grain into flour.

For centuries, these mills offered more than sustenance. They were the heartbeat of community life. People waited their turn while discussing crop yields, family marriages, and



village disputes. Some came just to listen to the hum of water, the scrape of stone, and the occasional bird perched on the dripping beams.

Today, only a few dozen remain. Most are in varying stages of collapse.

Technological change came first. With the rise of electricity and diesel-powered mills in the 1990s, villagers could get flour in minutes, not hours. Packaged flour from Punjab and Gujarat began appearing in Kashmir's local markets—pre-ground, neatly sealed, and chemically treated to increase shelf life.

Then came climate shifts. Shrinking glaciers, erratic snowfall, and reduced spring flows have transformed the valley's water patterns. Many streams that once surged through villages during harvest season now trickle out before summer ends. The timing has changed too. Some streams arrive late, some dry up early, and some have disappeared altogether.

"The water doesn't wait anymore," said Noor Mohammad, a 65-year-old miller from Kulgam. He is among the last to run a functioning Aab-e-Gratte in his region. His mill

operates just three months a year now, compared to nearly seven during his youth. "In spring, there's too little snowmelt. In summer, there's not enough rain. And when the water finally comes, it's already too late."

There's another issue: neglect.

These mills were often community-owned or passed down within families, with no formal protection or maintenance systems. When a beam broke or the channel cracked, repairs had to be done by hand, using local knowledge and materials.

Today, many young Kashmiris have moved to cities or taken up jobs that leave no time, or interest, for fixing ancestral mills.

Ghulam Rasool Dar, a retired schoolteacher in Tangmarg, pointed to the skeleton of a mill near his orchard. "My grandfather built this in 1943. It ran until 2001. Then the sluice rotted and the roof caved in. No one came to fix it. My sons say there's no use keeping it alive."

Data is scarce, but a 2023 informal survey by agricultural students at SKUAST-Kashmir identified fewer than 50 operational water mills in the entire valley, down from an estimated 400 in the early 1980s. Many of the remaining ones survive only in remote, uphill areas where modern infrastructure is slower to reach.

Some see value in reviving them. Environmental groups argue that Aab-e-Grattas are among the few surviving examples of zero-carbon food processing in the region. Their design aligns with local ecology and could, with minor adaptations, complement sustain-

able tourism or community farming projects.

"There's a climate-smart wisdom in them," said Dr. Tariq Hussain, who studies indigenous technologies in rural South Asia. "They require no fuel, produce no emissions, and work with seasonal cycles. If supported with even basic repairs and community awareness, they could play a role in local food security."

However, efforts to preserve them remain minimal. No government scheme currently exists to restore or protect these mills as heritage sites. Occasional cultural festivals might feature one for display, but the structural support is absent. NGOs working in rural sustainability say they lack funding or technical capacity to intervene.

Meanwhile, memory carries the burden.

When Sara visits her childhood village now, the wheel is no longer a sound she hears. It's something she has to imagine. She walks to the old spot by the stream and runs her hand along the mossy stones. The hollow where flour once collected is filled with leaves. The door is broken. A cow grazes nearby, uninterested.

"I tell my daughter about it," she said. "That once, a stream could feed a family. That water was enough."

Whether her daughter will ever see it turn again is uncertain.

The water still comes, some years more than others. But the will to build, repair, and wait fades faster than the streams.

- The author is a cultural activist by passion and scribe by profession.





28<sup>th</sup> year OF PUBLICATION

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## FCIK Seeks Urgent MSME Ministry Intervention For Revival Of J&K's Industrial Sector

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** In a significant policy appeal to revive Jammu and Kashmir's ailing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector, the Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) has urged the Union Ministry of MSME to intervene decisively for the revival of sick industrial units, equitable distribution of policy incentives, and overdue modernization of the region's industrial base.

During an interactive meeting held in Srinagar, FCIK Head Shahid Kamili submitted a detailed memorandum to Union MSME Secretary Subash Chandra Lal Das, outlining urgent measures needed to address the deepening crisis in the region's industrial ecosystem.

Kamili emphasized that more than 90 percent of the 40,000 industrial units in J&K are either sick or operating below capacity due to over three decades of sociopolitical unrest, natural disasters, and repeated lockdowns—amounting to an estimated 3,000 days of lost operations. Despite repeated representations, no structured revival mechanism has been put in place to address these long-standing issues.

In its memorandum, FCIK called for the immediate creation of a 2,000 crore revival fund to rejuvenate sick units, support technological upgrades, and facilitate modern-



ization and diversification. The initiative, it stated, could unlock over 1 lakh crore of stalled investments and generate large-scale employment across the region.

FCIK also urged a revised procurement policy favoring local units. It proposed reviving SICOP's procurement role, starting with 358 reserved items for MSEs and 25 percent allocation of public contracts to local MSMEs, and establishing a transparent mechanism for ensuring fair pricing and equitable distribution. The federation also called for a local vendor filter on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) for contracts up to 2 crore, citing adverse impacts of post-2019 procurement reforms on local manufacturers.

Addressing regional disparities in the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS), FCIK demanded equitable access to incentives across all 20 districts, regardless of pre-registration status. It also advocated the inclusion of existing units seeking revival, which have been left out under current provisions favoring new investments.

## India- UK FTA Will Boost Global Competitiveness Of Traditional J&K Industries: KCCI



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) has welcomed the recently concluded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom as a progressive and strategic step that will deepen bilateral economic ties, create new opportunities for Indian exports, and boost the global competitiveness of traditional industries in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Chamber has particularly commended the Government of India for its decision to exclude apples from the list of tariff concessions under the agreement. This decision, KCCI said, reflects a sensitive and informed understanding of the structural vulnerabilities of Kashmir's horticulture sector. Apple cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir supports the livelihoods of over 3 million people and forms the backbone of the rural economy. Any abrupt exposure to international competition—particularly from heavily subsidised foreign producers—could have had serious consequences for local growers," said a statement.

KCCI had earlier raised this concern directly with the Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, during his visit to Kashmir, and had requested the protection of the sector in ongoing trade negotiations. The Chamber is pleased that the Government has taken note and acted accordingly.

At the same time, KCCI has lauded the inclusion of products such as pashmina, saffron, and Kashmiri willow under the FTA's tariff list, which is expected to ease access for these traditional goods into the UK market. This development could significantly benefit artisans, growers, and sports goods manufacturers in the region.

The Chamber emphasised that the agreement presents a timely opportunity to expand exports in sectors where Kashmir has historic and competitive strengths, particularly in handicrafts and handlooms. The UK has traditionally been an important market for Kashmiri crafts. These products are not only emblematic of centuries-old artisanal excellence but also serve as vital sources of employment and women-led income generation across rural areas.

