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## Era Of Terror Is Over In J&K: LG

Hands Over 37 Appointment Letters to Terror Victims' Kin



Says Justice Means Healing, Not Just Punishment

Observer News Service

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday handed over appointment letters to 37 next of kin (NoKs) of terrorism victims at the Convention Centre Jammu, marking what he described as a decisive step towards restoring dignity and delivering | More on P6

'Will Not Rest Until Justice Reaches Every Family'

## '438 Terror Victim Families Given Jobs Since 2025'

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that appointment letters have been issued to 438 terror-victim families since 2025, describing the figure not merely as a statistic but as "shattered worlds" that lost loved ones to violence. Addressing a gathering here, Sinha said each such case represented homes | More on P6

## LG God Sent Angel To Us: Kin Of Terror Victims

"Justice has finally been done," said Abrar Ahmed of Rajouri, who lost his parents to terrorism 26 years ago, after he received his appointment letter from Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday. Abrar is among 438 beneficiaries who were handed government letters by the lieutenant governor to | More on P6

**THE YOUTH OF UT AND TERROR** victim families aspire to a bright future and wish to live a better life."

## Para Moves Bill For New Divisions, Districts In J&K

KO Web Desk

Srinagar: PDP legislator Waheed Para has moved a private member bill in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly seeking a statutory framework for the reorganisation of administrative divisions, districts, sub-divisions and tehsils across the Union Territory.

Titled 'The Jammu and Kashmir Territorial Administrative Reorganisation Bill, 2026', the proposed legislation calls for the creation of new administrative divisions, including a Chenab Division with headquarters in Doda and a Pir Panjal Division with headquarters in Rajouri, in addition

to the existing Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

The bill proposes several new districts in the Kashmir division, including Tral-Awantipora hill district, Ashmuqam-Pahalgam hill district, Beerwah, Sopore, Handwara, Gurez, Tangdhar-Karnah hill district and Norabad hill district.

In the Jammu division, it suggests the formation of new hill districts such as Nowshera, Bhaderwah, Banihal, Thathri, Akhnoor, Billawar, Kotranka and Mendhar, aimed at improving administrative reach and planning in geographically challenging areas.

According to the draft, the government | More on P6

## 72 Private Bills Lined Up, Passage Remains Unlikely

Agencies

As many as 72 private member bills are scheduled to be listed for introduction in the second leg of the budget session starting on March 27. However, the chances of these bills being passed remain bleak, given that such legislations have rarely been approved in J&K's legislative | More on P6

## Trump Delays Iran Strike After 48-Hour Ultimatum Escalates Crisis

Trans Asia News

Cairo: A dramatic escalation in the ongoing West Asia conflict took a sudden turn on Monday as US President Donald Trump stepped back from his own 48-hour ultimatum to Iran, announcing a five-day delay in threatened strikes on Iranian power infrastructure even as Tehran rejected claims of any ongoing negotiations.

The shift followed a week-end of intense rhetoric, with Trump warning he would "hit and obliterate" Iran's power plants—"starting with the biggest one first"—if Tehran failed to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital oil transit route through which nearly 20 percent of global crude supplies pass.

As the deadline ticked down, Iran signalled defiance rather than retreat.

The Islamic Revolutionary



Guard Corps (IRGC) and senior Iranian officials warned that any attack on Iran's energy infrastructure would trigger sweeping retaliation across the region, targeting US-linked facilities and allied infrastructure.

"If Iran's fuel and energy infrastructure is attacked, then fuel, energy, information technology systems and

desalination infrastructure used by America and the Israeli regime in the region will be struck," said Col. Ebrahim Zolfaqari, spokesman for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya military command.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf issued an even starker warning, saying that any such strikes would | More on P6

## US Holding Talks with 'Respected' Iran Leader: Trump Agencies

US President Donald Trump says Iran wants "to make a deal" and claims US envoys have been holding talks with a "respected" Iranian leader. Trump told reporters Monday his Middle East special envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner conducted talks Sunday into the evening.

