

Kulgam Operation Enters 6th Day

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The anti-terrorist operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district entered the sixth day on Wednesday as security forces continued to battle the ultras hiding in the deep forest area.

A senior police official said the security forces were using all means, including drones and helicopters, to track down the terrorists in the difficult terrain in the forest area.

"The operation has entered its sixth day and is going on," the official said, adding intermittent exchange of firing is going on.

Two terrorists have been killed while at least two security forces personnel were injured in the gunfight which began on Friday after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in a forest area at Akhal in the south Kashmir district, following specific intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists there.

After an initial exchange of fire between the two sides on Friday evening, the operation was halted for the night, but the cordon was strengthened, and additional reinforcements were rushed to the area, officials said.

Firing resumed on Saturday morning, during which the two terrorists | [More on P10](#)

‘Unfair, Unjustified, Unreasonable’

India Slams Trump’s 25% Additional Tariff

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: India on Wednesday described US President Donald Trump's decision to impose an additional 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) asserted that New Delhi will take "all actions necessary to protect its national interests."

Trump signed an executive order imposing the additional tariff less than 14 hours before his initial tariffs were to come into effect.

After the order, the total tariff on Indian goods, barring a small exemption list, will be 50 per cent.

While the initial duty becomes effective on August 7, the additional levy will come



6 IT IS EXTREMELY SHOCKING. It will impact India's 55 per cent of exports to US."

Delhi "very substantially" over the next 24 hours because it is buying Russian oil.

Which Sectors May Take A Hit

The 50 per cent total tariff imposed on India is the highest in Asia and would mean much higher cost for Indian exports to the US including textiles, auto | [More on P10](#)

India and Russia on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to boost bilateral defence cooperation during a meeting between Indian Ambassador Vinay Kumar and Russia's Deputy Defence Minister Colonel-General Alexander Fomin. According to a statement by the Russian Ministry of Defence, the Indian envoy called on Col-Gen Fomin, who is in charge of international defence cooperation, and the | [More on P10](#)

PM Modi Set to Visit China Amid US Tariff Heat

Special Correspondent

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit China later this month for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, marking his first trip to the country in over seven years – and the first since the 2020 Ladakh border standoff. A government source confirmed the visit, signalling a diplomatic thaw with Beijing at a time when India's relationship with Washington faces fresh turbulence.

Modi's visit to the Chinese city of Tianjin for the SCO summit, beginning August 31, comes amid escalating pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has

imposed a steep 50% tariff on Indian goods over India's continued purchase of Russian oil. Trump recently described BRICS nations, including India, as "aligning with anti-American policies" and hinted at an additional 10% tariff on imports from the bloc.

Modi last traveled to China in June 2018. Since then, ties between the two Asian giants soured significantly, especially after deadly clashes in the Galwan Valley in 2020. However, a brief meeting between Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping during a BRICS summit in Russia last October helped revive communication.

Diplomatic engagements between the two nations | [More on P10](#)

J&K Drafts Building Rules for Rural Panchayats

Agencies

Srinagar: In a significant move, the J&K government has unveiled a draft of "The Jammu & Kashmir Unified Building Bye-Laws Rural, 2025" to regulate construction activities in areas falling under Panchayats in the Union Territory.

According to the draft, the bye-laws will be applicable to Halqa Panchayat areas of the Union Territory. They will not extend to areas under municipal corporations, councils, committees, tourism development authorities, or any other statutory bodies empowered to grant building permissions under existing laws.

The draft of the building bye-laws has been put in public domain by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

The bye-laws categorise constructions into residential individual houses; commercial buildings, including shops, stores, markets, godowns, and facilities for money transactions, wholesale or retail sales, and storage ; and other buildings, such as group housing, low-rise group housing, studio apartments, integrated townships, industrial buildings or complexes, government buildings, buildings constructed for charitable purposes, religious buildings, schools, private hospitals, nursing homes, and telecom towers. As per these | [More on P10](#)

'Propagating False Narratives & Secessionism'

J&K Govt Forfeits 25 Books Under BNS

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has declared 25 books as forfeited under Section 98 of the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, citing their role in propagating false narratives and secessionism in the Union Territory.

According to a notification (S.O. 203) issued by the Home Department, the government stated that it had come to its notice that certain literature propagates false narrative and secessionism in Jammu and Kashmir. "Available evidence based on investigations and credible intelligence unflinchingly indicate that a significant driver behind youth participation in violence and terrorism has been the systematic dissemination of false narratives and secessionist literature by its persistent internal



circulation, often disguised as historical or political commentary, while playing a critical role in misguiding the youth, glorifying terrorism and inciting violence against Indian State," the order reads.

"Such literature deeply impacts the psyche of youth by promoting a culture of grievance, victimhood, and terrorist heroism. The means by which this literature has contributed to radicalization include distortion of | [More on P10](#)

Decades Of Injustice Against Tribals Ended In 2019: LG

Says Gurez Ranked As Top Travel Destination Of India

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Wednesday said decades of injustice against the tribal population ended in August 2019 when the Centre abrogated Article 370.

He said that various transformative initiatives since then have significantly improved the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.

The Lieutenant Governor virtually inaugurated the National Tribal Festival at Gurez. The two-day festival celebrates the culture and tradition of the Dard-Shina tribal community.

He noted that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the ancient glory and dignity of tribal cultures are being restored.

Addressing the gathering through virtual mode, the Lieutenant Governor lauded the immense contribution of



Tribal community to cultural diversity of the country. He also paid tributes to Bhagwan Birsa Munda.

"I consider the Dard-Shina tribal community to be the most precious treasure of India, which is inspiring the people to preserve their traditions and rituals. Its rich traditions are a guiding light for us. The Dard-Shina community's deep connection to nature has shaped a unique culture and set of values. They impart a powerful lesson to humanity to lead a sustainable lifestyle

in harmony with nature.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the Central Government has always focussed on empowering the tribal community and transforming their lives.

"Gurez was connected to grid power in 2023 for the first time since 1947. This reflects our commitment to Gurez and Dard-Shina community," he said.

On the occasion, Sinha dedicated the Shina Gilgit 88.8 FM Radio Station to the Dard-Shina tribal community. He said the community | [More on P10](#)

‘Not A Concession, But A Course Correction’ CM Urges Parties To Back J&K Statehood Bill

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said he has written to several parties with a sizeable presence in Parliament, seeking their support for the introduction of a bill for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood in the ongoing Monsoon session.

The Centre abrogated Article 370, which accorded a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, on August 5, 2019, and divided it into two union territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

"I have written a letter to all those parties who have a good number of MPs in Parliament and requested them to help on the promise made to Jammu and Kashmir on statehood and raise the issue in Parliament so that a bill is brought in this session itself and Jammu and Kashmir gets its statehood



back," Omar told reporters here. He said the issue was not of an individual or a party, or even a government, "it is about the promise made to the people of J&K".

"The promise was made in public rallies, in the Supreme Court and Parliament. We want the promise to be fulfilled," he added.

On the Supreme Court likely to hear a plea for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood on August 8, Omar said the restoration should come through the court if the government | [More on P10](#)

PM To Flag Off Amritsar-Katra Vande Bharat On Aug 10

Observer News Service

Jammu: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate the Vande Bharat Express between Amritsar and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on August 10, officials from the Jammu Rail Division confirmed on Wednesday.

According to a senior railway official, the high-speed train service will offer a faster and more comfortable travel option for pilgrims and other passengers commuting between Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir.

"Vande Bharat train No. 26406 will run from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra to Amritsar while train No. 26405 will run from Amritsar to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra six days a week except Tuesday," he added.

A statement said that train No. 26406 will depart from Katra at 6:40 am and reach Amritsar at 12:20 pm, with stops at Jammu, Pathankot Cantt, Jalandhar City, Vyas etc.

The same train numbered 26405 will depart from Amritsar at 4:25 pm and reach Katra at 10 pm.

"The new service is expected to significantly benefit pilgrims heading to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine by reducing travel time | [More on P10](#)

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CM Meets Public At Raabita Outreach Office

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A number of delegations and public representatives called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at Raabita office here Wednesday to discuss a wide range of issues concerning public infrastructure, traders' issues, higher education, and opportunities for technocrats.

The day's engagements began with a meeting of Members of the Legislative Assembly—Farooq Ahmad Shah (Gulmarg), Sajjad Shafi (Uri), Irshad Rasool Kar (Sopore), Shafi Ahmad Wani (Beerwah), and Pawan Gupta (Udhampur West)—who apprised the Chief Minister of various constituency-specific issues requiring immediate attention.

Subsequently, a delegation from the Traders Federation of Shopian raised concerns of the local business community. They sought the government's intervention to resolve logistical challenges and im-

prove market access for Shopian-based enterprises.

A separate delegation from the School of Architecture, Kashmir, met the Chief Minister to highlight the lack of job opportunities for architects in Jammu and Kashmir. They urged the government to create posts and integrate architectural expertise for urban development planning.

A deputation representing transporters and shopkeepers of the Old Batamaloo General Bus Stand also met the Chief Minister. They demanded the revival of commercial activity along with basic civic restoration at the Batmaloo.

The Chief Minister also held a separate meeting with former Minister and senior political leader Sajjad Ahmed Kitchloo, who discussed the developmental scenario in the Chenab Valley.

Scores of individuals also called on the Chief Minister and apprised him of various personal and public concerns.

Daily Gridlocks Irk Mominabad Residents

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Commuters and residents on Wednesday urged the authorities to act over recurring traffic jams at the Mominabad-Bypass in Srinagar, alleging that Sumo drivers routinely occupy nearly half the road, leading to severe congestion and daily inconvenience.

Locals from the area said that unauthorized parking by passenger vehicles, mostly Sumos, has turned the stretch into a bottleneck. "It has become a daily nightmare. Half the road is taken over by these drivers and no one seems to care," said a commuter, who travels through the route daily.

Dr. Ishtiyaq Ahmad, another frequent traveller and local resident, said the issue has persisted for a long time without any concrete action. "The situation is chaotic. Emergency vehicles often struggle to pass. There is an urgent need for the authorities to step in and regulate parking and movement at this critical junction," he said.

Responding to the issue, RTO Kashmir, Qazi Irfan Rasool told KNO that a team will be dispatched to assess the situation on the ground. "A team from our department will visit the area. The grievance will be addressed after verifying the matter," the official said.

Two Arrested For Cheating: CBK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Economic Offences Wing of Crime Branch Kashmir has arrested two individuals for allegedly cheating a complainant on the pretext of investment in various deposit schemes.

The duo has been identified as Majid Nazir Najar S/o Nazir Ahmad Najar R/o Batamaloo Near Mehboob Public School Srinagar and Mubarak Ahmad Rather S/o Nissar Ahmad Rather R/o Gulshan Nagar, Gulposh Colony, reads a statement issued to Kashmir Observer adding that they have been arrested in a case under FIR number 11/2025 under Section 420, 467, 468, 471, 120-B IPC of P/S EOW (Crime Branch Kashmir).

"The accused individuals had promised high returns on investment in Adarsh Co-operative Society, SBI Life insurance and HDFC Insurance

companies and provided the complainant with deposit certificates. However, during verification, the certificates were found to be fake and forged. The accused individuals projected themselves as authorized representatives and agents working with various financial institutions and lured complainants to make investments in various deposit schemes," the statement added.

A case was registered under relevant sections of law, and during the course of investigation, evidence confirmed the involvement of the accused. Both individuals were taken into custody and are being questioned further, it reads, adding that Crime Branch Kashmir continues its efforts to investigate economic crimes and bring fraudsters to justice. The general public is advised to stay cautious and verify credentials before making any financial investments.

DC Visits Shrine Of Hazrat Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (R.A)



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Wednesday visited Shrine of Hazrat Sultan-ul-Arfeen, Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (R.A) at Makhdoom Sahib area in Shahr-e-Khaas of Srinagar City to review the preparations for the upcoming Urs observance.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner was accom-

panied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE, City Drainage, City Roads, KP-DCI, Tehsildar Khanyar, Chief Sanitation Officer, medical Superintendent Gousia Hospital, Senior Officers of Police & Traffic departments, members of Makhdoom Sahib Shrine Management and other concerned.

FROM ZIYARAT TO DEVOTION

Rare Quran Copy Finds New Home At Chinar Book Festival



Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: The Chinar Book Festival at SKICC had many literary gems on display, but none as spiritually magnetic as the rare copy of the Holy Quran believed to be a reproduction of the original manuscript handwritten by Imam Ali (A.S) in the ancient Khat-e-Kufi script. Displayed reverently at the stall set up by the prestigious Rampur Raza Library, this sacred text wasn't just a book — it was a relic of love, history, and divine memory.

For most of the visitors, it wasn't merely an exhibit. People flocked to the stall not out of curiosity, but with reverence in their eyes — drawn to what felt like a spiritual encounter. "We didn't bring it to sell," said Shahamat Ali Khan, a representative of the 250-year-old Rampur Raza Library. "It was brought purely for ziyarat — so that people could see it, feel connected, and understand its historical and spiritual value."

The library, located in Uttar Pradesh, is a guardian of rich Islamic heritage, boasting a collection of over 17,000 manuscripts and nearly 70,000 printed books. Among its greatest treasures is the original

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manuscript of the Quran, believed to have been handwritten by Imam Ali (A.S) himself. That priceless original — still preserved in Rampur — was written in Khat-e-Kufi, a script devoid of zaer and zabar, using ink reportedly made by burning date seeds.

The copy brought to the festival was a reproduction of that sacred manuscript. "It carries the seal of authenticity," Shahamat explained, "but it is a copy — not the original. Even then, it is something we deeply respect."

Despite this, interest in acquiring the copy was high. "Many people approached us during the festival, asking if they could buy it," Shahamat said. "Each time, I told them firmly: 'It's not for sale.'"

But then came one man — quiet, humble, and deeply moved. "He had seen our video on social media," Shahamat shared. "He came all the way to the festival after watching that video — drawn not by curiosity, but by love for Imam Ali (A.S)."

Unlike others, the man did not argue or insist. He simply stood before the copy in silence, his eyes reflecting something more than admiration — perhaps longing. "Initially, I gave him the same answer I gave others — that it's not for sale. But there was something in his silence, something in his sincerity, that lingered with us," Shahamat said.

Eventually, the copy was handed over to him. "It wasn't sold in the usual sense. He offered a hadiya of Rs 15,000. He asked for a discount, we said no as it was not as a commercial exchange, but as a gesture of devotion," Shahamat emphasized.

As the copy of the Quran departed, visitors returned in disappointment, looking for the sacred manuscript. Many had hoped to catch one last glimpse, to photograph it, or to feel its presence again. "We told them it had found a new home — not sold, but passed on through love," Shahamat said.

‘Thirty Songs From & Kashmir’ Steals Spotlight

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A captivating panel discussion was conducted by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) on the century-old musical-literary classic "Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir" enthralled a discerning audience at the ongoing second season of the Chinar Book Festival, currently underway in Srinagar.

Originally published in London in 1913 by Luzac and Novello & Co, the seminal volume was recorded by Alice Coomaraswamy, popularly known as Ratan Devi, with introduction and translations by the pioneering art historian Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and a foreword by none other than Rabindranath Tagore.

The revised edition, published in 1994 by the IGNCA in collaboration with Sterling Publishers, was edited by the eminent musicologist Prem-lata Sharma and carries a fresh foreword by Kapila Vatsyayan.