## J&K Govt Gives Craft Dealers 7 Days To Remove Machine-Made Items

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** In an unprecedented move, the Department of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir Friday issued a notice giving Kashmir handicraft dealers a seven-day ultimatum to remove all machine-made products, largely imports from Turkey and Iran, from their Showrooms, failing which, the department warned, they will be blacklisted & deregistered for unfair trade practice under the relevant sections of law.

Addressing the dealers, the notice, issued vide No. H&HD/DDQC/TTA/95/2025, dated 25.07.2025, reads that, "you have been granted registration under the provisions of the Jammu & Kashmir Tourist Trade Act, 1978, for the sale of Kashmir handicraft products at your respective showrooms/outlets." As part of the registration process, the Notice reads that craft dealers have submitted a duly-sworn affidavit, wherein they undertook to exclusively display and sell genuine Kashmir handicraft products at your business establishment.

The Notice further states that under 'Violation of Rules' section that during recent inspections conducted by this office, it was found that several dealers have breached the extant rules by displaying and selling machine-made products, misrepresented as genuine Kashmir handicrafts. Such malpractices undermine the authenticity and reputation of Kashmir handicrafts, the Notice reads.

An official spokesman of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir, in a press release, stated that in response to these violations, this office has imposed penalties on defaulting dealers in accordance with the provisions of the J&K Registration



of Tourist Trade Act, 1978. "Director Handicrafts and Handloom, Director IICT and the Inspection Squad of Quality Control Division, visited various showrooms in City Centres in areas like Nishat, Nehru Park and Munawarabad, warning the Showrooms to immediately remove the machine-made products, failing which such showrooms shall be blacklisted and de-registered," he added.

Further, under G.I. labelling and misbranding concerns section, Notice reads that many Kashmir handicrafts are registered under the Geographical Indication of Goods Act (G.I.), Registry of India, Chennai, to protect their authenticity. To curb misbranding and promote genuine products, the department has introduced G.I.-based QR labelling for various crafts at PTQCC, IICT & Quality Control labs. "However, it has come to our notice that a dealer recently affixed a fake QR label on a machine-made carpet, misrepresenting it as a genuine handmade product. Consequently, the said dealer has been blacklisted and deregistered," the Notice further

reads. As per the notice, all registered dealers have been directed to ensure within 7 days from the issuance of this Notice, that their showrooms exclusively display and sell genuine Kashmir handicraft products and that no machine-made products are displayed or sold.

The spokesman further stated that the Notice directs concerned Kashmir Handicraft dealers to ensure all relevant documents, including G.I. labelling certifications, are prominently displayed at Craft Showrooms for inspection and sale purposes.

Quoting from the notice, the spokesman said that the machine-made products are banned from being sold or displayed in Kashmir handicraft showrooms registered under handicraft or handloom categories, & any violation & misbranding including by way of pasting fake QR codes and pulling out the machine-made labels shall attract relevant clauses/provisions of the Quality Control Act, J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act, GI Act as well as the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita.

## Gold Falls Rs 500 To Rs 99,120/10 G; Silver Trades Flat

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** Gold prices extended losses for the second straight day, by declining Rs 500 to Rs 99,120 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, amid easing global trade tensions and dampening the safe-haven demand.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 99,620 per 10 grams on Thursday.

At the local markets, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also decreased Rs 500 to Rs 98,750 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday as against the previous closing level of Rs 99,250 per 10 grams.

"Gold edged lower on Friday impacted by easing tariff-related concerns, a rebound in the US dollar, and waning expectations for multiple in-



terest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve due to a strong job market," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

However, silver prices traded flat at Rs 1,15,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday, as per the association.

Gandhi further highlighted that the US has already secured a trade deal with Japan, and there is optimism surrounding the US-EU trade agreement. Additionally, the US is expect-

ed to have trade pacts with India, Mexico, and Brazil, which may further increase selling pressure in bullion.

Spot gold fell by USD 20.72 or 0.62 per cent to USD 3,347.94 per ounce in the international markets.

"Gold traded weak at USD 3,345 per ounce, as expectations of tariff deals between the US and trade partners like Japan and the EU reduced safe-haven appeal.

"These developments may keep gold volatile, especially at elevated levels. Focus now shifts to the upcoming Fed's interest rate decision next week, which will be crucial for the direction of bullion prices," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

On the global front, spot silver slipped by 0.35 per cent to trade at USD 38.92 per ounce.



## CS Holds Strategic Discussion With Secy MSME To Boost Industrial Growth

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR-** Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today held an extensive meeting with Union Secretary, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), S.C.L. Das, to deliberate on the prevailing industrial scenario in Jammu and Kashmir and explore long-term strategies for promotion and sustainability of the MSME sector across the Union Territory.

The meeting was also attended by Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, and Secretary, Labour & Employment, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan.

During the interaction, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for a robust and inclusive roadmap to ensure the long-term sustainability of both existing and newly established industrial units across the UT. He underscored that the industrial landscape in J&K has historically been impacted by its unique geopolitical context, being a peripheral region of the country, thereby facing distinct logistical and connectivity challenges.

Highlighting the immense potential of the MSME sector as a vehicle for employment and economic empowerment,

Dulloo urged the Ministry to extend necessary technical and financial support to foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in the UT.

He observed that J&K is now poised to bridge the historic gaps in industrial development, and the youth of the region must be equipped with opportunities and tools to become self-reliant job creators.

He further sought the Ministry's intervention in initiating targeted programmes to nurture a culture of entrepreneurship among the youth, who, he said, have remained deprived of such opportunities due to the past circumstances. He called for enhanced handholding support in skilling the local workforce in tune with emerging, technology-driven industries to enable them to secure gainful employment.

The Chief Secretary also emphasized the need for establishing comprehensive platforms that can facilitate better market access, credit linkage, and business mentorship for aspiring entrepreneurs. He suggested exploring avenues for expanding digital infrastructure and support systems to aid MSME growth in both rural and urban pockets of the UT.

## Inflation, Growth Outlook To Decide Rate Cuts, Not Current CPI Data: RBI Guv

Press Trust Of India

**MUMBAI-** With data showing a steep decline in price rise in June, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said that the outlook on inflation and growth will determine future rate cuts, making it clear that the current data will not influence the trajectory.

Speaking at the Financial Express Modern BFSI Summit here, Malhotra also stated that the RBI's rate cuts will not lead to asset bubbles and added that the central bank has more ammunition in its arsenal beyond rate cuts to help the economy.