He said talks would continue today. Trump did not name any official or officials representing Tehran. Trump said the US has not talked to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei. Trump said if a deal is reached with Iran, the US will move to | More on P6

## Red Fort Blast Case NIA Raids Multiple Locations In J&K

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The National Investigation Agency on Monday conducted searches at various locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with its probe into the Red Fort car bomb blast case, officials said.

"The searches are being conducted at nine places in various locations of J&K," an NIA spokesperson said.

The locations included the Handwara area of Kupwara district, Rafiabad in Baramullah district, and places in Kulgam and Srinagar districts, among others, the officials said.

At least 13 people were killed, and several others were injured in the blast near the Red Fort that shook the national capital on November 10 last year.

The blast was triggered by suicide bomber Umar-Un-Nabi, a medical doctor and assistant professor at Al Falah University | More on P6

## PM Stresses Diplomacy To End War Says will overcome West Asia crisis like Covid

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the difficult global conditions caused by the West Asia conflict are likely to persist for a long time and called upon the nation to remain prepared and united, just as it had stood together during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement in the Lok Sabha, PM Modi addressed concerns related to the impact on fuel, fertilisers, national security and other areas in India as well as its nationals residing in the West Asia region,



detailing steps taken by the government to ensure that "ordinary families face as little trouble as possible", and said a unanimous voice should go out to the world from India's

Parliament on this crisis.

Reaffirming India's unwavering commitment to humanity and peace, the prime minister said the dialogue and diplomacy remain the only path to resolution and every Indian effort is directed at de-escalation and the cessation of hostilities.

Informing the House that he has engaged with all relevant West Asian leaders and urged them to reduce tensions and end the conflict, Modi emphasised that attacks on commercial ships and obstruction of international waterways like the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 | More on P6

## Ex-Tehsildar Awarded One-Year Jail In 2010 Bribery Case

M Ahmad

Srinagar: A Court here on Monday convicted a former Tehsildar in a corruption case dating back to 2010 and sentenced him to one year of simple imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 20,000.

The Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption, Tasleem Arif, convicted Mohammad Akram Khan, then Tehsildar Chadoora, under Section 161 of the Ranbir Penal Code for accepting a bribe.

According to the prosecution, the case was registered by the Vigilance Organization Kashmir (now Anti-Corruption Bureau) following a complaint by a resident of Chadoora, who alleged that the accused in 2010 demanded Rs 20,000 to decide a pending property dispute in his favour.

A trap was laid by the vigilance team, during which



the accused was "caught red-handed" while accepting the bribe at his residence in Jawahar Nagar Srinagar, the prosecution said. The tainted money was recovered from under a pillow in his room after the complainant and an independent witness signalled the trap team.

The Court, after trial, held the accused guilty of accepting illegal gratification in discharge of official duties.

While deciding the sentence, the Court took note of mitigating factors including the convict's advanced age, retirement from | More on P6

## Evacuation Drags, 120 Students Await Exit from Iran

Observer News Service

The evacuation of Indian students stranded in Iran continues at a slow pace, with nearly 120 students still stuck in Astara awaiting exit

clearance, raising concerns over delays in their return. Around 100 of these students are expected to receive exit codes by March 31. However, uncertainty persists, with fears that not all | More on P6

## ED Attaches Rs 16.86 Lakh In 'Digital Arrest' Case

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets worth Rs 16.86 lakh in a 'digital arrest' cyber fraud case involving impersonation of law enforcement agencies to extort money from a victim, officials said on Monday.

In a statement, an ED spokesperson said the Srinagar Zonal Office attached proceeds of crime amounting to Rs 16,86,465 under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The attached amount is lying in a bank account maintained in the name of M/s Jeevika Foundations with

HDFC Bank, Karol Bagh, New Delhi. The account is operated by accused Gaurav Kumar, son of Jaipal Singh, who is allegedly involved in a well-organised 'digital arrest' cyber fraud racket.