The session featured a distinguished panel comprising renowned

scholars, writers, researchers, and intellectuals Prof. Farooq Fayaz and Dr. Satish Vimal, with journalist and moderator Bilal Bashir Bhat guiding the conversation.

Opening the session, Bilal Bashir Bhat offered a succinct yet illuminating overview of the book's genesis and bibliographic significance. This was followed by an in-depth analysis by Dr. Satish Vimal, who articulated the literary and musical depth of the thirty folk compositions.


He emphasized that the songs, originally composed in Punjabi, Kashmiri, Dogri, and Persian, resonate with universal themes of love, longing, nature, separation, and celebration, deeply rooted in the syncretic cultural fabric of Kashmir.

Dr. Satish Vimal further drew attention to the remarkable musical notations systematically embedded in the original text, underscoring their technical precision and global applicability. "It is both fascinating and unfortunate," he remarked, "that while the book reflects an extraordinary understanding of folk

musical frameworks, we have failed to preserve and transmit this legacy with the seriousness it deserves."

Prof. Farooq Fayaz, known for his erudite scholarship in the history of Kashmir and Central Asia, spoke eloquently about the book's historical and linguistic dimensions. "The linguistic diversity alone is staggering," he noted. "Dogri, Punjabi, Kashmiri, and Persian coalesce to form a chorus of civilizational memory. These songs are not merely lyrical artefacts, they are echoes of a lived past, carriers of collective emotion, and windows into the ethos of a by-gone era."


Both panelists highlighted the secular and inclusive spirit of the compilation, praising its rare attempt to encapsulate creativity across linguistic and cultural spectra. "The collection transcends religious and regional boundaries," said Satish Vimal, "and brings together multiple layers of creativity, from peasant folk tunes to sophisticated poetic renderings, making it a unique ethnographic document." (KNO)



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HIGHWAY STATUS

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





HIJRI

CALENDAR

12 Safar

1447

PRAYERS

FAJR	4:12
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	5:28
Magrib	7:30
ISHA	9:01

This Day In History

- 626 - Battle at Constantinople: Slavic/Persians/Avarenvloot defeated
- 936 - Otto I the Great becomes King of Germany
- 1420- Construction begins on the dome of Florence Cathedral, designed by Renaissance architect Filippo Brunelleschi
- 1479- Battle of Guinegate: Emperor Maximilian I vs King Louis XI
- 1575- Spanish troops conquer Oudewater, almost all inhabitants died
- 1606- Possible first performance of Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth, performed in the Great Hall at Hampton Court Palace for King James I
- 1620- Battle at Ponto-the-Ce, Poitou: French king Louis XIII defeats his mother Marie de Medici
- 1714- The Battle of Gangut: the first important victory of the Russian Navy during the Great Northern War against Sweden
- 1782- Commander of the Continental Army, George Washington, creates two Honorary Badges of Distinction and a Badge of Military Merit (now the Purple Heart). First time military awards are presented to common soldiers.
- 1789- US Congress creates the Department of War and the United States Lighthouse Establishment
- 1802- Napoleon orders re-instatement of slavery on St Domingue (Haiti)
- 1819- Battle of Boyacá; Bolívar defeats Spanish in Colombia
- 1864- Battle of Moorefield, West Virginia
- 1882- Hatfields of south West Virginia and McCoys of east Kentucky feud, 100 wounded or die
- 1884- Germany annexes Angra Pequena/ German South West-Africa (modern Namibia)
- 1885- Five German warships anchor off Zanzibar
- 1904- Train derails on bridge in Eden, Colorado, during a flash flood, kills 96
- 1908- The first train to travel the length of New Zealand's North Island 'main trunk line', leaves Wellington
- 1912- Progressive (Bull Moose) Party nominates Theodore Roosevelt for US President
- 1914 - Russia invades East Prussia
- 1925 - League of Nation advises against Turk/Iraqi division of Moselgebied
- 1927 - Peace Bridge between US and Canada dedicated
- 1933 - The Iraqi Government slaughters over 3,000 Assyrians in the village of Sumail. The day becomes known as Assyrian Martyrs Day.
- 1944 - US 3rd Army reaches suburbs of Brest, Brittany
- 1944 - IBM dedicates the first program-controlled calculator, the Automatic Sequence Controlled Calculator (known best as the Harvard Mark I)
- 1956 - British government sends 3 aircraft carriers to Egypt
- 1956 - Dynamite transport explodes in Colombia; about 1200 die
- 1956 - 51-year-old Satchel Paige (Miami Marlins) wins a game before the largest crowd in minor league history, 57,000 at Miami's Orange Bowl; International League: Marlins 6-2 v Columbus Jets
- 1959 - Explorer 6 transmits 1st TV photo of Earth from space
- 1961 - Cosmonaut Gherman Titov circles Earth for a full day in Vostok 2
- 1961 - Soviet premier Khrushchev predicts USSR economy will surpass US
- 1962 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalitinsk USSR

Experts Warn of Guillain-Barré Outbreak in Gaza

Trans Asia News

Gaza City: The Gaza Health Ministry's director-general has warned about a potential widespread outbreak of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) in the Gaza Strip, stressing that treatment for this disease is unavailable in the besieged territory.

Munir al-Bursh made the warning in a statement on Monday, after the health ministry alerted about a significant increase in cases of acute flaccid paralysis among children, amid deteriorating health conditions and severe shortage of essential medicines caused by the Israeli blockade.

Bursh went on to say that contaminated water is

tion at aid centers, and preventable diseases.

He also pointed out the catastrophic living conditions in Gaza, emphasizing that residents are densely packed into just 18% of the total area, resulting in 40,000 people living per square kilometer, which accelerates the spread of diseases and epidemics.

Of particular concern are the children, with Bursh underscoring that over 18,000 children have tragically lost their lives since the start of the war.

The deepening health crisis is further illustrated by the prevalence of infectious diseases, respiratory illnesses, and 1,116 recorded cases of meningitis in 2025.

Bursh further warned



identified as the main cause of GBS, noting that the viral illness begins with a sudden loss of muscle movement, usually starting in the legs and then spreading upwards, with children being particularly affected.

Describing the situation as a "mass death," Bursh highlighted the tragic circumstances in Gaza, where civilians are perishing from direct bombardment, starva-

about the potential for an even more disastrous situation if the war and severe malnutrition persist, especially as the occupying regime continues to block all forms of infant formula.

Vulnerable groups, especially children and individuals with chronic illnesses, are bearing the brunt of hunger and disease due to the obstruction of humanitarian supplies, he said.

28 Kerala Tourists Missing After Flash Flood Horror In Uttarakhand

Press Trust of India

Kochi: A 28-member group of tourists, who are natives of Kerala, has gone missing after a cloudburst triggered massive mudslides in Uttarakhand, family members said on Wednesday.

Of the 28 individuals, 20 are reportedly from Kerala settled in Maharashtra, while the remaining eight are from various districts in Kerala, a relative of one of the couples in the group told the media.

She said the couple's son last spoke to them a day ago.

"They said they were leaving from Uttarkashi to Gangotri at around 8.30 am that day. The landslides occurred along that route. We have been unable to contact them since they left," she said.

She added that the Haridwar-based travel agency, which arranged the 10-day Uttarakhand tour, was also unable to provide any update on

At least four people have been confirmed dead in the disaster that struck Dharali, an ecologically fragile region in Uttarakhand, following the cloudburst on Tuesday afternoon.

the group's whereabouts.

"Their phones may have run out of battery by now. There is no mobile network in that region currently," she said.

At least four people have been confirmed dead in the disaster that struck Dharali, an ecologically fragile region in Uttarakhand, following the cloudburst on Tuesday afternoon.

Officials said nearly half of Dharali was buried under a massive mudslide of slush, debris, and water. The village is a key stop on the route to Gangotri, the origin of the Ganga, and hosts several hotels and homestays.



Trump Visa Curbs Open Doors for Rivals in Student Race

Associated Press

London: In China, wait times for US visa interviews are so long that some students have given up. Universities in Hong Kong are fielding transfer inquiries from foreign students in the US, and international applications for British undergraduate programs have surged.

President Donald Trump's administration has been pressuring US colleges to reduce their dependence on international enrolment while adding new layers of scrutiny for foreign students as part of its crackdown on immigration.

The US government has sought to deport foreign students for participating in pro-Palestinian activism. In the spring, it abruptly revoked the legal status of thousands of international students, including some whose only brush with law enforcement was a traffic ticket. After reversing course, the government paused new appointments for student visas while rolling out a process for screening applicants' social media accounts.

The US remains the first choice for many international students, but institutions elsewhere are recognising opportunity in the upheaval, and applicants are considering destinations they might have otherwise overlooked. The impact on US universities — and the nation's economy — may be significant.

New international enrolment in the US could drop by 30% to 40% this fall, according to an analysis of visa and enrolment data by NAFSA, an agency that promotes international education.

That would deprive the US economy of \$7 billion in spending, according to the analysis. Many international students pay full price, so their absence would also hurt college budgets.

Britain stands to gain as the US takes 'a massive hit'

As the second most popular destination for international students, Britain is positioned to benefit. The country's new Labour government has vowed to cut migration, and officials have imposed time limits on post-study visas allowing graduates to stay and work. But admissions consultants say the United Kingdom is still seen as the most welcoming of the traditional "big four" English-speaking destinations in higher education — the US, UK, Canada and Australia.

After declining last year, the number of international applications for undergraduate study in the UK this fall grew by 2.2%, official figures show. A record number of applications came from China, up 10% compared with the previous year. Applications from the US also reached nearly 8,000 students — an increase of 14% and a 20-year high.

Acceptances of interna-

tional students for graduate programmes in the UK grew an estimated 10% from last year, driven by demand for business and management courses in particular, according to data from UniQuest, which works with many British universities on admissions.

Data showing the extent of any impact will not be available until fall, said Mike Henniger, CEO of Illume Student Advisory Services, a consultancy that works with colleges in the US, Canada and Europe. "But the American brand has taken a massive hit, and the UK is the one that is benefiting," he said.

Upheaval could be a boon for countries with satellite campuses

Countries including the United Arab Emirates have invested heavily in attracting international students by partnering with universities elsewhere to host branch campuses. These arrangements could appeal to students who fear being denied access to the US.

Dubai, which has designs on becoming a global education hub, hosts dozens of international institutions' satellite campuses. It saw international student numbers grow by a third in 2024-2025.

Lisa Johnson, principal of Dubai's private American Academy for Girls, said her mostly Emirati student body is increasingly looking away from the US for college.

1.2 Million Displaced, 80% Water Lost: The Sinking Of Pakistan's Indus Delta

Agence France-Presse

Islamabad: Salt crusts crackle underfoot as Habibullah Khattai walks to his mother's grave to say a final goodbye before he abandons his parched island village on Pakistan's Indus delta.

Seawater intrusion into the delta, where the Indus River meets the Arabian Sea in the south of the country, has triggered the collapse of farming and fishing communities.

"The saline water has surrounded us from all four sides," Khattai told AFP from Abdullah Mirbahar village in the town of Kharo Chan, around 15 kilometres (9 miles) from where the river empties into the sea.

As fish stocks fell, the 54-year-old turned to tailoring

until that too became impossible with only four of the 150 households remaining.

"In the evening, an eerie silence takes over the area," he said, as stray dogs wandered through the deserted wooden and bamboo houses.

Kharo Chan once comprised around 40 villages, but most have disappeared under rising seawater.

The town's population fell from 26,000 in 1981 to 11,000 in 2023, according to census data.

Khattai is preparing to move his family to nearby Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, and one swelling with economic migrants, including from the Indus delta.

The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, which advocates for fishing communities, estimates that tens of thousands of people have been displaced from the delta's coastal districts.

However, more than 1.2 million people have been displaced from the overall Indus delta region in the last two decades, according to a study published in March by the Jinnah Institute, a think tank led by a former climate change minister.

The downstream flow of water into the delta has decreased by 80 percent since the 1950s as a result of irrigation canals, hydropower dams and the impacts of climate change on glacial and snow melt, according to a 2018 study by the US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water.

That has led to devastating seawater intrusion.

The salinity of the water has risen by around 70 percent since 1990, making it impossible to grow crops and severely affecting the shrimp and crab populations.

China Downplays Trump-Munir Ties, Says Pakistan Won't Ditch Beijing

Press TRUST Of India

Beijing: As US President Donald Trump has ramped up his country's ties with Pakistan, China's all-weather ally, Chinese strategic experts say Islamabad understands the limits given his strategy to contain Beijing's global influence. Last month, Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, made his first official visit to China since assuming office as field marshal. His visit came shortly after a rare five-day trip to Washington, where he attended a private luncheon with Trump. That meeting culminated in Trump's announcement of enhanced US-Pakistan cooperation in various fields, including an oil deal.

According to a recent "Economist" article, the outcome of General Munir's US visit marks a shift in American foreign policy, with implications not only for India but also China and the Middle East.

During his time in Beijing, General Munir met with Vice President Han Zheng, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and senior members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), though not with President Xi Jinping. This contrasts with his predecessor, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who met Xi during his 2018 trip to China.

While official readouts

from Munir's meetings emphasised diplomatic niceties and reiterated strong bilateral ties, Beijing's perception of the Trump-Munir rapport remains unclear — especially given Trump's overt strategy to curb China's rise as a global power.

Beijing has its concerns considering the decades-long investment fostering an all-weather relationship with Pakistan.

Two Chinese senior strategic experts PTI spoke to outlined for the first time China's view on the emerging new Washington-Islamabad strategic paradigm in the broader context of Trump's geopolitical strategy.

"Pakistan will not develop its relations with the US at the cost of its relation with China," Hu Shisheng, Director of the Institute for South Asian Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, said.

"Pakistan will not be that easily hooked by Trump," Hu, regarded as an expert on South Asian politics, said.

Jesse Wang, a research fellow at Huaxia South Asia Economic and Cultural Exchange Centre of China, said "on the surface, Trump's candy to Pakistan looks like a disturbance to China, but actually, cannot affect the structural stability of the Sino-Pak relationship".

Hiroshima Marks 80 Years Since Atomic Bombing



Doves fly over the cenotaph dedicated to the victims of the atomic bombing at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park during a ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of the bombing in Hiroshima, western Japan, Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025. (Photo | AP)

Associated Press

HIROSHIMA: Hiroshima on Wednesday marked the 80th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the western Japanese city, with many ageing survivors expressing frustration about the growing support of global leaders for nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

With the number of survivors rapidly declining and their average age now exceeding 86, the anniversary is considered the last milestone event for many of them. "There will be nobody left to pass on this sad and painful experience in 10 years or 20 years," Minoru Suzuto, a 94-year-old survivor, said after he kneeled down to pray at the cenotaph.

"That's why I want to share (my story) as much as I can."

The bombing of Hiro-

shima on Aug. 6, 1945, destroyed the city and killed 140,000 people. A second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half-century of aggression in Asia.

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui warned against a growing acceptance of military buildups and of using nuclear weapons for national security amid Russia's war in Ukraine and conflicts in the Mideast, with the United States and Russia possessing most of the world's nuclear warheads.

"These developments flagrantly disregard the lessons the international community should have learned from the tragedies of history," he said. "They threaten to topple the peacebuilding frameworks so many have worked so hard to construct."

Rahul Gandhi Granted Bail in Defamation Case

Chaubasa (Jharkhand) : Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was granted bail by an MP-MLA court in Jharkhand's Chaibasa on Wednesday in connection with a case related to alleged defamatory remarks against Union Home Minister Amit Shah at a rally in 2018.

Gandhi appeared before the court around 10.55 am.