It can be noted that the RBI has cut its key rates by 1 percentage point this year, and official data pointing to headline inflation cooling to 2.1 per cent against the 4 per cent target has led to expectations of further easing.

"Rate cuts will depend on the outlook for both growth and inflation rather than the current numbers," Malhotra said.

"We have to remember that monetary policy works with a lag and hence outlook on the outcomes on key data like inflation for up to 12 months is kept in mind while taking the rate calls."

He reminded that as per the current projections, CPI is expected to rise to 4.4 per cent in Q4, but admitted that the cur-



rent outcomes suggest there will be a downward revision to the number.

Data available till June suggest that banks' lending rates have declined by around 0.50 per cent this year, the same as the RBI's rate cuts till then, signalling a complete transmission of the RBI's decision.

The rate cuts are aimed at upping the credit growth, Malhotra said, exuding confidence that they will not lead to the creation of asset bubbles.

He said the 12.1 per cent credit growth for FY25 is better than the decadal average of over 10 per cent, but admitted that the number is trailing at around 9 per cent levels in FY26.

Malhotra assured the industry that the RBI will provide "the right macroeconomic conditions for growth" through its policies, liquidity stance and regulatory moves.

## India Announces Rs 4,850 Cr LoC For Maldives

Modi says ties between two neighbours as deep as ocean

Press Trust Of India

**MALE-** India on Friday announced a Rs 4,850 crore line of credit for the Maldives and agreed to finalise a free trade deal soon, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasising that New Delhi is proud to be the "most trusted" friend of the Indian Ocean archipelago.

New Delhi also decided to reduce the Maldives' annual debt repayment obligations by 40 per cent (from USD 51 million to 29 million), seen as a significant move to help the country deal with its economic woes.

These measures were announced after PM Modi held extensive talks with Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu that focused on deepening bilateral cooperation in a range of areas, including trade, defence and maritime security.

The two sides sealed six pacts in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture, me-



teorology, digital public infrastructure, UPI, Indian pharmacopoeia, and for India's concessional line of credit to the island nation.

"For us, it is always friendship first," Modi said in his media statement, adding the "roots of our relations are older than history, and as deep as the ocean."

The outcomes of the Modi-Muizzu talks signalled a major turnaround in the relationship

after a spell of unease and tension. The renewed intensity in the ties assumes significance as Muizzu came to power in November 2023 on the back of an "India Out" campaign.

India-Maldives friendship will always "remain bright and clear" irrespective of any circumstances, the prime minister said, outlining his vision for the relationship.

To give a new momentum to our development partner-

ship, we have decided to give a line of credit of USD 565 million (Rs 4,850 crore) to Maldives, Modi said.

This amount will be used for projects related to the development of infrastructure in the Maldives, in accordance with the priorities of the people of the country, he added.

In his comments, Muizzu appreciated India's "pivotal role" in supporting the Maldives to manage its economic challenges.

"India's continued assistance to the Maldives through the export of essential commodities is a key facet of our bilateral cooperation under the long-standing trade agreement," he said.

At a media briefing, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said a key pact inked following the Modi-Muizzu talks was to reduce the Maldives' annual debt repayment to India by 40 per cent.

## Two Days Of Market Fall Erodes Rs 8.67 Lakh Crore From Investors Wealth

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI-** Investors' wealth eroded by Rs 8.67 lakh crore in two days of sharp fall in the equity market, where the benchmark Sensex tanked 1.52 per cent.

Persistent foreign fund outflows and heavy selling in financial, IT stocks have dragged the markets lower.

In the past two trading days, the 30-share BSE Sensex has dropped 1,263.55 points or 1.52 per cent.

Following the sharp fall in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms fell by Rs 8,67,406.75 crore to Rs 4,51,67,858.16 crore (USD 5.22 trillion) in two days.

On Friday, the Sensex tanked 721.08 points or 0.88 per cent to settle at over a month's low of 81,463.09. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 225.10 points or 0.90 per cent to a month's low of 24,837.

"Nifty ended lower for the second consecutive day, declin-

ing 225 points to close below the 25K mark at 24,837 (-0.9 per cent). Financial stocks, particularly Bajaj Finance, led the sell-off due to concerns over asset quality. Global uncertainties, lack of progress in the India-US trade negotiations, and continuous selling by foreign investors further contributed to the market's negative performance," Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Research-Wealth Management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Among Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance declined 4.73 per cent post its June quarter earnings announcement. Power Grid, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Trent, Tata Motors, NTPC and Tata Steel were also among the laggards. However, Sun Pharma and Bharti Airtel emerged as the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,133.69 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

"Subdued corporate results and lacklustre global cues triggered a broad-based sell-off across domestic equities. Elevated valuations in large-cap stocks, coupled with significant net short positions held by FIIs, added to the downward pressure.

"Investor sentiment remained fragile amid ongoing uncertainty over US-India tariff negotiations and the ECB (European Central Bank) maintaining the status quo, with rate cuts deferred until clearer insights emerge on the inflationary impact of trade developments," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 1.88 per cent and midcap index dropped 1.46 per cent.

Utilities slumped 2.37 per cent, power tumbled 2.36 per cent, oil & gas (2.11 per cent), industrials (1.88 per cent), capital goods (1.83 per cent), IT (1.65 per cent) and metal (1.64 per cent).



# Op Sindhu Of 3,597 Indians Evacuated From Iran, Over 1,500 Hailed From J&K: GOI

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Of 3,597 Indian nationals who were evacuated from Iran under Operation Sindhu, 1,521 citizens hailed from Jammu and Kashmir and 1,198 from Uttar Pradesh, according to data shared by the government on Thursday.

The data was shared in a written response by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh to a query in the Rajya Sabha.

In a response to a separate query, he said, "Thirteen Indian nationals remain in the Russian armed forces, out of which 12 individuals have been reported missing by the Russian side."

"The Russian authorities concerned have been urged to provide an update on all the remaining/missing individuals, and also ensure their safety, well-being and early discharge," the MoS said.

Citing available information,

he said there were 127 Indian nationals in the Russian armed forces, out of which the services of 98 individuals were discontinued as a result of sustained engagement between the Indian and Russian governments on this matter, including at the highest levels.

Singh was asked the number of Indians, including students, travellers and workers who are residing in Iran and Israel, as also if any Indian was killed during the recent Iran-Israel conflict.

"As per available information, no Indian casualties have been reported in Iran or Israel during the recent conflict," he said.

At present, approximately 40,100 Indians are residing in Israel, including students, caregivers, construction and agricultural workers, business persons/experts, etc., Singh said.