"ED initiated the investigation on the basis of FIR No. 26/2024 dated October 19, 2024, registered by Cyber Police Station, Kashmir Zone, along with a preliminary chargesheet filed before the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar," the spokesperson said.

The investigation relates to a cyber fraud case in which individuals were deceived through impersonation of officials from law enforcement and regulatory agencies, the statement said. | More on P6

## Tiny Coin, Massive Heart 50 Paise Sells For Rs 17,000 At Mir Behri Auction



Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: A 50-paise coin—ordinarily of little value—emerged as one of the most powerful symbols of Kashmir's donation drive for the people of Iran after it was auctioned for Rs 17,000 in Srinagar.

The coin came from a child who brought his piggy bank to contribute towards relief for children affected by bombings in Iran. While sorting the contents at a mosque in Lati Mohalla, Mir Behri, in the interiors of Dal Lake, organisers found the small | More on P6

## J&K To Get Automatic Weather Station This Year

Agencies

Srinagar: The Union government on Monday said that one Automatic Weather Station (AWS) will be installed in Jammu and Kashmir in 2026 under Mission Mausam Phase-II to strengthen weather monitoring and agro-advisory services.

Replying to a question in Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Earth Sciences said that around 200 Agro-AWS will be deployed across the country during 2026, aimed at improving agro-meteorological observations and providing better weather-based advisories to the agriculture sector.

According to official data, Jammu and Kashmir has been allocated one such station under the proposed expansion plan. | More on P6



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# IIT-Delhi Launches Comic-Style Brochure To Demystify Complex Scientific Concepts

Press Trust Of India

The Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi has come up with first-of-its-kind comic-style brochure to bring the complex world of materials engineering alive through humour, storytelling and vibrant art, officials said on Thursday. At the heart of the comic titled 'Department of Materials Science and Engineering (DMSE)-- Delivering a Material Safari Experience' is Professor Padarth, the newly introduced mascot. Presented as a witty guide, Professor Padarth accompanies a curious student on a jungle-safari-themed journey through the diverse terrains of materials science, from metals and ceramics to polymers, data science and emerging smart materials. According to the officials, through this playful narrative style, the brochure aims to



“Through Professor Padarth's adventures, we hope to spark curiosity and showcase the excitement that lies in understanding the materials that shape our world

demystify complex scientific concepts and highlight real-world connections that make materials engineering both impactful and relatable. "This comic book was con-

ceived to herald an era of bringing the fun aspects of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) to the fore. Materials engineering is a deeply creative

and inspiring field, and we wanted a medium that could engage students and non-technical audiences alike. "Through Professor Padarth's adventures, we hope to spark

curiosity and showcase the excitement that lies in understanding the materials that shape our world," said Jayant Jain, Head, Department of Materials Science and Engineering. The first edition of the DMSE comic book will be followed by a series of comic books that will be released over time to capture the essence of the department, its research projects, and teaching work through the medium of art. "The idea is to let students look at materials as something they live with and experience every day so that the work they do does not feel highly technical but completely natural and logical. Professor Padarth's journey through the realm of materials will be the new fantasy world through which we wish to reach out to our younger generation of materials scientists," said R Lakshmi Narayani, Associate Professor, IIT-Delhi.

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed paying Guest/homes stay unit under the name & Style of M/s.CROWN SCHOLARS RESIDENCE HOME STAY " situated at Dara Harwan

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Whereas I Ms. Mushtaq Ahmad Rather C/o Wali Mohammad Rather R/o Stadium Colony Budshah Nagar Srinagar Intends to apply in the office of the prescribed authority of Director of tourism for registration of my proposed paying Guest house/Home stay under the name and style" M/s. CROWN SCHOLARS RESIDENCE HOME STAY " situated at Dara Harwan Srinagar under Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit landownership certificate from concerned Tehsildar with attested photographs of the unit through Dy commissioner concerned rent/lease deed/partnership deed/issued by concerned sub-registrar, judicial magistrate (if applicable NOC from the owner to the effect that the property can be used as home stay), Character certificate of the applicant from the concerned police station, undertaking from the owner as self declaration public notice inviting objections, if any in the print media, list of family members Name, age, and photograph self attested by owner, photographs of the unit as mentioned in the applicant (such of exterior and individual be rooms and bathrooms), inspection report by the committee (The recommendation of the inspection committee shall decide whether to issue a registration to the unit or not keeping in view the type of accommodation and amenity, adhar card. Now before my case is processed for registration by the prescribed authority. The matter is hereby notified for information of general public/organizations for objections if any and the same should reach to the office of prescribed Authority within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. objection received beyond the period of 7 days from the date of publication shall not be entertained and the case shall be proceeded under rules as per merit