"Rahul Gandhi ji appeared before the court as per the direction of the Jharkhand High Court. He had sought bail. Conditional bail has been granted. We will now take the process ahead," Gandhi's counsel Pranav Daripa said.

The lawyer said the case pertained to defamation and was registered in 2018.

"The case was initially registered in Ranchi and was transferred to Chaibasa in 2021. We had filed a petition for exemption from personal appearance before the high court, and we are here as per the high court's direction," he added.



Another high court lawyer, Dheeraj Kumar, said, "Conditional bail was granted to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Chaibasa MP-MLA special court of Supriya Rani Tigga asked Gandhi to cooperate in the trial."

The lawyers said that the court has asked Gandhi to cooperate in the proceedings.

Gandhi had, on June 2, moved the Jharkhand High Court, challenging the order of the special court here, which had directed him to appear before it on June 26.

The Congress MP's counsel had informed the high court on June 10 that his client would not be

able to appear on the specified day, and instead requested it to grant August 6 for the appearance.

The high court had accepted his request.

A case of defamation was filed against Gandhi by a person named Pratap Kumar for allegedly making defamatory statements against Shah at a rally in Chaibasa in 2018.

Kumar, in his petition filed before the court of the magistrate in Chaibasa, had alleged that Gandhi's statements were defamatory and made purposely to malign the stature of Shah.

Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, arrived in Jharkhand on Tuesday to attend the funeral of veteran tribal leader and former chief minister Shibu Soren at his ancestral village Nemra in adjoining Ramgarh district.

According to officials, Gandhi took a helicopter from Ranchi to reach Chaibasa.

A helipad was set up at Tata College Ground for the purpose, they added.

Press Trust Of India

Authorities Abandon Recovery Of German Olympian Killed In Pakistan

Authorities have abandoned efforts to recover the body of German Olympic biathlete Laura Dahlmeier, who died in a mountaineering accident in Pakistan this week.

Dahlmeier was confirmed dead on Wednesday, having been hit by falling rocks while climbing at an altitude of 5,700 metres (18,700 feet) on Laila Peak in the Karakoram range.

Attempts to recover her body were abandoned due to "dangerous" conditions at the site, Dahlmeier's management agency said Thursday.

Stay up to date with the latest news. Follow KT on WhatsApp Channels.

In consultation with the Alpine Club of Pakistan, the agency said her relatives would "continue to monitor the situation... and are keeping the option of arranging a rescue at a later date".

Several of Dahlmeier's colleagues confirmed the two-time Olympic gold medalist had said she did not want her body recovered if it put any would-be rescuers at risk.



Laura Dahlmeier. Photo: Reuters file

German mountaineer Thomas Huber was part of a team who had attempted a rescue but told reporters on Thursday, "We have decided she should stay, because that was her wish."

Another member of the rescue team, American Jackson Marvell told AFP it would be "disrespectful" to recover her body contrary to her wishes.

Associated Press

National Tribal Festival Turns Gurez Vibrant

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The serene Gurez Valley remained abuzz with excitement during the two-day National Tribal Festival, celebrating the rich culture and traditions of the Dard-Shina tribal community, which locals saw as a key step toward promoting tourism and preserving cultural heritage.

While locals celebrated the event as a promising beginning, they called for continued efforts to improve the Valley's infrastructure and other facilities to fully unlock its tourism potential.

"The festival is a great initiative. It brings the attention of the country to our culture and the beauty of Gurez," Shahnawaz Ahmad, a resident of the valley told KNO.

"However, there are still many things that need to be done. The roads are in bad shape, and we need more medical facilities. It's a start, but we need sustained efforts."

One of the unique aspects of this year's event was the approach taken to highlight the valley's cultural warmth. Guests, including officials and participants from other states, were invited to stay with local families instead of hotels.

The aim was to offer visitors an authentic experience of Gurez's hospitality. "Staying with a local family is a different experience altogether. You get to understand their way of life, their food, and the true

essence of the region," shared Rohit Verma, a participant from South India, who was hosted by a local family.

Guests were treated to organic Gurez delicacies, including fresh herbs, vegetables

"The food here is amazing! I've never tasted anything like this before. It's an honor to be part of this festival," said Parul Soni, another guest.

Gurez's strategic location, bordering Pakistan, and its pristine natural beauty make it an untapped gem for tourism. "We are hopeful that this festival will open the eyes of the world to our unique culture and the potential for tourism in the region," said Bilal Khan, a local guide. "But we need better roads, connectivity, and accommodations to accommodate the influx of tourists."

The event also served as an opportunity for the Dard-Shina tribe to showcase their vibrant traditions, including folk dances, traditional music, and handicrafts. "Our culture is our pride, and we want to share it with the world. But we need the government to support us in building infrastructure," said Amina Begum, a local artisan.

While the festival was a significant step forward, the valley's residents believe it is just the beginning. They hope that the government will follow through with long-term plans to improve Gurez's tourism facilities, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and thriving destination for years to come.

J&K Bank Provides Tranche Of Barricades To Jammu Traffic Police



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As part of a continuing series of contributions to aid traffic management and ensure public safety across the UT, J&K Bank yesterday handed over another tranche comprising seventy high-quality traffic barricades to the Jammu Traffic Police for streamlining vehicular movement and enhancing road safety in the region.

The barricades were formally handed over by the Bank's General Manager and Divisional Head (Jammu) Ashok Gupta along with Zonal Head (Jammu) Anita Nehru to SSP Traffic (Jammu) Farooq Qesar Malik in the presence of senior officers from both the Bank and the Traffic Police Department.

Speaking on the occasion,

Divisional Head (Jammu) Ashok Gupta said, "These barricades are part of our ongoing commitment towards public safety by facilitating better traffic management in the city, and we are pleased to partner with Jammu Traffic Police in their efforts to ensure safety on roads. As an institution deeply rooted in the region, J&K Bank remains committed to supporting civic bodies in initiatives that contribute to public welfare."

Expressing gratitude on behalf of the department, SSP Farooq Qesar Malik said, "We appreciate J&K Bank's generous contribution. These barricades will be of great help in regulating traffic flow, especially during peak hours and in sensitive zones. The Bank's proactive approach towards public safety is commendable."

DM Shopian Chairs Review Meeting On Prosecution Of Criminal Cases



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: A comprehensive review meeting was held on Wednesday convened under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Shopian Shishir Gupta IAS to assess the status of criminal cases pending adjudication before various Criminal Courts of the District.

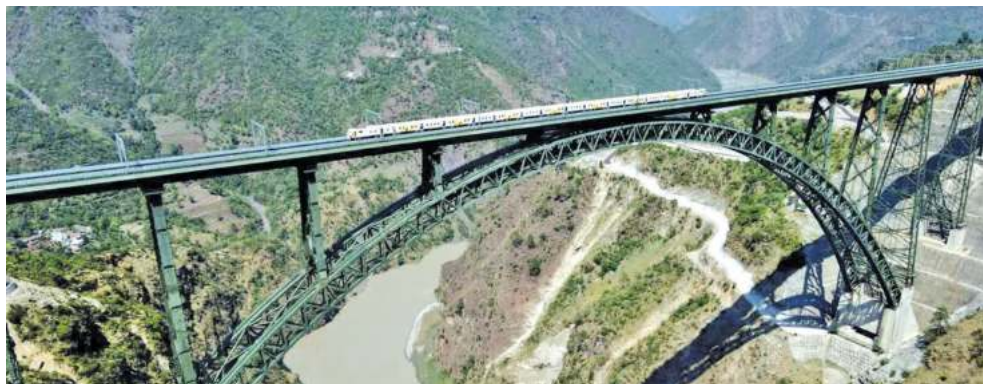
The DM was apprised by the Deputy Director Prosecution Shopian, regarding the pending criminal cases particularly NDPS cases in the District and highlighted several issues towards the conduct of effective prosecution of criminal cases.

The Deputy Director Prosecution highlighted some key issues such as presentation of charge sheets before the Court beyond the period of limitation, Defective investigation, non production of prosecution witnesses etc. The meeting focused on en-

surging speedy disposal of criminal cases and delivering timely justice to the victims of crime. DM issued a series of directions to the Public Prosecutors, emphasizing the need for effective prosecution, diligent follow-up, and coordination with investigating agencies to strengthen the justice delivery system. DM also directed for ensuring presence of prosecution witnesses and initiation of appropriate legal proceedings for absent official witnesses. Effective management of Malkhana, ensuring that case property is presented for identification of witnesses and vetting of charge sheets by prosecution before its presentation in courts was emphasized.

Executive Magistrate were directed to exercise powers provided under several provisions of Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 for prevention of crimes.

USBRL Project Brings Connectivity, Eco-Safeguards To J&K: GoI



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Government has outlined environmental safeguards, socio-economic contributions, and land acquisition details of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, including the Chenab and Anji Khad bridges, in a reply to the Lok Sabha.

The 272 km USBRL, now fully commissioned, spans Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban, Srinagar, Anantnag, Pulwama, Budgam, and Baramulla districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

Built through challenging Himalayan terrain, the project includes the world's highest railway bridge over the Chenab river in Reasi — 1,315 metres long, a 467-metre arch span, and 359 metres above

the riverbed — and India's first cable-stayed railway bridge over Anji Khad, with its deck 331 metres above the riverbed.

According to the Railways Ministry, the project generated over 5 crore man-days of employment and created more than 215 km of approach roads, improving regional connectivity. Safety features include mechanical ventilation, firefighting systems, and 66 km of escape tunnels.

The ministry, as reported by KNO, said environmental impact assessments, conducted by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), guided extensive slope stabilisation, erosion control, and muck management measures.

Slope stability was designed with inputs from the Indian

Institute of Science, IIT Delhi, and international experts. Controlled blasting, sedimentation tanks, alternative water supply arrangements, and air quality sensors were also part of the mitigation plan.

The fully electrified rail line is expected to cut carbon emissions and boost tourism in the Kashmir Valley by providing all-weather connectivity.

On land acquisition, the government stated that 1,559.48 hectares of private land and 276.71 hectares of government land were acquired, with Rs 816.21 crore paid in compensation.

Displacements were addressed under the Jammu & Kashmir State Land Acquisition Act, 1990, with pending claims handled by the Revenue Department through an established legal mechanism.

Time To Root Out Organized Crime In J&K: DGP

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir, Nalin Prabhat, IPS, visited the Crime Branch Headquarters in Srinagar on Wednesday. He reviewed the unit's work, current investigations, and overall functioning.

The DGP was received by the IGP Crime Branch Headquarters, J&K and senior officers. He held a meeting with officers and was briefed about important ongoing cases, including cybercrime, financial frauds, and other serious matters.

Shri Nalin Prabhat-IPS asked officers to work with honesty and speed. He stressed the use of technology and proper case documentation to make investigations stronger and help in court proceedings. He praised



the efforts of the Crime Branch and said more training and support will be provided, especially in cyber and financial crime areas.

Later, the DGP met with the staff, encouraged them to

keep up their good work, and assured them of full support from Police Headquarters J&K.

This visit is part of the DGP's regular field reviews to improve coordination and performance across police units in J&K.

Centre Says Telecom Services in J&K, Ladakh Meet Quality Standards

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Government of India has informed the Lok Sabha that all telecom service providers operating in the Jammu & Kashmir licence service area, which includes the Union Territory of Ladakh, are complying with the prescribed quality benchmarks for mobile services.

The response came during a parliamentary session in reply to a question raised by Member of Parliament Mohamad Haneefa, who flagged issues of poor mobile and internet con-

nectivity in areas like 144 RCC NP Road and Neyraks village. These regions, according to the Minister of State for Communications and Rural Development Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, have witnessed an increase in population due to labour camps, GREP presence, and heavy traffic movement along the Nimmu-Padarn-Darcha road.

The Minister noted that to meet the growing connectivity needs, several government-backed initiatives are underway. These include projects under the Digital Bharat Nidhi (earlier

known as the Universal Service Obligation Fund), focusing on boosting high-bandwidth and consistent digital access in rural, hilly, tribal, and border areas—including Ladakh.

Highlighting progress under the BharatNet Project, the Minister said all 193 Gram Panchayats in Ladakh have been made service-ready via satellite-based connectivity. In addition, the Amended BharatNet Programme aims to upgrade existing networks and extend broadband services to nearly 3.8 lakh non-gram panchayat villages across the country.



Greenlit For 3 New Highways To Transform J&K Connectivity

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In a major infrastructural boost for Jammu and Kashmir, the central government has approved three major National Highway projects aimed at transforming connectivity and enhancing security and tourism in the region.

The first of these is the ambitious four-lane highway project from Samba to Udhampur, with an estimated cost of Rs 7,418 crore. The Detailed Project Report (DPR) for this stretch is already prepared and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has set a target to complete the construction within the next three years.

Once operational, this highway will drastically reduce the travel time between Pathankot and Udhampur, cutting the current journey, which takes over four hours via existing routes passing through two military areas, to just about two hours.

Spanning 43 km from Samba to Udhampur, this new route will also provide an alternative for tourists heading to Srinagar, allowing them to bypass Jammu entirely. This crucial corridor has been selected under the Bharat Mala project, underscoring its national importance.

The second major project is

the Kathua-Bhaderwah-Doda four-lane highway, with a staggering budget allocation of Rs 28,679 crore. This road will start from Lakhampur—the gateway of Jammu and Kashmir—passing through Kathua, Basohli, Bani, and Bhaderwah, before reaching Doda.

Designed to connect with National Highway-44 in Doda, the route is currently a state highway but will see a massive upgrade under the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans. Additionally, there are plans to connect Bhaderwah to Chamba in Himachal Pradesh through a 130 km double-lane national highway, at an estimated cost of Rs 6,913 crore, further strengthening inter-state connectivity.

Officials revealed that the DPRs for these projects are complete and the necessary budget provisions have been made. The state administration has given its nod to move forward, clearing the way for construction to begin soon. "These projects are expected to bring multiple benefits not only by improving security and boosting tourism but also by significantly easing travel for local residents, who will be able to move between regions in much less time."—(KNO)

UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR, SRINAGAR
(NAAC ACCREDITED GRADE "A+")
RESULT NOTIFICATION
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY




Shohar Bano D/o Syed Amjad bearing University Registration No. 27947-NW-2012 who pursued Integrated Ph.D Programme on Whole Time basis in the discipline of Library & Information Science, Department of Library & Information Science, School of Social Sciences submitted thesis titled "Assessing Emotional Instability and Coping Strategies of Library and Information Science Professionals in Jammu and Kashmir" under the Joint Supervision of Prof. Sumeer Gul, Department of Library & Information Science and Dr. Mohd Muzamil Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Kashmir, Srinagar is declared qualified for the award of Ph.D degree on 17-04-2025.