In Iran, prior to the recent conflict, approximately 10,000 Indians were residing, including

students, workers, seafarers and fishermen, pilgrims and travellers.

The government of India had evacuated 4,415 Indian nationals from Iran and Israel under Operation Sindhu conducted recently.

Under the operation, 3,597 Indian nationals were evacuated from Iran, and 818 from Israel.

In his response, the minister also shared state-wise figures of evacuated citizens, from both the countries amid the conflict.

Of the 3,597 Indian nationals who were evacuated from Iran under Operation Sindhu, the state-wise data showed that 1,521 citizens were from Jammu and Kashmir; 1,198 from Uttar Pradesh; 223 from Ladakh; 89 from Maharashtra; 135 from Karnataka; and 50 from Bihar, among other states.

Of the 818 Indian nationals who were evacuated from Israel under the operation, the state-wise data showed that 151 citizens hailed from West Bengal

and 93 from Maharashtra, among other states.

In a separate query, Singh was asked about the measures the government is taking to address the "exploitation of millions of Indian workers in the Gulf", especially in construction and domestic work, where they face degrading conditions.

"As per the data available, a total of 7,001 and 3,723 death cases of Indian nationals (including Indian workers) from various causes in the Gulf countries were reported in 2024 and 2025 (till June), respectively," he said.

"The Missions/Posts utilise the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) from time to time to provide financial and legal assistance to Indian nationals in distress abroad including workers in Gulf countries on a means-tested basis. Under ICWF, the major assistance/facilitation includes boarding and lodging, air passage to India, and legal assistance," he added.

## Using Unfair Means During Govt Job Exam UPSC Bars Woman Aspirant For 3 Yrs

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: A woman candidate has been barred for three years for using unfair means during a government job recruitment examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), officials said on Friday.

It has also cancelled her candidature for the current year's examination, they said, without citing further details.

The UPSC had last year initiated a series of actions against former probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar, including lodging of a criminal case, for availing attempts in the civil services exam by faking her identity.

Khedkar has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing Other Backward Class (OBC) and disability quota benefits to ensure her selection in the Indian Administrative Service

(IAS).

Giving details of the latest case, the UPSC said that recently, a candidate was found in possession of incriminating material in one of the recruitment examinations.

"As the candidate has violated the rules of the Examination and is found to be guilty under the rule of the examination - 12(1)(h) 'being in possession of or using unfair means during the examination'.

"Accordingly, UPSC has taken stringent disciplinary action in line with standardisation of penalties by cancelling the candidature for the current year's examination and debarred the individual from appearing in all future examination(s)/selection(s) to be conducted by the Commission for a period of 3 years," the Commission said in a post on LinkedIn.

Speaking about the action, UPSC Chairman Ajay Kumar

said, the Commission is firmly committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and fairness in its examination processes.

"Any candidate found guilty of indulging in unfair means or misconduct during examinations faces strict disciplinary action as per rules, including debarment from future examinations, as the strictest action," he said.

Such measures are essential to preserve the sanctity of the selection process and to ensure that merit remains the sole criterion for recruitment to the government services, Kumar said.

"This is the sole reason why UPSC for the last 100 years, has been an epitome of merit and fair system, and candidates from any background can get selected, purely on merit basis, as per the selection process," he added.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Modi Becomes

only leader in India, among all PMs and CMs, to win six consecutive elections as the leader of a party -- Gujarat assembly polls in 2002, 2007 and 2012, and the national elections in 2014, 2019, and 2024," an official said.

#### ₹1.44 Lakh/Day

Investigation Agency (NIA) over the imposition of exorbitant travel expenses on the elected MP for attending the complete ongoing session of Parliament.

Engineer Rashid has challenged a trial court order asking him to bear travel expenses of Rs 1.44 lakh per day for attending Parliament in custody from July 24 to August 4.

A bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Shalinder Kaur issued notice to the NIA on the plea and listed the matter for further hearing on July 29.

The court is also scheduled to hear on July 29 Rashid's regular bail plea in the case.

Reacting to the development, AIP Chief Spokesperson Inam Un Nabi said, "We welcome the Hon'ble Delhi High Court's decision to issue notice to the SSP NIA on this grave concern. Engineer Rashid is not just an accused—he is an elected Member of Parliament. Imposing such unaffordable expenses on him is discriminatory and deeply undemocratic."

He added, "Arguments in the matter will now be heard on July 29, which is also the date fixed for hearing Er Rashid Sb's regular bail application. The AIP remains committed to exhausting every democratic and legal avenue to ensure justice, dignity and full representation for the people of Baramulla."

Inamun Nabi further noted, "The question is simple—can a duly elected MP be financially handicapped from entering Parliament? The voice of the people of Baramulla must not be silenced. We hope the Hon'ble Court intervenes with fairness and constitutional clarity."

The Baramulla MP has been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after he was arrested by the NIA under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the case.

During the brief hearing, Rashid's counsel submitted that the MP has already been saddled with Rs 17 lakh cost to represent the public at large in Parliament.

He said Rashid was previously allowed to attend Parliament and that he was losing every day as he was unable to attend the session due to the huge costs.

Rashid sought interim bail or custody parole with travel expenses to carry out his duty as a parliamentarian.

Custody parole entails a prisoner being escorted by armed police personnel to the place of visit.

On July 22, the trial court granted custody parole to Rashid to attend the Monsoon session from July 24 to August 4, subject to payment of travel expenses.

Rashid, who defeated Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, is facing allegations that he funded separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the NIA's FIR, Rashid's name cropped up during the interrogation of businessman and co-accused Zahoor Watali.

After being charge-sheeted in October 2019, a special NIA court framed charges against Rashid and others in March 2022 under sections 120B (criminal conspiracy), 121 (waging war against the government), and 124A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code and for offences relating to terrorist acts and terror funding under the UAPA.

#### No US Role In

countries, including the United States, it strongly denied that any external power influenced India's decision to stop the operations.

"The issue of trade discussions did not come up in any conversations related to the conflict," the government said in response to speculation that the U.S. linked trade concessions to the ceasefire.

On May 9, just a day before the ceasefire, India informed U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance that it would respond decisively if Pakistan escalated the situation.

The Ministry also reaffirmed India's consistent policy that there will be no third-party mediation on the Kashmir issue. "All outstanding issues with Pakistan will be discussed bilaterally," it stated, adding that even Prime Minister Modi had conveyed this directly to the U.S. President.

As regards any proposal for third-party mediation, "our long standing position remains that

any outstanding issue with Pakistan will be discussed only bilaterally. This has been made clear to all nations, including by the Prime Minister to the US President", the Minister said.