Subject: Grant of registration of the proposed paying Guest/homes stay unit under the name & Style of M/s.BADAM BREEZE HOME STAY " situated at Arabal Shalimar

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Whereas I Ms. Sami Ibrahim W/o Mohammad Ibrahim Bhat R/o Rathpora Eidgah Srinagar Intends to apply in the office of the prescribed authority of Director of tourism for registration of my proposed paying Guest house/Home stay under the name and style" M/s.BADAM BREEZE HOME STAY " situated at Arabal Shalimar under Tourist Trade Act1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, I will submit landownership certificate from concerned Tehsildar with attested photographs of the unit through Dy commissioner concerned rent/lease deed/partnership deed/issued by concerned sub-registrar, judicial magistrate (if applicable NOC from the owner to the effect that the property can be used as home stay), Character certificate of the applicant from the concerned police station, undertaking from the owner as self declaration public notice inviting objections, if any in the print media, list of family members Name, age, and photograph self attested by owner, photographs of the unit as mentioned in the applicant (such of exterior and individual be rooms and bathrooms), inspection report by the committee (The recommendation of the inspection committee shall decide whether to issue a registration to the unit or not keeping in view the type of accommodation and amenity, adhar card. Now before my case is processed for registration by the prescribed authority. The matter is hereby notified for information of general public/organizations for objections if any and the same should reach to the office of prescribed Authority within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in leading local newspaper of the valley. objection received beyond the period of 7 days from the date of publication shall not be entertained and the case shall be proceeded under rules as per merit

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MALIK NEWS AGENCY	AERWANI
IRSHAD NEWS AGENCY	KOKERNAG
RAYEES NEWS AGNECY	AWANTIPORA
PAMPURE NEW AGENCY	PAMPURE
SANGAM NEWS AGENCY	SANGAM
GAZI KHURSHEED NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
MANZOOR NEWS AGENCY	PUWLAMA
ALTAF NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
MANZOOR NEWS AGENCY	NORPORA
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BOOZE NEWS AGNECY	AWANTIPORA
3 WAY TRAL NEWS AGENCY	TRAL
SYED MAQBOOL NEWS AGNECY	TRAL
DAR NEWS AGENCY	PULWAMA
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**NOTICE**  
 I have lost my four (04) identity cards on 16th March while travelling from Rangreth to Budgam Court. The lost items include my Gate Entry Pass of Old Air Field Military Station (bearing No. 21/GE 970EWS/24), PGMV and along with my driving license. If anyone finds these documents, I kindly request that they please return them to the address/contact details mentioned below. Since the documents are lost, I intend to apply for duplicate passes. If anybody has any objection, they may convey the same to the concerned authorities within one week from the date of this notice.  
**Latif Ahmad Ganai**  
 9419711411/ 9622570361

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 I want to change the name on electricity bill bearing consumer ID No: 0211020003851 from Abdul Khaliq Gudda to Aabid Maqbool . If anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the PDD Sub Div Nawa within seven days. After that no objection shall be entertained.  
 Aabid Maqbool .  
 S/o Mohd Maqbool Gadda  
 R/o Hanji Mohalla Kakapora