Sd/-
Dr. Majid Zaman
Controller of Examinations

Sd/-
Assistant Controller of Examinations
Secrecy

BEFORE THE HON'BLE COURT OF PRINCIPAL DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE BARAMULLA.
IN THE CASE OF:- Caveat application captioned below:
1. Mohd Shafi Yatoo,
2. Ghulam Hassan Yatoo,
Both Sons of Late Abdul Raheem Yatoo,
Both Residents of Nehalpora PattanCaveators.
V/s
1. Bilal Ahmad Malik.
2. Nazir Ahmad Malik
3. Mehraj ud din Malik
4. Aijaz Ahmad Malik
5. Zainab
6. shahida
All Sons and daughters of Late Ghulam-ud-din Malik
7. Rafiq Begum widow of Ghulam-ud- Malik
All Resident of Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan. District Baramulla
...Non-caveators
IN THE MATTER OF:- Caveat Application.
May it please your Honour.
The Caveators most humbly submits as under:-
1. That the caveators are the possessors of the landed property situated at Village Nehalpora Tehsil Pattan dist. Baramulla
2. That the non-caveators are unnecessarily interfering with the possession, use and enjoyment of the caveators over the landed property stated above and are adamant to dispossess them out of the same and in this regard, the non-caveators made multiple efforts, but the caveators managed to protect their property against the invasions made by the non-caveators by the timely intervention of the relatives as well as the respectable persons from the locality.
3. That since the non-caveators could not succeed in their efforts to dispossess the caveators out of their property stated above, as such in order to harass the caveators and to force him to yield to his illegal and illogical claim over the property of the caveators, the caveators have an apprehension that the non-caveators may file a suit before this Hon'ble Court on concocted grounds and he may also file an application for grant of interim relief and seek orders in disguise against the Caveators to restrain him from the enjoyment of his property and stall the construction work on spot.
4. That the caveators through the medium of the instant caveat application seeks to submit that should any motion be made by the non-caveators on the subject aforementioned let no orders be passed in the interim application, unless the Caveators are given a chance to present their case against the same.
5. That the caveat is complete in all respects and the requisite document is annexed herewith.
In the premises it is, therefore, prayed that should any motion be made by the non-caveators on the subject aforementioned, let no orders be passed in the interim application unless the Caveators are given a chance to present their case against the same. For which act of kindness the applicants/caveators are duty bound in law shall ever pray.
FKO Caveators through counsel.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR,
NEAR J&K BANK(ZALDAGAR)
Telefax No. 0194-2952696 e.mail Id: xenmidsrinagar@gmail.com

Sub: Extension in bidding time for Short Term e-NIT No. 14 OF 2025-26, Dated: 23-07-2025 for below mentioned works:-
Part-1: Repairs/ Replacement works to be carried out at Lift Irrigation Scheme Zaloosa Chariesharief.
Part-2: Mechanical repair works to MS Rising main at LIS Ahansar of MISD Ganderbal.
Ref: JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No.: -2025_IFC_282194_1, 2025_IFC_282194_2

EXTENSION NOTICE 2
Due to poor response to above mentioned e-NIT for the subject works, the critical dates are extended as under:-

Bid submission/ Document download / sale end Date	11/08/2025 at 1400 hrs
Date and time of Bid opening	12/08/2025 at 1230 hrs

Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original e-NIT.
No. MIDS/Ts/1983-89
Dated: -05-08-2025
DIPK-4893-25
DT: 06/08/2025

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Srinagar

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KO VIEW

In Sickness
And In Debt

A carpenter skipping meals so his wife can take her heart medication. A mother in Kupwara unable to treat her child’s chest infection. A family selling land to pay for an MRI. These are not stray stories. This is the harsh reality of healthcare in Kashmir, a reality where getting sick doesn’t just threaten your health, but your entire economic stability.

Despite the promise of universal health coverage through schemes like Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT, the ground truth is grim. Medicines are growing costlier, private health-care is unaffordable, and government hospitals are buckling under the pressure of too many patients and too few doctors. For a region already reeling under an unemployment crisis, the burden of medical costs is quietly breaking families.

One reason for this is the understaffed healthcare department, forcing people to visit private health institutions for treatment, which burns a hole in their pocket. According to figures, nearly half the sanctioned posts for rural medical officers remain vacant. Specialist doctors are missing from community health centres. So patients travel long distances, wait for weeks, or give up altogether. And even when they seek private care, many are denied insurance coverage on flimsy technicalities or because outpatient costs aren’t covered at all.

Sometimes, the daily medical struggle forces families to skip treatment or ration medicine, worsening health outcomes. Needless to say, poor health leads to lost wages, reduced productivity, and school dropouts.

The response so far has been woefully inadequate. Enrollment in SEHAT may look impressive on paper, but it means little when the insured still pay out of pocket. Auditing hospital refusals, enforcing transparency, and holding healthcare providers accountable is the bare minimum the administration must do.

Then there’s the question of priorities. Why are we still ignoring outpatient care when it forms the bulk of everyday medical needs? Why is the medical workforce in rural areas neglected when that’s where the need is most acute? We must move from a reactive to a proactive model of care, one that safeguards lives.

Kashmir doesn’t just need more hospitals. It needs a just and caring health system, one that sees every patient not as a burden or statistic, but as someone who deserves dignity, care, and a fighting chance. In a place where falling ill means falling behind, healthcare reform is not just a policy demand, it’s a moral imperative.

CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

Guard Your Ground
The valley’s beauty hides
a brutal property battle.

Irshad Mushtaq

Owning a piece of land in Kashmir has always meant more than just property. It’s about roots, memory, and identity. But today, landownership comes with rising risks, especially for those who live outside the valley.

A growing network of brokers, often referred to as the land mafia, is targeting absentee owners through deceit, pressure, and manipulation.

Their tactics are calculated. They seek out lands that appear neglected without boundary wall, and clear fencing. Then they manufacture disturbance near the property, spreading rumours, sending middlemen, or feigning legal trouble. Their aim is to create stress. And once you’re unsettled, they make an offer far below the actual value.

The pressure isn’t always obvious. Sometimes they come as friends or “well-wishers.” Sometimes they send people who threaten, subtly or directly. Once they earn your trust or fear, the deal becomes easier, for them.

There are ways to protect yourself. Make sure your land has proper documents: a registered sale deed, an updated mutation, and relevant municipal permissions. Build a simple boundary wall. It’s not just concrete; it’s a signal that the land is cared for.

Stay alert. Ask someone reliable to visit your property occasionally. Monitor any suspicious activity. If you’re harassed, don’t stay silent. Go to the revenue office, consult a lawyer. File a civil case only after all other steps are taken.

Land is hard-earned. It deserves more than neglect. In Kashmir’s shifting real estate landscape, awareness is your best defense. Don’t let anyone sell you fear in the name of help. Hold your ground, legally, firmly, and with clarity.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial advisor.

Why Uttarakhand Is a Big
Warning for Kashmir

Another flash flood, another Himalayan village washed away. This time it was Dharali in Uttarakhand. Next time, it could be somewhere in Kashmir.



Asra Bhat

“In a place like Kashmir, where every crisis becomes a national headline, a single flood or landslide can do more than physical damage. It can shake the system.

It started like so many stories in the Himalayas do, with a cloudburst.

At 4 a.m., in the sleepy mountain village of Dharali in Uttarakhand, the rain came down hard. Within minutes, a wall of water, stones, and broken dreams tore through the village.

Locals watched helplessly as homes, hotels, and even an Army camp were swallowed by the river. Roads disappeared, so did lives. Four are confirmed dead, while nine soldiers are still missing.

Beyond a weather event, it was a warning, loud and clear.

What happened in Dharali could happen in Kashmir tomorrow. The signs are everywhere. We’re just not looking.

Uttarakhand and Kashmir are siblings in the same fragile Himalayan family: Same mountains, same rivers, same beauty. And now, the same danger.

Over the years, Uttarakhand has become a symbol of how not to build in the hills: roads blasted through unstable rock, tunnels drilled without care, and hotels perched on riverbanks. All in the name of progress and tourism.

Now the land is giving way.

Kashmir is walking the same path, faster than we think. The forests of Sonamarg are shrinking under new construction. Gulmarg, once a silent ski town, is now a year-round tourist hub with barely any space to breathe. Pahalgam, once known for its meadows, is now a maze of hotels and traffic.

Even Srinagar is choking. Wetlands that once soaked up floodwaters are being filled up for buildings and roads.

In 2014, the Jhelum gave us a wake-up call. The flood drowned homes, memories, and livelihoods. We promised to change. For a while, we talked about wetlands and drains. But then came bulldozers, more concrete, more

tunnels. In our rush to welcome more tourists and build more infrastructure, we forgot that the mountains have limits.

And when those limits are crossed, they collapse.

Dharali wasn’t the first Himalayan village to fall. Joshimath is already sinking. Parts of Mandi in Himachal have crumbled. Landslides are now part of the monsoon forecast. And the Himalayas are shifting under our feet.

Kashmir is next, unless we act.

We can’t blame the clouds. Climate change is real, yes. But disasters like Dharali are made worse by what we build, where

ism should be balanced with nature, not against it.

This isn’t anti-development. It’s common sense.

We need to learn from Uttarakhand’s pain before it becomes ours. The same mistakes are repeating. The same cracks are forming. And the same warnings are being ignored.

And the truth is, we may not get a second chance.

When a disaster strikes in the mountains, it’s not just mud and water that come down. It’s everything: roads, electricity, phone lines, even government response.

In a place like Kashmir, where

“Uttarakhand and Kashmir are siblings in the same fragile Himalayan family: Same mountains, same rivers, same beauty. And now, the same danger.

we build, and how we build. The rain was natural. The damage was man-made.

Look at the glaciers. Kolahoi is melting fast. The Jhelum is choked with silt. Snowfall patterns are changing. Rain doesn’t come gently anymore: it crashes down, flooding areas in hours.

Scientists have warned that the Himalayas could lose up to 80% of their glaciers by the end of this century.

Imagine a Kashmir without rivers, snow, and the seasons that shape its life.

So, what should we do?

First, pause. Take a breath. Just because we can build something doesn’t mean we should. Every new road in a hilly area must go through a proper safety check. Every hotel near a river must prove it won’t block water or cause erosion. Wetlands should be protected, not paved over. Tour-

every crisis becomes a national headline, a single flood or landslide can do more than physical damage. It can shake the system.

We still have time, but not much.

Dharali was a village. It is now rubble. Kashmiri villages, towns, and cities are still standing. But for how long?

The mountains are speaking. They have been for years, through floods, landslides, sinking towns, and melting ice.

It’s up to us now, to listen, change, and stop pretending that nature will always forgive what we do.

One day, it won’t.

The author is an environmental scholar based in Srinagar. Views expressed in this article are author’s own and don’t necessarily reflect KO’s editorial policy.

Letter to Editor

Smart City Buses Need Urgent Regulation

Today, I watched a video uploaded by Kashmir Observer showing the reality of overcrowding in Srinagar’s Smart City buses. What stood out to me was the way several male passengers spoke, honestly and passionately, about how chaotic and uncomfortable these buses have become.

Their arguments are valid and grounded in everyday experience. They pointed out that it is not only a matter of inconvenience, but also about public sensitivity and ethics.

When dozens of people are packed into a single bus, bodies inevitably come into close contact. This becomes an unnerving and distressing situation for men, women, students alike.

Beyond logistical issues, they become psychological ones, where discomfort crosses into mental stress and emotional fatigue. Public transport must not turn into such a space.

What these men were saying is not about excluding women from public spaces. They were calling for order, structure, and decency,

something every city needs in its public services.

Unregulated overcrowding creates conditions that are unethical, unsafe, and unhealthy.

The comparison they made to the older public transport system is also worth considering. We’ve seen how the absence of regulation collapsed that mode of transport. Are we now watching history repeat itself?

The Smart City buses certainly offer some comfort during the summer heat, but that does not mean

they are immune to criticism.

Regulation is essential.

Crowd control, respectful staff behaviour, hygiene, and route discipline must all be part of the system.

Public transport should be a space of dignity, not discomfort. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,

Suhail Nazir
Trader, Srinagar

To Visit Kashmir is to Enter a Sacred Relationship

In this letter to every visitor, a son of the soil urges deeper care for Kashmir's soul.

Arun Wakhlu

You might think you've come to Kashmir for the scenery, but the truth is, when you arrive in the mountains we call home, you're stepping into something far deeper.

This place is an invitation that greets visitors in the weight of silence on a shepherd's trail, and in the low chant of a boatman guiding his shikara through the mist.

And if you're paying attention, you'll begin to sense what the brochures won't tell you: this land is here to remind you of who you are.

The chinar trees that flame gold in autumn don't ask for attention. The rivers don't try to impress you. Yet they carry stories far older than your guidebook.

The wind moving through the poplar groves has passed over the graves of saints and kings. It has heard poetry recited in whispers, and witnessed prayers pressed into stone.

You may have arrived with plans and itineraries, but Kashmir has other intentions.

This is a place that humbles you, if you let it. It doesn't need your awe. It asks for your presence. There's a difference.

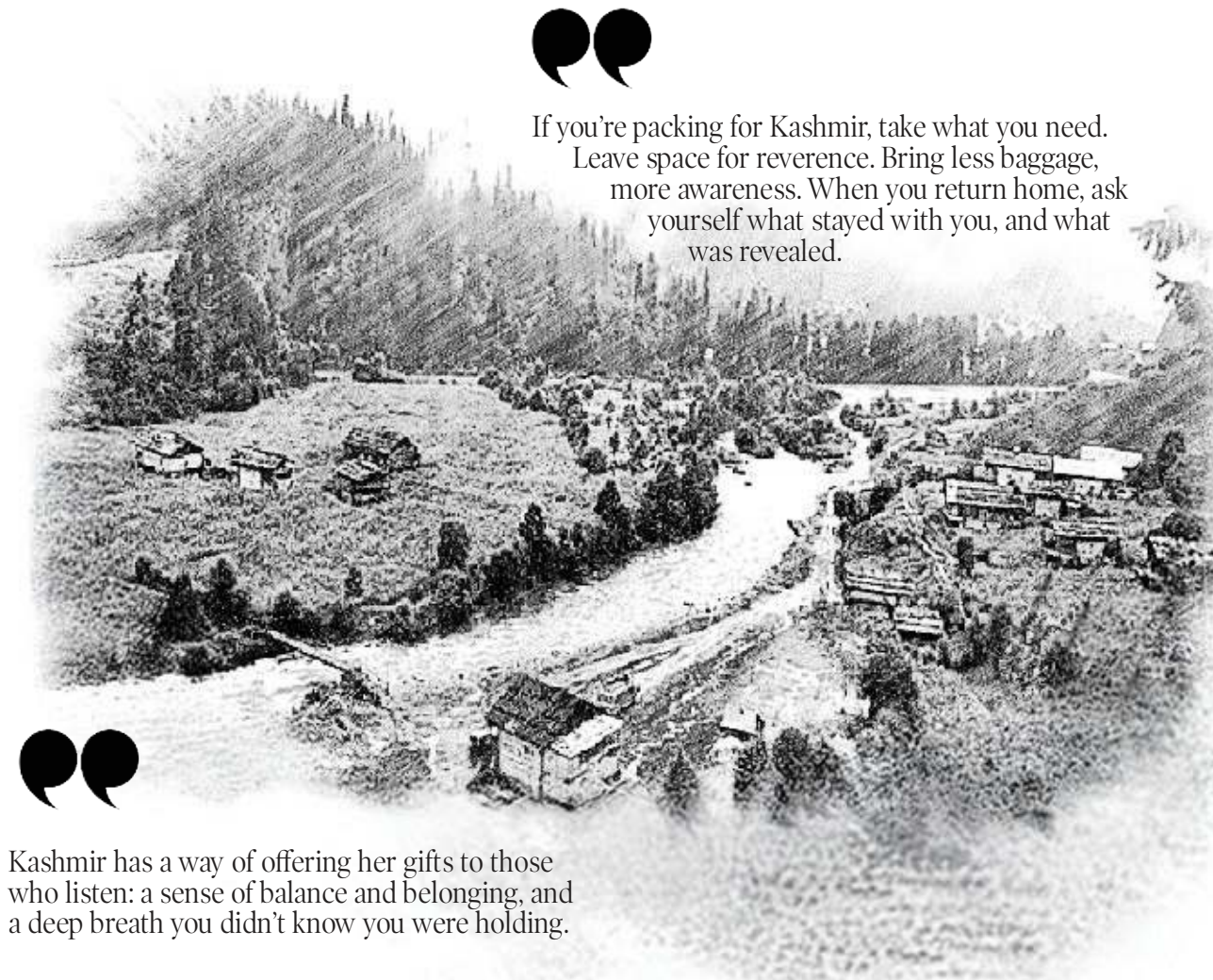
Awe keeps you at a distance, snapping photos from the safety of admiration. Presence asks you to step closer: to feel, listen, and care.