Notably, US President Donald Trump on Friday (local time) repeated his claim of stopping the four-day war between India and Pakistan using "trade deal" as a tool. Trump has made this claim numerous times since May 10, the day an "understanding" to halt the fight was negotiated among the two rival neighbours. Trump, without naming the country that was at the receiving end, claimed that five jets were downed in the India-Pakistan conflict. "We stopped a lot of wars. And these were serious, India and Pakistan, that was going on. Planes were being shot out of there. I think five jets were shot down, actually. These are two serious nuclear countries, and they were hitting each other," Trump said. Trump's claims were refuted by India last month, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Donald Trump over a phone call. PM Modi had made it clear to Trump that India never accepted mediation, nor will it in the future. "The discussion on halting military actions took place directly between India and Pakistan through existing military channels, at Pakistan's request. PM Modi emphasised that India has never accepted mediation, does not accept it, and will never accept it," Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had said, sharing details about the exchange between the two leaders. Taking credit for the ceasefire again, Trump claimed he asked both warring nations to stop "throwing around nuclear weapons".

"But India and Pakistan were going at it, and they were back and forth, and it was getting bigger and bigger, and we got it solved through trade. We said, you guys want to make a trade deal. We're not making a trade deal if you're going to be throwing around weapons, and maybe nuclear weapons, both very powerful nuclear states," he claimed.

Trump has repeated his unsubstantiated claims on numerous occasions, despite India's refusal.

India hit back at Pakistan on May 7 in response to the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians.

#### CM, Mehbooba

and cannot be indiscriminate."

"This incident should be investigated in a transparent and time-bound manner. I send my condolences to the family of Mohd Parvez. May Allah grant him Jannat," he said.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday also demanded a time-bound probe into the death of an alleged drug peddler in cross-firing with police in Jammu city.

"Mohammad Parvez a tribal youth was killed by the police at Surat Chak, Police Station in Satwari yesterday. He's now been labelled as a drug dealer but even that may be the case we still live in a democratic country where justice is served through rule of law as opposed to khap panchayats or kangaroo courts," the former chief minister said in a post on X.

She demanded an impartial inquiry into the incident.

"Sincerely hope the DG takes cognisance of this shocking incident by ordering a time bound impartial probe. We must not descend or condone a culture of extra judicial encounters because that's precisely what alienates people," she added.

A suspected drug peddler was killed and another detained during a cross-firing with police in Jammu city on Thursday.

Irate over the killing of the alleged drug peddler, the family members assembled at GMC Hospital in Jammu and held protests demanding probe into the incident.

A police spokesman said a police team was chasing suspected drug peddlers, when it was fired upon.

One alleged drug peddler was killed in the cross-firing, a senior police officer had said, adding that another was detained.

2 Police Officials Suspended

Jammu and Kashmir Police have suspended two police officials of the district special Branch. Besides, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by a DySP ranked officer has also been constituted to probe into the allegations of the family members of the deceased youth. Meanwhile, the district magistrate Jammu has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident that occurred on July 24, 2025, at Surya Chak, Phallian Mandal, Jammu.

"Taking serious note of the incident, as reported by Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu, the District Magistrate has initiated a magisterial inquiry to ensure a fair and

impartial examination of the facts and circumstances leading to the incident," reads the statement.

The inquiry will be conducted by the sub-divisional magistrate, Jammu South.

The inquiry officer has been directed to complete the investigation within two weeks from the date of the order and submit a detailed report to the district magistrate for further necessary action.

#### JKB Q1 Net

along with its aftermath that affected business activity and credit offtake in key geographies well into June; we have been able to deliver a healthy bottom line growth of around 17%."

"The sudden decline in NIM should be viewed against the broader environment wherein repo rate cuts announced by the regulator impacted the margins", he added.

"Pertinently, the profitability for Q1 is subdued on account of impairment provision of Rs 87 Cr made in this quarter towards our investment in the RRB - Jammu and Kashmir Grameen Bank, necessitated by amalgamation of Ellaquai Dehati Bank with erstwhile J&K Grameen Bank w.e.f. 30th April 2025. Excluding this non-recurring impact, our profitability growth would be upwards of 30% YoY. This one time provision has also impacted our ROA and ROE, however on a normalised basis both metrics remain broadly in line with our expectation", he added.

"Having said that, we remain fundamentally strong, with adequate capital and liquidity buffers, and are already seeing signs of accelerating credit off-take on ground. With improving conditions on the ground, we are sure to gain growth momentum in the coming quarters", asserted MD & CEO.

Business Growth

The Bank's deposits rose 12% YoY to Rs 148542 Cr from Rs 132574 Cr recorded in Q1 last FY, while the net Advances grew 6.06% YoY reaching Rs 101230 Cr as against Rs 95450 Cr. The Bank's CASA ratio stood at 45.71% as on June 30, 2025.

MD & CEO further remarked, "Regarding business growth, we are confident in our long term strategy as we are actively diversifying and scaling up our Rest of India operations by opening more branches in strategic business centres, entering builder tie ups, and strengthening partnerships with DSAs."

"Going forward, our focus will also remain deepening relationships in core geographies through sufficient lending to agriculture, industry and youth entrepreneurship; and investing further in digital capabilities and operational efficiency", he added.

Asset Quality  
Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) of the Bank reduced by 41 bps YoY to 3.50% (from 3.91% a year ago), while Net NPA stood at 0.82%. The Bank's NPA Coverage Ratio remained strong at above 90%.

On asset quality, MD & CEO remarked, "On the asset quality front, as per our annual guidance, we plan to bring it to around 3% by the end of CFY through prudent lending, robust recovery mechanisms, and proactive monitoring using early warning systems and digital tools like our NPA tracker."

Capital Adequacy  
The Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) stood at 15.98%, providing a comfortable buffer for future growth.

Regarding the capital position, MD & CEO said, "With CAR almost 16%, we remain well capitalized and have an enabling board approval for raising further capital to fund our growth plans and seize emerging opportunities across our business segments."

#### LG Pays Homage

in the most inhospitable terrain in the world and conquered the enemy. The gallantry, valour and supreme sacrifice of our soldiers will inspire the generations to come," the Lieutenant

Governor said.

The Indian Army on Friday started the Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrations in Drass, Ladakh, paying tribute to the soldiers, who lost their lives in the 1999 Kargil War. The main event will be held on July 26.

Senior Army officials and Union Ministers including the Minister of State for Defence, laid wreaths at the Kargil War Memorial to honour the fallen heroes of battles fought at Tololing, Tiger Hill, and Batalik.