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM**  
 Subject:- Necessary Correction/change in address in data to the License No. JK-0420100010635 issued in favour of GULZAR AHMAD MIR Parentage MOHD SAFDAR MIR  
 Whereas an application has been received by one GULZAR AHMAD MIR Parentage MOHD SAFDAR MIR wherein he claimed that the Fathers Name has been wrongly recorded in the records of Driving Licenses as MOHD SAFDAR MIR Which needs to be changed as MOHD SAFDAR MIR.  
 Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any in this regard shall reach in written in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper. After expiry of stipulated time no objection will be entertained.  
 Assistant Regional Transport officer  
 Budgam Kashmir

**The Jammu And Kashmir Board Of School Education**  
 Sub Office Pulwama  
 I have passed/appeared in Secondary School Examination (Class- 10th) under Roll No. 7246077 Session: dec Year 1992 through the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. Due to the error committed by the Govt HSS Dardsara Tral against my father's name as M. Ismail Bhat Instead Of Mohd Ismail Bhat  
 Now, I have applied for correction/rectification of error in the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education Sub Office Pulwama . If any person has any objection in this regard, may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Sub Office Pulwama within seven days from the date of Publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period no objection will be entertained.  
 Name: Farooq Ahmad Bhat  
 Father's name: Mohd Ismail Bhat  
 Mother's Name: Rehti Begum  
 DOB: 25-11-1975  
 Residence: Kamla Buchoo  
 Mobile no: 9622629216

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 My mother's name has been wrongly written in my 10th class Marks Card bearing Roll No: as Gulshan Bano while her correct name is Gulshan Begum. Now I have applied for the correction of the same if anybody has any objection in this regard he/she may file them in the office of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education Sub Office Baramulla within seven days After that no objection shall be entertained.  
 Gazanfer Ali Bhat  
 S/o Shafiq Hussain Bhat & Gulshan Begum

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 I, Zulfiqar Ali S/o Altaf Hussain and mother name Rubaba Bano residing at Balti Bazar Kargil hereby inform the general public that I have lost/misplaced my original Marks Card with Roll No. 146038267 and Registration no. 2046002000750027 and Diploma Certificate of Class 10th Studying in Munshi Habibullah Mission School Baimathang Kargil issued by the Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education . Now , I am applying for the issuance of duplicate Marks Card and Diploma Certificate from the concerned authority. Objections, if any may kindly be conveyed to the concerned authority i.e. Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 I, Zulfiqar Ali S/o Altaf Hussain and mother name Rubaba Bano residing at Balti Bazar Kargil hereby inform the general public that I have lost/misplaced my original Diploma Certificate with Roll No. 339059098 and Registration no. 2046002000750027 of Class 12th Studying in Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Jawahar Nagar Srinagar issued by the Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education . Now , I am applying for the issuance of duplicate Diploma Certificate from the concerned authority. Objections, if any may kindly be conveyed to the concerned authority i.e. Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education within 07 days from the date of issue of this notice.

## Firecrackers Trigger Shop Blaze, Goods worth Lakhs Damaged

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Electronic goods worth lakhs of rupees were damaged after a closed shop caught fire in Srinagar's Mehoor Nagar area, allegedly due to firecrackers set off by children, locals said.

The incident occurred when firecrackers were reportedly pushed through a gap beneath the shutter of the shop late at night, triggering a blaze inside the premises.

The shop, owned by Abdul Qayoom Bagow, dealt in electronic goods and had stock valued at around Rs 10 to 12 lakh stored inside, the owner said.

The episode has drawn attention to continued violations of restrictions on firecracker use in residential areas, with locals alleging that such materials were freely available to children despite existing curbs.

According to the shop owner, the fire caused extensive damage to goods kept inside the store before it was brought under control.

"Goods worth around Rs 10 to 12 lakh have been damaged. I am thankful to the local residents who helped in dousing the fire," Bagow said.

Locals said children were seen bursting firecrackers in lanes and by-lanes across the locality, including near

closed shops and residential spaces, causing distress to elderly and unwell individuals.

In a separate incident reported from the same area, a sofa and a car cover were also gutted after being set ablaze by firecrackers, locals said.