The problem is, we've forgotten how to be present. Tourism, even in places as sensitive and storied as this one, has turned into a type of consumption. We arrive for experiences, photos, and thrills.

But we forget we're entering a sacred living ecosystem. We forget that someone's home is not our playground.

And here in Kashmir, that forgetting has consequences.

You'll see them if you stay long enough. Bottles tossed into rivers that once quenched entire villages. Food wrappers tangled in the reeds where herons used to nest. Names scratched into ancient tree bark, as if the beauty of a place could only be marked by



Kashmir has a way of offering her gifts to those who listen: a sense of balance and belonging, and a deep breath you didn't know you were holding.

claiming it.

Kashmiris rarely complain, and that's part of the tragedy.

Our hospitality is deep, rooted in centuries of receiving strangers with grace. Even when the valley has been through conflict and hardship, the doors have remained open,

the tea warm.

But the kindness shouldn't be mistaken for permission to disregard what is sacred.

Kashmir is sacred.

And that word isn't poetry. It's the truth. Every bend in the river, every stone underfoot carries memories. Every meadow has been

walked upon by mystics who saw nature not as scenery, but as scripture.

When you make noise in a meditative grove, you're interrupting a conversation that has been going on for centuries. When you leave behind trash in the hills, you're severing a bond between land and spirit that took

generations to build.

This doesn't mean you shouldn't come. It means you should come differently.

You are not just a visitor here. You are a guest. That means carrying yourself with care, not just for the sake of the people who live here, but for the sake of the place itself.

It means choosing awareness over urgency, and gratitude over greed.

It also means choosing to sit by the water, not to capture a moment, but to be changed by it.

And something shifts when you do.

Kashmir has a way of offering her gifts to those who listen: a sense of balance and belonging, and a deep breath you didn't know you were holding.

When the mist clears over the lake and the mountains appear like a memory, you realize that this journey isn't about getting somewhere. It's about remembering something.

You don't need to do much. It begins with attention. Look into the eyes of the man rowing your boat, and see more than a service. Hear the story of a weaver, and recognize the generations stitched into his shawl. Sit under a tree, and resist the urge to mark it. Its prayer has already been said.

This land has given a lot, to its people, pilgrims, and tourists. What it asks for in return isn't much. Just that you remember it is alive.

And when something is alive, you don't consume it. You care for it.

So if you're packing for Kashmir, take what you need. Leave space for reverence. Bring less baggage, more awareness. When you return home, ask yourself what stayed with you, and what was revealed.

Maybe it was a musing moment by the lake, or a conversation with someone who asked nothing in return.

Maybe it was the stillness, or the sense that something larger than yourself had opened a small door inside you.

That's the real gift. That's what Kashmir offers, if you are open to receive it.

- The author is Executive Director at Pragati Leadership and co-founder of the Foundation for Peace and Compassionate Leadership.

Inside Kashmir's Cancer Ward: A Son's Long Watch

As his father fights tumour, a Kashmiri son sees a broken system pushing families to the edge.

Faizaan Bashir

I know the corridors of the State Cancer Institute (SCI) at SKIMS, Soura better than I ever wanted to.

Over the past three years, I've watched my father fight a slow, punishing war with Multiple Myeloma. And while he's held on with courage, I've come to understand that the struggle isn't only with cancer. It's with the system meant to treat it.

At first glance, SCI appears to be doing everything right. The consultants, senior oncologists with staggering patient loads, handle case after case with focus and precision. You'll see them hunched over files late into the evening, decoding lab reports, tracking the smallest clinical changes, adjusting chemo doses with the care of someone handling live wires.

The junior doctors, most still in training, move briskly through the maze of appointments, updates, and questions. Nurses manage drips, check vitals, and carry out instructions with speed and grace. I've seen them react to a single wince before the patient even speaks. They know what pain looks like.

But what happens when professionalism collides with pressure? When the system you're trying to serve starts to collapse under its own weight?

SCI, the only cancer facility of its kind in the region, is running on the strength of too few people and too little infrastructure.

With more than 50,000 cancer cases in the past seven years, there is still only one PET-CT scanner in operation. This machine is crucial. It stages the cancer, maps its spread, guides the treatment plan.

And yet, it takes three to four weeks to get a slot. Sometimes longer.

By the time the scan is done, the dis-

ease may already have advanced. A cancer that could have been caught in time slowly spreads. Meanwhile, the patient, often a daily-wage worker from a remote village, waits without treatment, diagnosis, and pain relief.

Private hospitals charge over 25,000 for the same scan. At SKIMS, the subsidized cost is still 10,000 or more. For many families, even that is unreachable.

Then comes the OPD. Here, you don't need to be told the hospital is overwhelmed, you can see it.

The hematology, radiology, and oncology wings all share a single cramped corridor. Patients sit shoulder-to-shoulder, IV poles resting on tiled floors, the air thick with anxiety.

Some have traveled overnight from places where buses don't even run every day. They wait six, seven hours, only to be told they'll need to come back in two months for a follow-up.

The senior doctors, to their credit, don't leave until the last file is closed. Some answer phone calls after hours. A few meet patients without appointments, trying to plug the gaps left by a failing structure.

But there are limits to what any one person can do. Without expanding the pool of consultants, five or ten more at least, patients will continue to fall through the cracks.

Admissions are another problem.

Short-stay slots, meant for chemotherapy cycles or pain management, are in short supply. Beds free up only when someone else is discharged. You might spend hours sitting on a plastic chair in the hallway, clutching your file, hoping someone ahead of you cancels. Meanwhile, outside, empty green spaces lie unused: flat land that could hold new wings, more beds, some relief. But

nothing gets built.

Then there's Ayushman Bharat, the government health insurance program that, on paper, promises free medicine. In practice, it's a slow crawl through a bureaucratic maze.

You need to be admitted first. Then you wait for a requisition. And then two stamps, one signature, and a queue at the MRD.

After that, you're told to walk to a desig-

nated pharmacy half a kilometer away from the main building.

This, for families who've barely eaten or slept, who have one relative on a drip and another standing in line. You wonder if the system was designed with any real patient in mind. Or if it was ever tested before being deployed.

Even small things hurt, be it a rude word from a security guard, or a dismissive ges-



With more than 50,000 cancer cases in the past seven years, there is still only one PET-CT scanner in operation. This machine is crucial. It stages the cancer, maps its spread, guides the treatment plan.

ture from the records counter.

These might seem minor, but in a place full of fragile people - some dying, some mourning, all desperate - they land like blows.

There's hardly any staff training, accountability, and performance reviews. Those who show empathy go unrecognized.

I don't write this with anger, I write it with exhaustion, and with respect for the people, especially the doctors and nurses, who give more than they should, every single day. But they cannot fix this alone.

The system needs expansion. The hospital needs more scanners, specialists, and space. The welfare schemes need fixing. Patients shouldn't be doing administrative relay races just to receive a medicine their doctor already prescribed.

Above all, someone in power needs to walk through these wards, to feel what it's like to sit in the hallway for five hours, or to wait three weeks for a scan, knowing the disease might be running ahead of you.

The author is PG History and an Independent researcher.



The system needs expansion. The hospital needs more scanners, specialists, and space. The welfare schemes need fixing. Patients shouldn't be doing administrative relay races just to receive a medicine their doctor already prescribed.

How Ancient Viruses Could Help Fight Antibiotic Resistance

The Conversation

If bacteria had a list of things to fear, phages would be at the top. These viruses are built to find, infect and kill them – and they have been doing it for billions of years. Now that ancient battle is offering clues for how we might fight back against antibiotic-resistant infections.

As more bacteria evolve to withstand our antibiotics, previously treatable infections are becoming harder – and in some cases, impossible – to cure. This crisis, known as antimicrobial resistance (AMR), already causes over a million deaths a year globally, and the number is rising fast. The World Health Organization has named AMR one of the top ten global public health threats.

Phage therapy – the use of phages to treat bacterial infections – is gaining attention as a potential solution. Phages are highly specific, capable of targeting even drug-resistant strains. In some compassionate-use cases in the UK, they have cleared infections where every antibiotic had failed. But phages still face a challenge that is often overlooked: the bacteria themselves.

Bacteria have evolved sophisticated systems to detect and destroy phages. These defences are diverse: some cut up viral DNA, others block entry, and a few launch a kind of intracellular shut-down to prevent viral takeover. In a new study published in Cell, my colleagues and I describe a system that works differently, called Kiwa. It acts like a sensor embedded in the bacterial membrane, detecting early signs of attack.

Exactly what Kiwa is sensing remains an open question, but our findings suggest it responds to the mechanical stress that occurs when a phage latches on to the cell and injects its DNA. Once triggered, Kiwa acts fast. It shuts down the phage's ability to make the components it needs to build



new phages, stopping the infection before it can take over the cell.

But just as bacteria evolve ways to defend themselves, phages evolve ways to fight back. In our latest experiments, we saw two strategies in play.

Some phages developed small mutations in the proteins they use to attach to the bacterial surface – subtle changes that helped them avoid triggering Kiwa's detection system. Others took a different approach: they allowed themselves to be detected, but escaped the consequences.

These phages carried mutations in a viral protein that seems to be involved in how Kiwa shuts down the infection. We don't yet know exactly how this works, but the result is clear: with just a few changes, the virus keeps replicating, even after Kiwa has been activated.

This evolutionary flexibility is part of what makes phages so powerful, and why they hold such promise in treating infections. But it also highlights a key challenge: to make phage therapy effective, we need to understand how these microbial battles play out.

Rules of engagement

If a bacterial strain carries a defence like Kiwa, not all phages will succeed against it. Some might be blocked entirely. But others, with just the right mutations, might slip through. That means choosing or

engineering the right phage for the job is not just a matter of trial and error – it is a matter of knowing the rules of engagement.

Studying bacterial defence systems like Kiwa gives us a deeper understanding of those rules. It helps explain why some phages fail, why others succeed, and how we might design better phage therapies in the future. In time, we may be able to predict which bacterial defences a given strain carries, and select phages that are naturally equipped – or artificially tuned – to overcome them.

That is the idea behind our growing phage collection project. We are gathering phages from across the UK and beyond, including from public submissions – dirty water is often a goldmine – and testing them to see which ones can overcome the defences carried by dangerous bacteria. With over 600 types already catalogued, we are building a resource that could help guide future phage therapy, pairing the right phage with the right infection.

Kiwa is just one piece of the puzzle. Bacteria encode many such defence systems, each adding a layer of complexity – and opportunity – to this microbial arms race. Some detect viral DNA directly, others sense damage or stress, and some even coordinate responses with neighbouring cells. The more we learn, the more precisely we can intervene.

(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)
(UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CITY ROADS (SMC) DIVISION SRINAGAR.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No:- E-NIT/59/CRD/SMC/SGR/2025-26DATED: 04-08-2025.

For and on behalf of the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e-tenders (in Single cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments.

S.No	Name of Work	Advt. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T./Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit @2% of Adv. Cost	Completion days	Class of Contractor	M.H of A/C
1	Restoration/ improvement of road cut by S AND D 1 st UEED Srinagar at Friends Enclave Humhama near Airport by way of laying of 50mm and 30 mm dia main sewer line.	62.11	1600/-	124220/-	25 Days	AAVClass	State/ District plan/ CDR (2025-2026)
2	Restoration/ macadamization of road surface at Dhobi Mohalla to FirdousabadBatmalooTengpora Crossing Bypass by way of providing and laying of 75mm WMM, 50mm BM, 25mm SD and premixed seal coat.	57.67	1600/-	115340/-	25 Days	AAV Class	NCAP/State/ District plan/ CDR (2025-2026)
3	Development/upgradation of lane C Budshah Nagar Natiporabwo p/f of 75mm WMM, 50mm BM, 25mm SD with premixed seal coat.	58.56	1600/-	117120/-	25 Days	AAV Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
4	Upgradation of road at NowsheraMohallaChanapora, Sgr by way of WBM, 75mm WMM, 50mm BM, 25mm SD and premixed seal coat.	57.36	1600/-	114720/-	25 Days	AAV Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
5	Macadamization of various lanes of Gousia colony Rangpora.	56.00	1600/-	112000/-	25 Days	AAV Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
6	Macadamization of interior road link from Shahdad Lane to Kumar Mohalla, Chandpora, Harwan.	45.00	1100/-	90000/-	20 Days	AAV/ BEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
7	Imp/ upg of road LHS/RHS from JahingirChowk to Rambagh Bridge.	45.00	1100/-	90000/-	20 Days	AAV/ BEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
8	Imp/ upg of link road arm main road to kralmohalla Chan Mohalla Mir Mohalla at Harwan.	45.00	1100/-	90000/-	20 Days	AAV/ BEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)
9	Upgradation and macadamization of lane from SudrabaluptoGhat No.07 at Sudrabal, HazaratbalSgr.	42.00	1100/-	84000/-	20 Days	AAV/ BEE Class	Capex Budget (2025-2026)

AAA: Accorded.

- The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specification, Drawings, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of dates given below:

Scheduled Dates& Time of Online Tenders.			
1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice Online	05-08-2025.	
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM	05-08-2025 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	05-08-2025	FROM 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	13-08-2025	UPTO 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	14-08-2025 at 10:00 A.M in the office of the Executive Engineer City Roads SMC Division Srinagar.	

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Bank Receipt as a tender fee paid in the Municipal Account No: 021601020000007 payable at J&K Bank Branch Dood Ganga Balgarden, Srinagar payable at Srinagar (With NIT No. and S.No. of work mentioned)by simply uploading a copy of necessary Bank Receipt.
- Bids must be accompanied with Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) @2% of the advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar which shall be uploaded with the tender documents at the time of tendering. The same shall be released after receipt of 5% of performance security which should be valid till completion of DLP from the successful Bidder.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer City Roads (SMC) Division Srinagar (Tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain Valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The lowest bidder (L1) also called the successful Bidder has to produce a performance security amount equal to 5% (five percent) of the contract value in the shape of CDR/ FDR/ BG immediately after the opening of financial bids, but prior to fixation of contract. The validity period of the FDR/ BG for requisite amount shall be upto DLP. Any FDR/ BG having less validity period shall not be entertained. The CDR/ FDR/ BG shall be released after successful completion of the Defect Liability Period (DLP).
- If any bidder / tenderer withdraws/ modified his bid during the period of validity etc, the Department is at liberty to suspend the bidder for one year or as shall be deemed suitable by the tender inviting Authority. Same shall hold good if the bidder fails to produce performance security within the specified time.
- The successful bidder (L1) shall have to furnish hard copy of the uploaded documents viz Registration card duly renewed, Valid GST Registration, PAN Card, GSTR- 3B etc. alongwith Treasury Challan Receipt.
- The execution of works falling under the jurisdiction of LAWDA shall be subject to NOC from LCMA (LAWDA) Department.

NIT/59/CRD /SMC/SGR/2025-26/e-tendering/ _____
DIPK-4852/25 DATED:-06-08-2025.