This year's celebrations will continue for two days and include a mix of traditional and modern events.

On Friday evening, people witnessed cultural performances like the traditional Yak dance and patriotic songs. A special drone show lit up the night sky, showing India's progress in modern defence.

The Army also showcased new equipment like robotic dogs and logistics drones that can help soldiers carry supplies and patrol in high-altitude areas.

Army officials said that these tools would help to reduce the physical burden on troops working in tough terrains.

On Saturday, the Army will launch three new digital projects, a website where people can pay tribute to martyrs online, QR-code based audio guides at the memorial, sharing stories from the war and the opening of "Indus Viewpoint" in Batalik, offering a rare public view of the Line of Control.

The Kargil War Memorial in Drass has become a major place of remembrance, drawing tourists, students, and citizens from across India who come to honour the bravery of Indian soldiers.

The Army showcased its latest high-altitude logistic drones and robotic dogs, developed to transport supplies and conduct patrols across challenging border terrains. These cutting-edge machines are built to operate in extreme environments where human mobility is often limited.

A senior official noted that the introduction of these technologies will significantly reduce the physical strain on troops deployed in harsh conditions. He added that their use will enhance operational efficiency, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas

#### Employment-linked

August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2027.

According to the statement, the employment-linked incentive scheme will come into

effect from 1st August 2025 as the "PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY)".

The name is in alignment with the scheme's overall objectives towards the Viksit Bharat initiative and reflects the government's commitment to generating inclusive and sustainable employment opportunities in the country.

The scheme, which incentivizes employers to create new employment, aims to provide benefits for the generation of new jobs across various sectors with special focus on the manufacturing sector.

It forms a crucial part of India's strategy to accelerate economic growth through employment-led development.

The Scheme consists of two parts, with Part A focused on first timers and Part B focused on employees.

Targeting first-time employees registered with EPFO, Part-A will offer one-month EPF wage up to Rs 15,000 in two installments. Employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh will be eligible.

The 1st installment will be payable after 6 months of service and the 2nd installment will be payable after 12 months of service and completion of a financial literacy programme by the employee.

To encourage the habit of saving, a portion of the incentive will be kept in a savings instrument or deposit account for a fixed period and can be withdrawn by the employee at a later date.

This part will cover the generation of additional employment in all sectors, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector..

The employers will get incentives in respect of employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh..

The Government will incentivize employers, up to Rs 3000 per month, for two years, for each additional employee with sustained employment for at least six months. For the manufacturing sector, incentives will be extended to the 3rd and 4th years as well.

Establishments, which are registered with EPFO, will be required to hire at least two additional employees (for employers with less than 50 employees) or five additional employees (for employers with 50 or more employees), on a sustained basis for at least six months.

All payments to the First Time Employees under Part A of the Scheme will be made through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) mode using the Aadhar Bridge Payment System (ABPS).

Payments to the Employers under Part B will be made directly into their PAN-linked Accounts.

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# England Take 186-Run Lead, End Day 3 At 544/7

Press Trust of India

**MANCHESTER:** Joe Root produced a batting masterclass on way to a milestone 38th hundred as England exploited a jaded Indian bowling attack to stamp their dominance on the fourth Test here on Friday.

At stumps on day four, England were 544 for seven, stretching their first innings lead to 186 runs.

Root made a sublime 150 off 248 balls while the other contributions came from Ben Stokes (77 batting off 134) and Ollie Pope (71 off 128), a day after the openers put a pedestrian looking Indian attack to sword.

It has been a long tour with another Test to go in a week's time but considering the body language of Indian pacers in the field on Friday, lasting the whole series would be a challenge.

The visitors have already been hit by a series of injuries with the latest one being X-factor cricketer Rishabh Pant's toe fracture.

Both Jasprit Bumrah and Mo-



ammed Siraj seemed to be bowling with a niggles while debutant Anshul Kamboj hit underwhelming speeds in the range 125-130 kmph. Even Bumrah, who usually bowls in the range of 140 kmph, clocked speeds in the lower 130s.

Having bowled just one over in the afternoon session, Bumrah was seen holding his ankle and even had to leave the field briefly.

In his 24th over, he managed to procure the wicket of Jamie Smith (9).

Siraj too seemed to be in discomfort like Bumrah, but he bowled with more intensity in the final session and was rewarded the wicket of Chris Woakes.

The lone positive for India was the performance of Washington Sundar who struck twice in the afternoon session after being questionably brought in as late as the 69th over.

Shardul Thakur was used for 11 overs, raising questions on the presence of three all-rounders in

the team.

It would take a special effort from the Indians to bounce back and keep the series alive.

In the afternoon session, Root reached his 12th hundred against India as England extended their dominance over India, reaching 433 for four at tea.

Washington got the ball to drift and got rid of Pope (71 off 128) and Harry Brook (3 off 12) after lunch, providing a much needed relief for India following a wicketless morning session.

India employed spinners Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja from both ends despite taking the new ball. The move worked as Sundar had Pope caught at first slip before having Brook stumped as he could not connect on the charge.

Root chose to play on the back-foot when the spinners were in operation and used the reverse sweep effectively.

In the morning, the Indian bowlers did not pose enough threat for Root and Pope who steered England to 332 for two at lunch.

## Zone BK Pora Lifts U-19 Zonal Cricket Title In Budgam



Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** District Youth Services and Sports Office Budgam conducted its Inter-Zonal District Level Cricket Tournament for Boys Under-19 at Gowhar Sports Stadium here on Friday. The tournament witnessed participation from a large number of students, representing both government and private educational institutions across the district.

Organised under the supervision of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam Ghulam Hassan Lone, the tournament aimed to foster sportsmanship and identify young cricketing talent from various zones.

The event was inaugurated by Ghulam Hassan Khanday, Activity Incharge DYSSO Budgam, who encouraged players to uphold the spirit of the game and give their best on the field.

The final encounter proved to be an exciting face-off between Zone BK Pora and Zone Budgam. Displaying skill, teamwork and determination, the team from Zone BK Pora emerged victorious, lifting the prestigious inter-zonal cricket title.

The tournament concluded on a high note, with appreciation pouring in for the efforts of the organising committee and the sports staff who ensured smooth conduct of the matches.

## YSS Ganderbal Holds Multiple Sports Events Across District



Observer News Service

**GANDERBAL:** Department of Youth Services and Sports Ganderbal organised a series of sporting activities across the district on Friday. From traditional games to modern martial arts and team sports, student players from various zones and schools actively participated.