There was no report of any injury in either of the incidents. Locals have raised concerns over the unchecked sale and use of firecrackers, especially among minors, and called for stricter enforcement of existing regulations.

According to KNT, authorities have previously imposed restrictions on the sale and use of firecrackers in Srinagar citing safety and public health concerns, but enforcement remains a challenge on the ground, locals said.

Notably, the Srinagar district administration imposed a blanket ban on the sale and use of firecrackers in October 2018, citing public safety and law-and-order concerns.

In subsequent years, authorities reinforced restrictions in line with environmental norms, including limiting the use of firecrackers to designated time slots and permitting only "green crackers" during certain festivals.

Despite these measures, enforcement has remained inconsistent, with periodic violations reported from various localities.



## Tulip Garden Attracts Over 57,000 Visitors In First Week

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Tulip Garden in Srinagar, Asia's largest, recorded a footfall of around 57,000 visitors in its first week of opening, officials said on Monday.

Assistant Floriculture Officer In-charge Tulip Garden Srinagar, Imran Ahmad, informed KNO that the figure pertains to offline ticket sales recorded during the initial week.

"The footfall in the first week is around 57,000, and this is based on offline ticketing," he said, adding that the online ticketing data is currently not accessible.

The officer said the online figures will be compiled and made available after the garden closes for the season. "The online ticketing data can be accessed later and will be available once the garden is closed," he added.

Ahmad said the visitors include a mix of locals, domestic tourists and foreigners. "There has been a good mix of locals and tourists. Around 200 to 300 foreign tourists have also visited the garden in the first week," he said.

He, however, noted that intermittent rainfall during the opening week slightly impacted visitor turnout. Despite this, officials are hopeful of an increase in footfall in the coming days. "We are expecting more visitors in the coming days," he said.

Spread over the foothills of the Zabarwan range overlooking Dal Lake, the garden this year showcases around 70-75 varieties of tulips, along

## Traffic Gridlock Chokes Boulevard Road amid Tourist Surge

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A major traffic jam brought movement to a near standstill along Srinagar's Boulevard Road on Monday, leaving commuters stranded for extended periods and disrupting routine activity, witnesses said.

The congestion was reported along the busy stretch skirting the Dal Lake, where a surge in vehicular movement led to long queues and slow-moving traffic during peak hours.

The situation gained significance as the Boulevard Road remains one of the city's most frequented routes, catering to both daily commuters and a rising number of tourists.

Officials said traffic flow was affected due to a sharp increase in vehicle volume, particularly in the wake of the seasonal opening of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, which has drawn large crowds in recent days.

Commuters said vehicles remained stuck for long durations,

with minimal movement across key points of the stretch.

"We were caught in the jam for a long time with hardly any movement. It was difficult to navigate through the stretch," said a commuter travelling along the route.

Several commuters pointed to inadequate on-ground traffic regulation, saying the absence of sufficient personnel worsened the situation.

"There was confusion at multiple junctions, and traffic was not being effectively regulated. This stretch needs better management, especially during peak tourist season," another commuter said.

According to KNT, the congestion also affected movement of essential services, with delays reported in routine travel across the area, residents said.

The Boulevard Road, which connects key tourist spots and public spaces, typically experiences heavy traffic during peak seasons, but Monday's congestion was described by many as unusually severe.

with other ornamental flowers. Opened annually during the spring season, it remains a key highlight of

Jammu and Kashmir tourism calendar and attracts thousands of visitors from across India and abroad.