Executive Engineer,
City Roads (SMC) Division, Srinagar.



The methods used to consume news have changed over time from newspapers, to television, to the Internet on our computers to carrying the news around with us 24/7 on smartphones in our pockets.

Kashmir Observer, with 28 years of experience in news gathering is now available 24x7 on all digital platforms like laptops, cell phones or via Bluetooth on your smart TV's across the world

Kashmir Observer is a one stop information bank for you. Watch live debates, talk shows and documentaries on critical issues facing Kashmir on KO youtube channel.

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RBI To Standardise Procedure For Settlement Of Claims For Accounts, Lockers Of Deceased Customers



Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday said the central bank will standardise the claims settlement procedure for bank accounts and lockers.

This is aimed at simplifying the process for settlement of claims in favour of nominees of deceased customers.

Besides, he said, the central bank plans to expand the functionality in RBI Retail-Direct platform to enable retail investors to invest in treasury bills through systematic investment plans.

"We will be standardising the procedure for settlement of claims in respect of bank accounts, and articles kept in safe custody or safe deposit lockers of deceased bank customers. This is expected to make settlement more convenient and simpler," he said while addressing the third bi-monthly monetary policy.

Under the provisions of Banking Regulation Act, 1949, nomination facility is available in respect of deposit accounts, articles kept in safe custody or safe deposit lockers.

This is intended to facilitate expeditious settlement of claims or return of articles or release of contents of safe

deposit locker upon death of a customer and to minimise hardship caused to family members, according to Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies released by the RBI.

The extant instructions require banks to adopt a simplified procedure to facilitate expeditious and hassle-free settlement of claims made by survivors/nominees/legal heirs, the procedures vary across banks, it said.

"With a view to enhance customer service standards, it has been decided to streamline the procedures and standardise the documentation to be submitted to the banks. A draft circular in this regard shall be issued shortly for public consultation," it said.

Presently, all banks have their system and processes in place with regard to claims with respect to account and locker by nominee of deceased but there may be some difference with respect to papers sought.

Similarly, for accounts without nomination there may be some variance among banks which may be standardised and simpler.

With regard to investment in treasury bills (T-bills), it said, this will enable investors to systematically plan their investments, an auto-bidding facility for T-bills, covering both investment and re-investment options, has been enabled in Retail Direct.

The new functionality helps investors to mandate automatic placement of bids in primary auctions of T-bills, it said.

The Retail Direct portal was launched in November 2021 to facilitate retail investors to open their Gilt accounts with the Reserve Bank under the Retail Direct Scheme.

2 Maritime Bills Passed By Both Houses Of Parliament In A Single Day

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Two bills aimed at streamlining maritime governance with a modern and internationally compliant approach were given approval on a single day on Wednesday in both Houses of Parliament, amid continued protests by the Opposition.

While the Rajya Sabha passed a century-old colonial-era 'Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025', the Lok Sabha approved the 'Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024' amid the din.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said it was a historic day as the parliament passed two important legislations -- the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 and the Carriage of Goods Sea Bill, 2025 -- effectively endorsing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to modernise India's maritime sector, both policy and action wise.

"With the passage of the bills, the Modi government's push for India's modern shipping gets double endorsement from the Parliament," he said.

It was for the first time that

the Ministry got parliamentary approval of two bills on the same day.

The bills will pave the way for a modern, efficient and globally aligned maritime policy framework in India, Sonowal said.

The landmark legislations designed to promote ease of doing business and make India's shipping sector future-ready, he said.

The Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 is a progressive, future-ready legislation that replaces the outdated Merchant Shipping Act of 1958. The Bill marks a significant step towards aligning India's maritime legal framework with global standards and strengthening the country's position as a trusted maritime trade hub.

Introducing the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024 in the Lok Sabha, the minister, said that the Bill represents a decisive step towards positioning India as a global leader in maritime trade and governance.

"It is a progressive and advanced legislation, up to date with international maritime conventions and informed by the best practices of leading maritime nations," he said.

Leather, Textiles, Gems, Jewellery, Shrimp Exports To Hit Hard From 50% US Tariff



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Domestic export sectors such as leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, textiles and shrimp will be severely impacted by the imposition of the 50 per cent tariff by the US, say industry experts.

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday slapped an additional 25 per cent tariff, raising the total duties to 50 per cent on goods coming from India, as a penalty for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil.

The United States has imposed additional tariffs or penalty for Russian imports only on India while other buyers such as China and Turkey, have so far escaped such measures.

"The tariffs are expected to make Indian goods far costlier in the US, with potential to cut US-bound exports by 40-50 per cent," think tank GTRI said.

The 25 per cent duty, announced on July 31, will come into force from August 7 (9.30 am IST).

The additional 25 per cent will be implemented by the US from August 27. These will be over and above the existing standard import duty in the US.

In 2024-25, the bilateral

trade between India and the US stood at USD 131.8 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports).

The sectors, which would bear the brunt of 50 per cent duty include textiles/ clothing (10.3 billion), gems and jewellery (12 billion), shrimp (USD 2.24 billion), leather and footwear (USD 1.18 billion), chemicals (2.34 billion), and electrical and mechanical machinery (about USD 9 billion).

Kolkata-based seafood exporter and MD of Megaa Moda Yogesh Gupta said that now India's shrimp will become expensive in the US market. "We are already facing huge competition from Ecuador as it has only 15 per cent tariff. Indian shrimp already attracts a 2.49 per cent anti-dumping duty and a 5.77 per cent countervailing duty. After this 25 per cent, the duty will be 33.26 per cent from August 7," Gupta said.

The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) said that it is "deeply concerned" about the potential adverse impact of the effective 50 per cent US tariff rate for India.

The US is India's largest market for textile and apparel exports..

"The US tariff announcement of August 6 is a huge

setback for India's textile and apparel exporters as it has further complicated the challenging situation we were already grappling with and will significantly weaken our ability to compete effectively vis-à-vis many other countries for a larger share of the US market," it said.

It urged the government to urgently take steps to help the sector during these hugely testing times.

Colin Shah, MD, Kama Jewellery, said this move is a severe setback for Indian exports, with nearly 55 per cent of India's shipments to the US market directly affected.

The 50 per cent reciprocal tariff effectively imposes a cost burden, placing our exporters at a 30-35 per cent competitive disadvantage compared to peers from countries with lesser reciprocal tariff, he said.

"Many export orders have already been put on hold as buyers reassess sourcing decisions in light of higher landed costs. For a large number of MSME-led sectors, absorbing this sudden cost escalation is simply not viable. Margins are already thin, and this additional blow could force exporters to lose long-standing clients," Shah said.

'Additional 25% Tariff Will Essentially Cut Off Most Indian Exports To US'

Press Trust Of India

NEW YORK- President Donald Trump's announcement of additional 25 per cent tariffs on India will essentially cut off most Indian exports to the US, a former American trade official said on Wednesday, voicing concern over the escalating bilateral dispute.

Senior Vice President of the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI) and former Deputy US Trade Representative Wendy Cutler also suggested that officials in Delhi and Washington should try to work out their differences in private.

"Regrettably, the US-India dispute is escalating, with

the President now threatening an additional 25 per cent tariff. This will essentially cut off most Indian exports to the US," Cutler said.

She said this turnaround in bilateral relations has occurred quickly, and neither side can afford to be at odds with each other.

"Beijing is most probably welcoming these developments and may take modest steps now to improve its relations with Delhi. It's time for US and Indian officials to try to work out their differences in private," Cutler said in a statement.

Trump on Wednesday signed an executive order, imposing the additional 25 per cent tariff on India for

its purchases of Russian oil, bringing the total tariffs imposed on India to 50 per cent.

The additional ad valorem rate of duty of 25 per cent will be effective after 21 days from the signing of the executive order.

Reacting to the development, India said these actions are "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

On Tuesday, Trump said in an interview with CNBC that India has not been a good trading partner and announced he will raise tariffs on India "very substantially over the next 24 hours" because Delhi is "buying Russian oil and fuelling the Ukraine war machine".

RBI Keeps Interest Rates Unchanged Amid Uncertainty Over Trump's Tariffs

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged on Wednesday as it appeared to have taken a wait-and-watch approach to assess the full unveiling of US President Donald Trump's trade policies as well as transmission of past rate cuts.

The six-member rate-setting panel, headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, held the repurchase rate at 5.5 per cent in a unanimous vote and decided to continue with a 'neutral' stance.

While on-track monsoon rains and the approaching festival season are expected to provide buoyancy to the economy, global trade challenges continue to linger, Malhotra said, announcing the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Trump last month slapped a 25 per cent duty on all Indian goods entering the US from August 7, and on Tuesday threatened to substantially hike the tariff for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil.

"Over the medium-term also, the Indian economy holds bright prospects in the changing world order, drawing on its inherent strength, robust fundamentals, and comfortable buffers," he said. "Opportunities are there for the taking, and we are making all efforts to create enabling conditions through a multi-pronged yet cohesive approach to policy making."

The pause follows a 100 basis point (bps) cut in inter-



est rate over three bi-monthly MPC meetings in 2025. The full transmission of the front-loaded 50 bps rate cut effected in June is still awaited.

While keeping the repo rate unchanged, RBI revised its inflation forecast lower by 60 bps to 3.1 per cent. Malhotra flagged a rise in headline inflation towards the end of the year.

"CPI inflation is likely to edge up above 4 per cent in Q4:2025-26 and beyond, as unfavourable base effects, and demand side factors from policy actions come into play," he said.

With the target for inflation being kept above 4 per cent for the fourth quarter of the current fiscal year ending March 31, 2026 and the first quarter of next, and the forecast for GDP growth at 6.6 per cent for Q1 FY27, raises the bar for a further rate cut in the coming quarters, economists said.

The central bank kept the GDP growth forecast unchanged at 6.5 per cent for 2025-26 (FY26).

Ongoing Uncertainties, Frontloaded Cuts, Core Inflation Uptick Led To Status Quo On Rate: Malhotra

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI- Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said continuing global uncertainties, frontloading of interest rate cuts, and uptick in core inflation prompted the central bank to opt for the status quo at the bi-monthly policy review on Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters at the central bank headquarters here after announcing the policy review, Malhotra affirmed the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) commitment to support growth, and added that the GDP expansion at 6.5 per cent is slower than what is aspired for.

The six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) will continue to be vigilant and continue watching all the incoming data to take an appropriate call on rates, Malhotra said, even as a growing number of analysts opine that the possibilities of a cut in rates are slimming down.

Listing out the reasons for the unanimous call of holding rates, Malhotra said, "We did a front-loaded rate cut of 1 per cent point over a short period of four months from February to June. Transmission is still happening."

Pointing to tariff negotiations and the clouded geopolitical aspects, he said the global uncertainties on this issue continue, he said.

Additionally, the rising core



inflation also played a part in the policy decision which dashes borrowers' hopes of a decline in their outgoes.

Without directly spelling out his views on credit growth not accelerating as much despite the rate cuts, Malhotra said some part of transmission is yet to happen, and added that if the rates go down, it will lead to increase in credit pickup and so will the overall growth momentum.

On growth in home loans, the mainstay of retail lending, Malhotra said the RBI feels growth in the segment will be "very good" at 14 per cent as it is outpacing the system.

He added that it takes longer for lenders' rate offerings to reflect all the cuts done by the RBI and then for homebuyers to make their decisions on long-term purchases, hinting that credit to the sector will grow more.

He said the sharp decrease to 2.1 per cent in the headline number for June is more because of the cooling of food inflation.

India, Russia Exploring Opportunities In Rare Earth, Critical Minerals Extraction

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- India and Russia are exploring opportunities in rare earth and critical minerals extraction, underground coal gasification, and creation of modern industrial infrastructure, an official statement said on Wednesday.

The issue came up for discussions during the India-Russia Working Group on Modernization and Industrial Cooperation meeting, which was held here under the framework of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation.

Critical minerals such as copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth are essential raw materials re-



quired to fuel the growth of rapidly-growing clean energy technologies and their expanding uses ranging from wind turbines and electricity networks to electric vehicles and battery manufacturing.

The commerce and industry ministry said the key focus areas included cooperation in aerospace science and technology, including the establishment of a modernized wind tunnel facility, pro-

duction of small aircraft piston engines, and joint development in carbon fibre technology, additive manufacturing, and 3D printing.

"Both sides also explored opportunities in rare earth and critical minerals extraction, underground coal gasification, and creation of modern industrial infrastructure," it said.

The two sides also welcomed enhanced engagement in aluminium, fertilizers, and railway transport, alongside capacity building and technology transfer in mining sector equipment, exploration, and industrial and domestic waste management.

The meeting was held in the backdrop of US President Donald Trump announcing high tariffs on India.

Sensex Falls By 160 Pts On Sell-Off In IT, Healthcare Shares

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI - Falling for the second day, benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 160 points on Wednesday due to selling in IT and healthcare shares amid the RBI policy decision to keep the key interest rates unchanged.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 166.26 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 80,543.99 with 18 of its constituents ending lower and 12 with gains. During the day, it declined 261.43 points or 0.32 per cent to hit a low of 80,448.82.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 75.35 points or 0.31 per cent to close at 24,574.20. In the intraday session, the index decreased 110.35 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a low of 24,539.20.

Among the Sensex firms,

Sun Pharmaceuticals, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Eternal, Tata Consultancy Services, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, ITC and L&T were the major laggards.

Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra, BEL, Adani Ports, State Bank of India, Trent, HDFC Bank were among the gainers.

"Despite renewed trade tensions—stemming from the U.S.—the domestic market remained resilient, holding firm near the key support level of 24,500. The pharma sector underperformed, emerging as a notable casualty of the tariff warnings," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged

on Wednesday, as policymakers weighed the risks posed by US President Donald Trump's trade policies and the uncertainties surrounding the potential for higher tariffs.

The RBI also retained the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year at 6.5 per cent while lowering the inflation forecast to 3.1 per cent from 3.7 per cent.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.14 per cent and the midcap index by 1 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Focused IT fell by 1.78 per cent, followed by Healthcare (1.72 per cent), IT (1.64 per cent), Realty (1.55 per cent), Teck (1.20 per cent), Industrials and Capital Goods (0.83 per cent each), FMCG (0.80 per cent), Telecommunication (0.75 per cent) were among the laggards.

Gold Rises Rs 200 To Rs 99,020/10 G; Silver Climbs Rs 500

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Gold prices rose Rs 200 to Rs 99,020 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday due to continuous buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 98,820 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased Rs 100 to Rs 98,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. It had closed at Rs 98,500 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

"Gold traded with a moderate positive bias on Wednesday as safe-haven demand continued to push precious metals higher," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday issued fresh tariff threats on pharmaceutical imports. He said the tariffs would start off small but could rise up to 250 per cent over time.

Additionally, Trump indicated that an announcement regarding tariffs on semiconductors and chips would be forthcoming.

"This tariff-related uncertainty added a risk premium on precious metals," Gandhi said.

KO Classifieds

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75% Must For Board Exams: CBSE Cracks Down on Attendance Rule

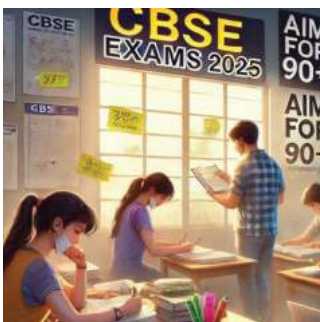
Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has warned schools to strictly adhere to the 75 per cent attendance requirement for students appearing for board exams, according to officials.