At Physical College Gadoora, the Inter-Zone District Level Kho-Kho competition for Girls Under-19 witnessed spirited performances from all four educational zones of the district. After a series of thrilling matches, Zone Kangan triumphed over Zone Tullamulla in a closely contested final.

Trophies were presented to the winners and runners-up by senior officials, and outstanding players were shortlisted by a selection committee for participation in the upcoming Provincial Level Championship.

In a parallel event, the Indoor Sports Complex Sehpora buzzed with energy as boys and girls from different institutions competed in the Inter-School District Level Taekwondo Championship All Age Groups. The event featured multiple bouts across various weight categories.

Adding to the day's momentum, a two-day Football Coaching Camp for Girls All Age Groups was inaugurated at Government Physical College Gadoora.

## Sports Minister To Commemorate Kargil War Anniv. In Drass

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will lead a 'padyatra' featuring over 1,000 youth volunteers, veterans, armed forces personnel, families of fallen soldiers, and civil society members in Drass on Saturday to commemorate the 26th anniversary of India's victory in the 1999 Kargil War.

Mandaviya will also be joined by Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth in the 'Kargil Vijay Diwas Padyatra' being organised by MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat).

"The Padyatra, covering a distance of 1.5 kilometers, will commence at 7am from the grounds of Himabass Public High School, Drass, and will conclude at the grounds of Government Higher Secondary School, Bhimbet," stated a press release from the ministry of youth affairs and sports.

The two ministers, accompanied by 100 youth volunteers, will then proceed to the Kargil War Memorial to lay wreaths and offer homage to the soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the 1999 conflict with Pakistan.

## Kashmir Super League Play-Off Matches To Begin On Sunday

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** With the league stage done, Kashmir Super League 2025 will shift its focus to the play-off rounds. United Elegant FC were crowned league stage champions on Thursday and booked their place in the final rounds of the tournament.

Joining United Elegant in the final four are teams like Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC, ARCO United FC and New JK United FC. These four franchises will now battle to reach the final of the competition.

The Kashmir Super League will resume on Sunday with the first play-off game set to pit United Elegant FC against Aqua Kashmir Avengers FC at TRC Ground in Qualifier 1. The game kicks off at 7:00 PM.

The second play-off contest will be held on Monday, with ARCO United FC playing New JK United FC in the Eliminator.

The third game of the play-offs will



see Qualifier 1 Loser take on Elimination Winner on Thursday in a Qualifier 2 matchup.

The Qualifier 1 winner will then take on the Qualifier 2 winner in the Grand Finale on Sunday, August 3.

## Xavi's Application Surprises AIFF, But An Indian Set To Become Coach

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Spain's World Cup-winning mid-field superstar Xavi Hernandez was among those who applied for the position of India's head coach, leaving the All India Football Federation (AIFF) pleasantly surprised but also unable to process his application for reasons which had nothing to do with the game.

Xavi, it is learnt, "sent an email from his own account" to apply for the post.

However, the AIFF could not go ahead with the processing of his application as the costs involved in recruiting one of the world's finest mid-fielders was way beyond the federation's means.

"Yes, he (Xavi) applied for the job of the Indian senior men's team football head

coach. He has himself mailed his application to the people in the technical committee, and it looks like he was very much interested in the job," a source in the AIFF told PTI on Friday.

"However, those tasked with the responsibility of recommending the short-list of coaches to the executive committee for final approval federation know that it's difficult.

"You understand that Xavi is one of the greatest mid-fielders of all time, people talk about Messi all the time but he along with (Andres) Iniesta are right up there as far as Barcelona is concerned. So, yes, it is what it is," he added.

The experienced Anglo-Cypriot Stephen Constantine, Stefan Tarkovic of Slovakia and home-bred Khalid Jamil were among three candidates shortlisted on Wednesday

by the technical committee of the AIFF.

Out of the three, Jamil appears to be the frontrunner to replace Manolo Marquez, who quit earlier this month after a string of poor performances by the national team. The side's FIFA ranking has plummeted to 133, which is its lowest in nine years.

The AIFF had invited applications for the top job on July 4 with July 13 as the deadline. It received 170 applications, which included big names like former Liverpool stars Robbie Fowler and Harry Kewell.

Before Xavi, Fowler and Kewell had thrown their hats into the ring for the position.

Besides the World Cup triumph with Spain in 2010 and Euro title victories in 2008 and 2012, the 45-year-old Xavi has won five La Liga titles, three Copa del

Rey trophies, and three UEFA Champions League trophies with FC Barcelona, including two continental trebles in 2008-09 and 2014-15.

A product of the famed La Masia like his longtime illustrious FCB teammate Messi, Xavi's last coaching job was at FC Barcelona, where he was in charge from 2021 to 2024.

Before that, the maestro was managing Qatari club Al Sadd from 2019-21.

After his glorious 24-year stint at Barcelona, Xavi had also played for Al Sadd before being appointed the team's manager.

He left Barcelona as a player in 2015 for Al Asadd, where he also won four trophies before retiring in 2019.

As Barcelona manager, he led them to the 2023 Supercopa de Espana and the 2022-23 La Liga tile.

## Root Surpasses Ponting, Next In Sight Is Tendulkar

The prolific Joe Root on Friday surpassed Australian legend Ricky Ponting's tally to become the second highest run-getter in the history of Test cricket and next in sight of the England batter is Indian icon Sachin Tendulkar who continues to head the list.

On the third day of the fourth Test against India here, Root first leapfrogged legendary Indian Rahul Dravid and South African great Jacques Kallis' aggregate of runs in a space of eight balls and then went past Ponting by steering the ball behind point for a single as the Old Trafford crowd gave him a standing ovation.

Ponting had scored 13378 runs in 168 matches at an average of 51.85, while Tendulkar continues to top the list with 15921 runs.

It was apt that Ponting was in the commentary box when Root went past him.

Root is playing in his 157th Test.

Overall, the ton at Old Trafford was his 38th in red ball format as he joined former Sri Lanka star Kumar Sangakkara at fourth place in the list of centurions in the game's longest format.

Tendulkar (51), Jacques Kallis (45) and Ponting (41) are ahead of him in the hundred's list. (PTI)

## RCB Pacer Yash Dayal Accused Of Rape, FIR Registered

PL side Royal Challengers Bengaluru's under-fire pacer Yash Dayal has been accused of raping a minor in an FIR registered against him by Jaipur Police.

The 27-year-old cricketer from Uttar Pradesh is already facing charges of sexual exploitation from a woman in Ghaziabad who has alleged that Dayal abused her after promising to marry her during a five-year relationship.

SHO of Jaipur's Sanganer Sadar police station Anil Jaiman said that the latest FIR was registered on Wednesday.