According to the CBSE Examination Bye Laws, a minimum of 75 per cent attendance is mandatory for students to be eligible to appear for the board examinations.

The CBSE offers a 25 per cent relaxation only in cases of exigencies such as medical emergencies, participation in national or international sports events, and other serious reasons, if supported by the necessary documents or record.

"All students and parents must be made aware of the mandatory 75 pc attendance requirement criteria and the potential consequences of not meeting this criteria. Any student, if on leave due to a medical or any other reason, needs to apply for the leave to the school with proper medical and other documents at the time of availing leave. Leave without a written request will be considered unauthorized absence from the school,"



CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said in a letter to schools. The board has directed that schools must regularly monitor and maintain correct attendance records.

"Attendance registers should be updated daily, signed by the class teacher and the competent authority of the school and be readily available for inspection by the CBSE.

"The Board may conduct surprise inspections to verify student attendance records. During such inspections, if it is found that the records are incomplete or students have not been attending the school regularly, the school may face strict action, including disaffiliation. The students may be disqualified from appearing in the board exams," Bhardwaj said.

NIT Srinagar organizes tiranga rally under nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign

Over 1000 participants including faculty, students join rally ahead of 79th Independence Day

Observer News Service

Srinagar, Aug 08: As part of the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Wednesday organized a large-scale Tiranga Rally within its campus to celebrate the spirit of patriotism ahead of India's 79th Independence Day.

The rally, aimed at instilling national pride and unity among students and staff, was flagged off by Prof. Roohi Naaz, Incharge Director of NIT Srinagar, in the presence of Institute's Registrar Prof. Atikur Rehman.

The event witnessed participation from over 1,000 individuals, including deans, heads of departments, faculty members, research scholars, non-teaching staff, and students.

Carrying the national flag and chanting patriotic slogans, the participants marched across the institute's campus in a coordinated display of national unity. The rally began at the administrative block and



passed through the Mechanical Department, water resource centre, new guest house and before culminating at the fountain park of the campus.

Speaking on the occasion, Incharge Director Prof. Roohi Naaz said that the rally was not just a symbolic gesture but a reminder of the sacrifices made by freedom fighters.

"This event reflects our deep respect for the nation and its core values. It is a matter of immense pride to see the entire NIT Srinagar fraternity coming together to honour our national flag and the spirit of independence," she said.

Registrar Prof. Atikur Rehman said that the Har Ghar

Tiranga campaign is about re-connecting with our identity as Indians. Through this rally, we seek to foster a sense of civic duty and national consciousness, especially among the youth who are the future of the country," he said.

The Tiranga Rally was part of a broader set of activities being conducted by NIT Srinagar in the lead-up to Independence Day. The Institute has planned a series of events over the next week. It includes cultural programs, patriotic song competitions, debates, and awareness drives to highlight the significance of India's freedom struggle and constitutional values.

Unable To Represent Constituency Due To Court Rider: Er Rashid Tells HC

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir MP Engineer Rashid, accused in alleged terror funding case, on Wednesday informed the Delhi High Court that he was unable to represent his constituency owing to a rider imposed on him to pay daily costs to attend the parliamentary session.

Appearing before a bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Anup Jairam Bhambhani, Rashid sought the modification of an order passed by a coordinate bench.

The order directed him to deposit Rs 4 lakh with the prison authorities as travel expenses for attending Parliament.

During the hearing, the bench remarked that when custody parole is granted, it is ordinarily at the cost of the person.

At this, senior advocate N Hariharan, appearing for Rashid said the condition was unreasonable because "he (Rashid) is an elected representative of the people of a parliamentary constituency and unable to represent them due to inability to pay the same".

Hariharan continued, "If the condition imposed is such that he is unable to go (to the

parliament), we are interfering with the basic elements of democracy in this country." He claimed when Rashid took the oath, "the state never asked for expenses".

"These are conditions imposed to somehow see to it that the voice of my constituency is not heard there," the senior lawyer added.

The counsel pointed out he was not seeking a review of the order but "only the modification of the conditions".

"The order is he be taken into custody, subject to conditions. I am saying the condition is erroneous amounting to defeating the order itself," he said.

The bench posted the matter for August 12.

The Baramulla MP, who defeated Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, is facing trial in a terror funding case with allegations that he funded separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir.

He has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since 2019 after the NIA arrested him in the 2017 terror-funding case. He was granted interim bail for one month in September last year to campaign in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

India Slams

components, tyres, chemicals, agrochemicals, and cut & polished diamonds. The trade imbalance between India and the US could widen and there could also be a possible shift or reconsideration in the supply chain.

India buys about 88 per cent of its crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel, from overseas. Russian oil made up for hardly 0.2 per cent of all crude oil that India imported till 2021. After Moscow invaded Ukraine, Russian oil was available at a discount to international benchmarks due to western sanctions, and was quickly lapped up by Indian refiners. Russia is now India's largest oil supplier.

In July, India imported about 5 million barrels of oil a day, of which 1.6 million came from Russia.

After the new levy, India will attract the highest tariff of 50 per cent along with Brazil. After this, India's competitors will be much better placed in the US market as their duty is lower - Myanmar (40 per cent), Thailand and Cambodia (both 36 per cent), Bangladesh (35 per cent), Indonesia (32 per cent), China and Sri Lanka (both 30 per cent), Malaysia (25 per cent), Philippines and Vietnam (both 20 per cent).

The announcement comes at a time when a US team is scheduled to visit India from August 25 for the sixth round of negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA).

The sectors, which will have to bear the brunt of these tariffs include textiles/ clothing, gems and jewellery, shrimp, leather and footwear, animal products, chemicals, and electrical and mechanical machinery.

The exempted goods, which will not be subject to the high tariffs, include pharmaceuticals; energy products such as crude oil, refined fuels, natural gas, coal, and electricity; critical minerals; and a wide range of electronics and semiconductors, like computers, tablets, smartphones, solid-state drives, flat panel displays, and integrated circuits.

According to exporters, the move would affect India's USD 86 billion worth of exports to the US severely.

"It is extremely shocking. It will impact India's 55 per cent of exports to US," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) DG Ajay Sahai said.

In 2024-25, the bilateral trade between India and the US stood at USD 131.8 billion (USD 86.5 billion exports and USD 45.3 billion imports).

The announcement is being seen as a pressure tactic to get New Delhi to agree to demands made by the US in the proposed BTA.

The US is seeking duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles, especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, agri goods, dairy items, apples, tree nuts, and genetically-modified crops.

The two countries are aiming to conclude the first phase of the pact by fall (October-November) this year.

PM Modi Set to

have since resumed, slowly easing tensions that had halted business and cross-border travel.

Meanwhile, India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is currently in Moscow to hold key discussions on defence cooperation and oil imports. The visit comes ahead of a possible trip

by Russian President Vladimir Putin to India and follows Trump's pressure campaign to halt India's Russian crude purchases.

Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar is also expected to visit Russia soon, as India navigates a delicate balancing act between long-standing partners Moscow and Washington.

India's internal government assessment suggests that Trump's tariff hike could wipe out competitiveness in \$64 billion worth of exports - 80% of total shipments to the U.S. in 2024. Despite this, the Reserve Bank of India has held GDP growth projections steady at 6.5% for the current fiscal year, singling confidence that the broader \$4 trillion economy can absorb the impact. India exported goods worth an estimated \$81 billion to the U.S. last year.

As global alliances shift and trade tensions intensify, Modi's China visit could carry broader geopolitical implications - not just for India-China relations, but for India's role in a rapidly evolving world order.

India, Russia

meeting was held in a "warm and friendly atmosphere, customary for Russian-Indian ties".

"During the conversation, the sides discussed in detail the pertinent issues of bilateral interaction in the sphere of defence and confirmed their intent toward the further strengthening of relevant cooperation in the spirit of particularly privileged strategic partnership," said the statement.

The meeting took place amid US President Donald Trump's threats to slap harsh sanctions on India for buying crude oil from Russia. PTI

J&K Drafts Building

bye-laws, the authority for granting permission for residential individual houses lies with Sarpanch of the Halqa Panchayat or BDO concerned, Secretary Panchayat, Junior Engineer and Patwari Halqa.

The permission for construction of commercial buildings and other types of structures shall be granted by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of the concerned area or Assistant Commissioner Panchayats, Tehsildar, Town Planner or Assistant Executive Engineer Rural Engineering Wing or Assistant Engineer REW, Block Development Officer concerned and Sarpanch of the Halqa Panchayat.

The administration has proposed a fee structure for granting building permissions across different categories.

As per the fee structure, applicants will be required to pay a construction fee ranging from Rs 3 to Rs 15 per sq ft in rural areas.

A fee of Rs 3 per sq ft will be levied for residential individual houses, while Rs 15 and Rs 10 per sq ft will be charged for commercial buildings and other types of buildings, respectively.

As per these the bye-laws, the application for seeking construction permission shall be accompanied by site plan, building plan, ownership document of land and an undertaking.

The permission shall remain valid for a period of five years and the validity period of permission for additions/alterations, of all categories, shall be two years from the date of permission, the draft bye-laws state.

"If the construction of the new buildings or extension or alteration of any existing buildings is not completed within the stipulated period, the permission shall require re validated, on application, on payment of 10% of the total

fee/charges, subject to the rules then in force," reads the bye-laws. (KNO)

CM Urges

does not do it.

"It is a good thing and I hope the Supreme Court keeps in mind is that when they gave a judgement on the August 5 case (in December 2023), they had said that the statehood should be restored as soon as possible.

"Now, many years have passed but we have not got it yet," he said.

He said had the SC not set a deadline for conducting assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, "perhaps I would not have been talking to you as the chief minister today".

"The elections were held because the SC had set a deadline and the elections were held in that time frame. We want that much time has passed now and if it (restoration of statehood) does not come through the government, then it should come through the court," he said.

The CM's outreach comes amidst a growing demand for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. His push is a renewed effort to hold the Centre accountable for its commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

On July 29, Omar wrote a letter to the presidents of 42 political parties, including Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, urging them to press the Centre to bring a legislation in the Monsoon session to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, saying it must not be viewed as a concession, but as an essential course correction.

He wrote that downgrading a state to a union territory sets a "profound and unsettling" precedent and is a "constitutional red line" that "must never be crossed".

"The act of reducing Jammu and Kashmir from a state to a union territory in 2019 and the prolonged delay in restoring its status as a full state... has profound implications for the future of Indian polity," the three-page letter stated.

The chief minister said the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir into a union territory in August 2019 was presented as a "temporary and transitional measure" and cited repeated public assurances from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, including a promise made in Kashmir earlier this year that he called "Modi ka Wada".

Omar also cited the stand of the Centre before the Supreme Court reaffirming its commitment to restore statehood at the earliest.

However, he said, the "interpretation of terms like 'at the earliest' or 'as soon as possible' cannot stretch into years or decades".

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir have already waited long enough - statehood must be restored now."

He called the "prolonged and unprecedented disempowerment" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir "unjust" and said it "undermines the very rationale that was invoked to justify the changes of August 2019".

"The restoration (of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir) must not be viewed as a concession, but as an essential course correction - one that prevents us from sliding down a dangerous and slippery slope where the statehood of our constituent states is no longer regarded as a foundational and sacred constitutional right but reduced instead to a discretionary favour bestowed at the will of the central government," the letter said.

"More than nine months have passed and yet

there is no clarity, timeline, or visible progress toward fulfilling that solemn assurance," Omar lamented.

The chief minister's letter warned that the "temporary" status is beginning to "appear more as a convenient alibi than a genuine commitment", serving as a "proverbial fig leaf" for an "indefensible act".

He said that the six-year persistence of this status is "far beyond what any reasonable interpretation of the word might allow" and that an arrangement "meant to be transitional cannot be allowed to harden into permanence".

Omar pointed to two recent events as "extraordinary opportunities to heal historical wounds and reinforce national unity" -- the high voter turnout in the recent elections and the public condemnation of terrorism following the Pahalgam attack.

"To allow such moments to pass -- unacknowledged or unreciprocated due to narrow partisan calculations, will, without doubt, be a monumental mistake," the chief minister cautioned and quoted famous poet Muzaffar Razmi Kairanavi: "Lamhon ne khata ki thi, sadiyon ne saza payi (Moments committed the mistake, centuries got the punishment)".

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Omar expressed hope that after the incident-free and successful Amarnath Yatra, Jammu and Kashmir will witness an increase in tourist footfall.

"The numbers are increasing. The situation has not remained like how it was after the April 22 (Pahalgam) attack. We had a good yatra as well, about 4 lakh yatrins undertook the yatra through Baltal and Pahalgam, and the situation remained good during the yatra.

"We now hope that the tourists will start coming from different corners of the country and benefit from the hospitality of the people of J&K," he said. (PTI)

Decades Of Injustice

radio station will inspire the young generation to preserve and cherish the values, knowledge and traditions of the community

The LG suggested that the new radio station should broadcast the rich history of the tribal community, through a dedicated weekly program.

"Gurez was developed and established as the most favourite offbeat tourist destination of the country. Today Gurez is ranked as a top travel destination of the country and it is considered as a haven for outdoor enthusiasts with its serene landscapes and picturesque villages. The community radio programmes must reflect its natural, artistic and cultural heritage," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the Indian Army, Tribal Affairs Department, District Administration and various voluntary organizations for their dedication to promote the priceless cultural heritage of Dard-Shina community.

Captivating performances by the Artists from J&K and other states celebrating "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" received special appreciation from the Lieutenant Governor.

Members of the tribal community were also honoured for their service to the society and the Indian Army.

Javed Ahmed Rana, Minister for Tribal Affairs, Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment; Nazir Ahmad Khan, Member of Legislative Assembly from Gurez; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri,

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Prasanna Ramaswamy G, Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department; Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, Deputy Commissioner Baniptora, senior officials of security forces, civil and police administration, and people from all walks of life in large number attended the inaugural ceremony.

J&K Govt Forfeits

historical facts, glorification of terrorists, vilification of security forces, religious radicalization, promotion of alienation, and pathways to violence and terrorism."

Acting under Section 98 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, the Government declared these books forfeited due to their threat to national integrity and public order.

"The books have also been found to excite secessionism and endanger the sovereignty and integrity of India, thereby attracting the provisions of Sections 152, 196, and 197 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023," the order reads.

The forfeited books include Human Rights Violations in Kashmir by Piotr Balcerowicz and Agnieszka Kuszevska; Kashmiri's Fight for Freedom by Mohd Yusuf Saraf; Colonizing Kashmir, State-Building under Indian Occupation by Hafsa Kanjwal; Kashmir Politics and Plebiscite by Dr. Abdul Jabbar; and Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora? by Essar Batool and others.

Also on the list are Mujahid ki Azaan edited by Maulana Mohammad Enayatullah Subhani; Al Jihadul fil Islam by Moulana Moududi; Independent Kashmir by Christopher Snedden; Resisting Occupation in Kashmir by Haley Duschinski, Mona Bhat, Ather Zia, and Cynthia Mahmood; and Between Democracy and Nation (Gender and Militarization in Kashmir) by Seema Kazi.

Other titles include Contested Lands by Sumantra Bose; In Search of a Future (The Story of Kashmir) by David Devadas; Kashmir in Conflict (India, Pakistan and the Unending War) by Victoria Schofield; The Kashmir Dispute 1947-2012 by A.G. Noorani; Kashmir at the Cross Roads (Inside a 21st Century Conflict) by Sumantra Bose; and A Dismantled State (The Untold Story of Kashmir after Article 370) by Anuradha Bhasin.

The forfeited publications further include Resisting Disappearance (Military Occupation & Women's Activism in Kashmir) by Ather Zia; Confronting Terrorism edited by Stephen Pcohen and Maroof Raza; Freedom in Captivity (Negotiations of Belonging along Kashmiri Frontier) by Radhika Gupta; Kashmir (The Case for Freedom) by Tariq Ali, Hilal Bhatt, Angana P. Chatterji, Pankaj Mishra, and Arundhati Roy; and Azadi by Arundhati Roy.

Also named are USA and Kashmir by Dr. Shamsad Shan; Law & Conflict Resolution in Kashmir by Piotr Balcerowicz and Agnieszka Kuszevska; Tarikh-i-Siyasat Kashmir by Dr. Afag; and Kashmir & the Future of South Asia edited by Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal.

PM To Flag Off

and offering modern onboard facilities," the official added.

Kulgam Operation

were killed, they said.

The identity and group affiliation of the slain terrorists has not been ascertained so far, they added



Shubman Gill Among Nominees For ICC's Player Of The Month Award

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India captain Shubman Gill was on Wednesday named among the three nominees for ICC's Player of the Month award for July along with South Africa's Wiaan Mulder and England skipper Ben Stokes. Gill led India remarkably in the recently-concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy against England as his young side emerged with a hard-fought 2-2 draw, a series in which the 25-year-old rewrote batting records. Gill scored 754 runs in the series against England with four centuries, including a double ton at 75.40 to break legendary Sunil Gavaskar's record (732) for the highest run tally for an Indian captain in a five-Test series. Gill's returns are now also the second-best behind Sir Donald Bradman (810 runs) in the all-time list for captains. "Shubman Gill had a sensational month, amassing 567 runs at an impeccable average of 94.50 in three

Tests during India's gripping series in England," the ICC wrote on its website. "He played a starring role in India's record-breaking win at Edgbaston, where he scored a monumental 269 in the first innings followed by 161 in the second. His combined 430 runs across the two innings is the second highest tally, next only to Graham Gooch's 456," it added. The ICC said Gill carried the baton from "all-time great" Virat Kohli at No.4. "His consistency at No. 4, carrying on the baton from all-time great Virat Kohli, provided stability and flair in equal measure, and combined with his extraordinary captaincy in his debut series," it said. In his maiden outing as South Africa captain, Mulder struck a mammoth 367 not out against Zimbabwe but declared his team's innings when he could have broken legendary Brian Lara's record for highest individual total of 400 not out against England in 2004. The ICC said, "He scored 531 runs

across the two matches at an astonishing average of 265.50, including a composed 147 in the second innings of the first Test." "However, his standout act came in the second Test at Bulawayo, where he smashed an unbeaten 367 in his maiden outing as South Africa's Test skipper — the highest individual score in South African Test history." "Mulder also chipped in with the ball, claiming seven wickets at just 15.28 apiece, including a four-wicket haul in the first Test," it added. The ICC lauded Stokes for his all-round show against India saying, "He scored 251 runs at an average of 50.20 and took 12 wickets at 26.33, delivering in high-pressure situations with both bat and ball." "His leadership proved crucial in maintaining England's intensity and belief in a closely contested series. With ball in hand, he bowled long spells, often breaking key partnerships and turning the tide in England's favour," it added.

Siraj Arrives In Hyderabad To Groups Of Adoring Fans

India pacer Mohammed Siraj on Wednesday landed in his hometown Hyderabad after a stellar performance in the intensely-contested drawn Test series against England and enthusiastic fans made a beeline to welcome him. Siraj was the leading wicket-taker in the five-match series. He played all the five games and bowled a mammoth 185.3 overs. The 31-year-old, along with team's fielding coach T Dilip, first landed at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport terminal from London before heading to his home base. He was dressed in dapper black casuals and a small group of fans gave him a joyous welcome. There were requests for selfies and autographs but Siraj quickly trooped into a car and left for the domestic terminal to catch the connecting flight to Hyderabad, where he was once again greeted by a group of adoring fans. Siraj's most definitive effort came on the fifth day of the final Test at the Oval, when his singular grit helped India bowl out England for 367 in a chase of 374. Siraj took five wickets in the innings to complete a match-haul of nine wickets. The six-run win, the slimmest in India's Test history, earned the visitors a highly admirable 2-2 draw in the series.



Root Should Be Man Of The Series: Harry Brook

Star England batter Harry Brook disagreed with India coach Gautam Gambhir's decision to name him as Player of the Series, saying the honour should have gone to Joe Root for his prolific run in the five-Test series. With the series ending 2-2, each team's coach selected one player from the opposition for the Player of the Series award. While England head coach Brendon McCullum picked India captain Shubman Gill, Gambhir chose Brook as England's standout performer. Brook played a destructive innings of 111 off 98 balls on the fourth day of the final Test, putting England on the brink of a record chase before the visitors collapsed, losing seven wickets for 66 runs to concede the match. "I didn't score as many runs as Rooty (Joe Root), so I probably think he should be Man of the Series—and Man of the Summer again, like he has been for many years," Brook told the BBC. "I think we're in a great place. Obviously, it has been an awesome series. 2-2, I didn't think it was going to be like this, to be honest." While Brook scored 481 runs at an average of 53.44, Root amassed 537 runs at an average of 67.12 across nine innings in the five-match series. (PTI)

Sourav Ganguly All Set To Re-Enter Administration

Nearly three years after he stepped down as BCCI chief, former India skipper Sourav Ganguly is set to re-enter administration as he will in all likelihood file nomination for the president's post in the upcoming Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) elections. The 52-year-old Ganguly was the CAB president till 2019, having started his journey as the secretary of the state unit under late Jagmohan Dalmiya back in 2014. In 2019, he was unanimously elected as the president of the BCCI with Jay Shah as the secretary but after completion of one term, Ganguly had to make way for 1983 World Cup hero Roger Binny. "Yes, Sourav is very keen to come back to administration. He has made up his mind to file nomination for the CAB president's post. If one goes by BCCI constitution, he will have five years (total nine years in state) left. Whether he will be a unanimous choice or there will be an election is still not clear at this stage," a senior CAB official, privy to the developments in state unit, told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Incidentally, the current CAB president is Snehasish, who is Ganguly's older brother.

UK Police To Use 'DNA Tagging Spray' Disorderly Behaviour From Fans

A police force in northwest England will use a "DNA tagging spray" to try to curb disorderly behavior from soccer fans this season. Cheshire police said Wednesday they will equip officers with the spray at all fourth-tier matches in the region, including for Crewe Alexandra's game against Accrington Stanley on Saturday. The spray marks equipment, clothing and skin with an invisible uniquely-coded synthetic DNA solution that can be used for forensic evidence. It "clings to skin and clothing for months," police said. The spray shows up under ultraviolet light. "We know that the vast majority of football fans are law abiding, but unfortunately on occasions there are some who are intent on causing disorder, which is why a strong policing operation is essential," said chief constable Mark Roberts, who is the lead for soccer policing in the UK. "I'm confident that this new tool will make a real difference," he added, "by helping to identify and deter the criminals who attend football matches here in Cheshire." (AP)

DYSS Budgam Hosts Day 2 DL Girls Basketball Championship

Dabirah Hassan

BUDGAM: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Budgam, under the leadership of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Ghulam Hassan Lone, conducted Day 2 of the Inter Zonal District Level Basketball Championship for Girls across All Age Groups at Foundation World School Budgam. The event was formally inaugurated by Ghulam Hassan Khanday, Activity Incharge DYSSO Budgam, amidst an atmosphere of high energy and enthusiasm. A large number of students from both government and private institutions participated,



showcasing their incredible skills, sportsmanship and passion for the game. "This grand sporting initiative not only aims to promote basketball at the grassroots level but also provides a vital platform for young female athletes to shine, compete, and grow. The championship continues to reflect the commitment of DYSSO Budgam towards nurturing youth talent and strengthening the sports ecosystem in the district," the department said. "The matches were marked by intense competition, team spirit and electrifying performances, making the day a memorable chapter in Budgam's sporting calendar," it added.

District Level Volleyball & Kabaddi Events Continue In Anantnag



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: An Under-19 Girls Volleyball Tournament is being organised at MS Bona Dialgam by DYSSO Anantnag. A unity pledge was also taken by all attendees. Meanwhile, the Inter-Zonal Girls Kabaddi Tournament (U-14 and U-17) was held by District Youth Services and Sports Office Anantnag at Wizkids School, Batengo. The event saw spirited participation from over 275 girl students representing various zones of the district, in which Zone Achabal clinched U-14 and

U-17 finals. The concluding ceremony was presided over by DYSSO Anantnag Raja Yaqoob, who felicitated winners and runners-up, applauding the growing participation of girls in competitive sports. In another event, Zone Srigufwara concluded its Inter-School Zonal Level U-17 Boys Cricket Tournament at Sports Stadium Nowshara with two high-energy matches. HSS Mahind clinched the title by defeating Sir Sayed Mahind by 36 runs. Shahid Saleem of HSS Mahind was declared Player of the Tournament for his all-round performance.

Kashmir's Bilquis Mir Meets Sports Min To Discuss Water Sports Future

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: From an accidental kayaker to being a jury member at the Olympics, Kashmiri trailblazer Bilquis Mir has come a long way and it was another moment of pride for her when Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and Minister of State for Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse met her to discuss the sport's future. The 38-year-old, who served as a jury member for kayaking and canoeing during the Paris Olympics last year, met the two ministers here on Tuesday and apprised them about the growth of water sports in the country. "I can see that the contribution of sportspersons is acknowledged more outside Jammu and Kashmir and this was clear from the attention and



respect I got during my meeting with the two respected ministers," Mir told PTI. She said the Sports Minister even asked her to prepare a roadmap for kayaking and canoeing and groom teams too.

"It was heartening to know that the Union sports ministry is keen on these water sports which in total have 16 medals in Olympics," she said. Her meeting with the two ministers comes at a time when

Kashmir's iconic Dal lake is gearing up to host the inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival from August 21 to 23. After the interaction, Khadse, while stressing on the transformative potential of sports, laud-

ed Mir for her inspiring journey and deep commitment to grassroots development. Mir is a tale of overcoming barriers and achieving new milestones in Kashmir when terrorism was at its peak. She started her journey on the waters of Dal Lake, where she honed her kayaking skills after being introduced to the sport accidentally while out with a friend. Between 1998 and 2006, she dominated the national stage, winning more than 25 medals and became the first from her state to compete for India in the ICF Sprint World Cup in Hungary, where she progressed to the semifinals -- a first for Indian water sports. She was also the national coach for the women's kayaking and canoeing team at the London Olympics in 2012.

Relief For BCCI As Only Who Take Govt. Funds To Come Under RTI

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: In what can be construed as a relief to the BCCI, the Sports Ministry has amended the RTI-related provision of the National Sports Governance Bill, placing only those bodies under its ambit which rely on government grants and assistance. The bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on July 23 and its clause 15 (2) stated that "a recognised sports organisation shall be considered as a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 with respect to the exercise of its functions, duties and powers under this Act." The RTI has been a thorny issue for the BCCI, which has steadfastly opposed coming under it as the Board is not dependent on government funds unlike a majority of other National Sports Federations (NSFs).



The amendment proposed in the bill effectively puts an end to that apprehension. "The amended clause defines public authority as an entity that is relying on government funds or assistance. With this amendment, there is a clear definition of

what is a public authority," a well-placed source told PTI. "If this had not been done, it would have been a grey area that could have led to the bill getting held up or being challenged in court. So anything that involves public money will come under RTI. It defines the specifics," the source added. "And even if a national sports body is not taking government funds, it can still be questioned if government assistance of any kind is involved in the conduct or operation of its events. Because government assistance is not merely funds, it is also about infrastructure," he explained. The BCCI had earlier stated that it would study the bill before commenting on its provisions. The RTI Act defines a "public authority" as any institution or body created by any law made by Parliament or a State Legislature,

including bodies owned, controlled, or substantially financed by the government. The amended sports bill will be "in alignment with this definition." Once the bill becomes an act, the BCCI will have to register itself as an NSF given that cricket has become an Olympic sport, which is set for a debut in the 2028 Games in the T20 format. The bill has the provision for a National Sports Board (NSB) to create a stringent system of accountability and all NSFs will have to attain NSB's recognition for access to central government funding. Another striking aspect of it is the National Sports Tribunal, which will have the powers of a civil court and decide disputes ranging from selection to election involving federations and athletes. Once instituted, the Tribunal's decisions can only be challenged in the Supreme Court.

'Natural disasters caused \$135 billion in economic losses in first half of 2025'

PTI

ZURICH: Natural disasters caused \$135 billion in economic losses globally in the first half of 2025, fuelled by the Los Angeles wildfires, reinsurer Swiss Re said Wednesday.

Swiss Re, which serves as an insurer of insurance companies, said first half losses were up from the \$123 billion in the first half of 2024.

The Zurich-based reinsurance giant estimated that of this year's first half losses, \$80 billion had been insured -- almost double the 10-year average, in 2025 prices.

The Los Angeles blazes in January constitute the largest-ever insured wildfire loss event by far, reaching an estimated \$40 billion, said Swiss Re.

It said the "exceptional loss severity" of the fires was down to prolonged winds, a lack of



rainfall and "some of the densest concentration of high-value single-family residential property in the US".

Swiss Re said losses from wildfires had risen sharply over the past decade due to rising temperatures, more frequent

droughts and changing rainfall patterns -- plus greater suburban sprawl and high-value asset concentration.

"Most fire losses originate in the US and particularly in California, where expansion in hazardous regions has been high," it said.

Before 2015, wildfire-related insured losses made up around one percent of all natural catastrophe claims, but now account for seven percent.

Hurricane season approaching

Insured losses from severe thunderstorms amounted to \$31 billion in the first half of 2025.

The second half of the year is usually more costly for insurers due to damage during the North Atlantic hurricane season.

If current loss trends continue, global insured losses from natural catastrophes in 2025 could exceed the Swiss Re Institute's projections of \$150 billion.

"The strongest lever to increase the resilience and safety of communities is to double down on mitigation and adaptation. It's here that everyone can help reduce losses before they occur," said Swiss Re's group chief economist Jerome Haegeli.

"While mitigation and adaptation measures come at a price, our research shows that, for example, flood protection measures such as dykes, dams and flood gates are up to 10 times more cost-effective than rebuilding."

The March earthquake in Myanmar figured among the major natural disasters in the first six months of the year, with the tremors felt in neighbouring Thailand, India, and China.

In Thailand alone, insured losses reached \$1.5 billion.

Overall, while natural disasters caused \$135 billion in economic losses in the first half of 2025, man-made disasters -- which include industrial accidents -- caused another \$8 billion in losses, of which \$7 billion were insured losses.

WhatsApp Bans 6.8 Mn Accounts, Launches Safety Tool



PTI

WhatsApp has launched a new 'safety overview', which will alert a user when someone not in their contact adds them to a new WhatsApp group that they may not recognise, as the Meta messaging platform intensified its crackdown on scams and frauds.

The safety overview will contain key information about the said group and tips to stay safe, it said.

"From there, you can exit the group without ever having to look at the chat. And if you think you might recognise the group after seeing the safety overview, you can choose to see the chat for more context," according to WhatsApp. And notifications from the group will be silenced until the user marks that they wish to stay.

Meta's messaging platform further said it is exploring ways to caution users when they start a chat with someone not in their contacts by providing more information about the person they are messaging. This, it hopes, will enable informed decisions.

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