According to Jaiman, the victim has alleged that the player raped her first in 2023 when she was 17 and a similar assault took place in April this year at a hotel in Sitapura area.

"She alleged that the cricketer had promised help and support in her career. He contacted her in April this year when he was in Jaipur for IPL and called her to the hotel where he allegedly raped her again," the SHO said, adding that the matter was under investigation.

The player has not issued any statement on either of the two cases so far. (PTI)

## Pakistan Recall Shaheen Afridi For West Indies T20Is

The Pakistani selectors have recalled fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi for the upcoming T20 series in the West Indies while retaining Mohammad Rizwan as the captain for the One-Day Internationals in the Caribbean.

Left-arm pacer Shaheen, who was sidelined in the last few T20 series, has been recalled in the format while fast bowlers Hasan Ali and Haris Rauf, who missed the recent series in Bangladesh, also came back into the team.

The selectors have also retained top batsman Babar Azam for the three ODIs.

The T20s are scheduled from July 31 to August 3 in Florida followed by the ODIs in Trinidad.

The three young pacers -- Abbas Afridi, Ahmed Daniyal and Salman Mirza -- who played in the T20 series in Bangladesh which ended on Thursday, have not been picked for the West Indies tour.

Pakistan T20 squad: Salman Ali Agha (capt), Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Muhammad Haris, Muhammad Nawaz, Sahabzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Muqim.

ODI squad: Muhammad Rizwan (capt), Babar Azam, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Hasan Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Muhammad Haris, Naseem Shah, Muhammad Nawaz, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Muqim. (PTI)

## Barcelona To Play Preseason Game In Japan After Dispute

Barcelona will play a preseason game in Japan that it had previously said was canceled after resolving a contractual dispute with the promoter, the Spanish champion said Friday.

Barcelona said that its team was traveling to Japan where it will play a friendly against Vissel Kobe on Sunday.

The club said that it and the promoter have "resolved all the issues that two days prior obliged Barcelona to cancel its participation" in the game. Barcelona has not named the promoter or given more detail about the dispute.

After Japan, Barcelona also plans to visit South Korea to play FC Seoul on July 31 and Daegu FC on Aug. 4.

Like other big clubs, Barcelona -- which has struggled with large debts in recent years -- uses the summer to play exhibition games abroad as a way to earn extra cash. (AP)





# US wrestling icon Hulk Hogan dies at 71

AP

Hulk Hogan, the American sport and entertainment star who made professional wrestling a global phenomenon, has died at the age of 71, World Wrestling Entertainment said.

"WWE is saddened to learn WWE Hall of Famer Hulk Hogan has passed away," World Wrestling Entertainment wrote in a social media post on Thursday. "One of pop culture's most recognizable figures, Hogan helped WWE achieve global recognition in the 1980s. WWE extends its condolences to Hogan's family, friends, and fans."

Hogan, whose legal name was Terry Bollea, became a universal symbol of WWE during the 1980s, with a beach-blond handlebar moustache, bandanas, and towering physique that he paired with an over-the-top persona that endeared him to fans and captured the spectacle of wrestling entertainment. He referred to his bulging arms as "24-inch pythons" and often waved a US flag in the ring.

Hogan was twice inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame and

was never shy about his icon status, calling himself as the "Babe Ruth" of wrestling in a reference to the US baseball phenom who became synonymous with the sport.

Hogan's flair and bravado helped elevate US wrestling entertainment into a global phenomenon during the 1980s. He later became more involved in US politics, offering a full-throated endorsement of Donald Trump in the 2024 election.

"Let Trumpamania run wild, brother!" he said during a speech at the 2024 Republican National Convention as he ripped off his shirt. "Let Trumpamania rule again!"

"We lost a great friend today, the 'Hulkster,'" Trump said in a social media post on Thursday. "Hulk Hogan was MAGA all the way — Strong, tough, smart, but with the biggest heart. He gave an absolutely electric speech at the Republican National Convention, that was one of the highlights of the entire week."

Hogan also attracted controversy when a recording emerged of him using an anti-Black racial slur, for which he was suspended by WWE in 2015. He was later reinstated in 2018.

# Major media say Gaza staff face starvation as US envoy prepares to host ceasefire talks

AP

Four leading news organizations said Thursday their journalists in Gaza are facing the threat of starvation as the Israeli assault on Gaza grinds on, while top US envoy Steve Witkoff was to meet with key negotiators from the Middle East for talks on the latest ceasefire proposal and the release of hostages.

"We are desperately concerned for our journalists in Gaza, who are increasingly unable to feed themselves and their families," said a joint statement by The Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Reuters and the BBC. "For many months, these independent journalists have been the world's eyes and ears on the ground in Gaza. They are now facing the same dire circumstances as those they are covering."

The statement called on Israel to allow journalists in and out of Gaza and allow adequate food supplies into the territory. The statement came a day



after more than 100 charity and human rights groups said that Israel's blockade and ongoing military offensive are pushing Palestinians in the Gaza Strip toward starvation.

Also Thursday, Hamas confirmed it had sent its latest ceasefire proposal to Israel, with an Israeli official calling it "workable," although no details were provided. The official spoke on condition of

# Lionel Messi, Jordi Alba avoid sanctions over MLS All-Star snub

AP

Inter Miami's Lionel Messi and Jordi Alba have not been sanctioned for skipping Wednesday's MLS All-Star Game in Austin, Texas, their coach confirms.

Both players were voted into the showcase by fans and the media, but neither featured in the MLS squad's 3-1 win against Mexico's Liga MX All-Stars.

League rules stipulate that players who choose to opt out of the All-Star Game without an approved medical reason can face a one-match suspension.

Inter Miami coach Javier Mascherano pointed out on Friday that his team had "played the most games so far this semester by far" and Messi "showed normal fatigue from the number of games and minutes he's been playing", according to ESPN.

"Look, players always have discomfort, especially when they play every three days. But luckily, [Messi] is returning today," Mascherano said on Friday. "Let's hope he can train alongside the group so we can count on both of them for tomorrow's game. We haven't received any [sanction]."

Inter Miami host FC Cincinnati on Saturday night at Chase Stadium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Mascherano said Messi, 38, and Alba, 36, will be available for the match depending on their fitness levels.

Messi shares the MLS top scorer honours with 18 goals and has 10 assists in 17 league matches this season. The Argentinian forward also made six starts in the CONCACAF Champions Cup and four in the FIFA Club World Cup.

Alba has one goal and eight assists in 18 MLS matches. The Spanish defender made seven starts in the Champions Cup and one in the Club World Cup.



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