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**HIGHWAY STATUS**

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



**HIJRI CALENDAR**  
04- Shawwal  
1447

**PRAYERS**

FAJR	5: 06
ZUHR	12:40
ASR	4: 59
Magrib	6:48
ISHA	8: 09

### This Day In History

- 1379 - End of Gelderse war victory
- 1545 - German Parliament opens in Worms
- 1550 France & England sign Peace of Boulogne
- 1603 - Scottish King James VI son of Mary Queen of Scots, becomes King James I of England in succession to Elizabeth I, thus joining the English and Scottish crowns.
- 1765 - Britain enacts Quartering Act, required colonists to provide temporary housing to British soldiers.
- 1837 - Canada gives its black citizens the right to vote
- 1878 - British frigate Eurydice sunk; 300 lost
- 1882 - German scientist Robert Koch discovers and describes the tubercle bacillus which causes tuberculosis (Mycobacterium tuberculosis)
- 1894 - 37 miners killed at Franklin, Washington
- 1905 - A group of Cretans dedicated to Crete's union with Greece led by Eleutherios Venizelos, meet at the village of Therisso and proclaim a union in defiance of the Great Powers
- 1913 - Netherlands soccer team's 1st victory over England
- 1916 - German submarines torpedo the unarmed French cross-channel packet 'Sussex'
- 1924 - Greece becomes a republic
- 1941 - British troops defeat British Somalia
- 1941 - German troops occupy El Aghella Libya
- 1945 - Largest one-day airborne drop, 600 transports & 1300 gliders
- 1959 - Iraq withdraws from the Baghdad Pact

## Srinagar Parks Cry for Urgent Restoration

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Several public parks in Srinagar, including a children's park near LD Hospital, Joggers Park in Rajbagh and Dahlia Park opposite Municipal Park, are in a state of disrepair, raising safety concerns among locals.

The parks, which attract a large number of children and families, currently lack basic facilities, with broken swings, damaged play equipment and garbage scattered across the premises, they said.

The issue assumes significance as these parks serve as key recreational spaces in densely populated areas, and their deteriorating condition poses risks to children using unsafe and unusable structures.

Visitors alleged that most of the swings and play installations are either broken or missing, making the parks unfit for use.

ken or missing, making the parks unfit for use.

"There is nothing left for children. The swings are broken, equipment is missing and garbage is lying everywhere. It looks like these parks have been abandoned," said a local after visiting Children's Park along with his family.

Joggers Park, meant for morning walkers and fitness enthusiasts, is also reportedly in poor condition, with uneven pathways and lack of maintenance discouraging visitors.

At Dahlia Park, locals said overgrown grass, litter and damaged infrastructure have turned the space into an unusable area. Visitors have blamed the Floriculture Department for failing to maintain the parks, alleging that repeated complaints and high-lighting of the issue have not resulted in any improvement.

## Div Com Inaugurates Gyan Bharatam Workshop

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg inaugurated a three-day Gyan Bharatam Workshop & National Survey of Manuscripts at Indian IIM, Sanat Nagar, Srinagar.

The workshop is being organized by the Department of Archives, Archaeology & Museums, J&K to promote identification, preservation, conservation, and digitization of centuries-old manuscripts across Jammu & Kashmir.

Addressing the participants, the Divisional Commissioner underscored the importance of public participation in safeguarding manuscript heritage. He emphasized that the mission adopts a "Har Ghar Dastak" approach to reach custodians and ensure documentation of valuable manuscripts.

Highlighting the significance of the initiative, he said the Gyan Bharatam Mission aligns with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to preserve and document India's rich intellectual and cultural legacy.

The Director, Kuldeep Krishan Sidha stated that the workshop aims to sensitize and train District Level Committees in manuscript identification and provide practical training on the use of the Gyan Bharatam Mission mobile application for field surveys.

The programme also focuses on creating awareness about the importance of manuscript preservation and digitization as part of the broader knowledge ecosystem. The Gyan Bharatam App, launched by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is being used to monitor progress, with regular review at the PMO level.



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

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# The War Nobody Needed

From Delhi gas lines to global markets, the cost of escalation falls on ordinary people, while history warns where this leads.



### KO VIEW

## Reckless Joy

Festivals in Kashmir have long brought people into the open, filling streets and parks with families eager to spend time together. Laughter, food, and shared moments give these days a special warmth. Recent scenes, though, show a shift that deserves attention. Celebration has begun to blur into excess, and excitement often turns into disruption.

City roads during festival days tell this story clearly. Groups of young riders speed through crowded streets, engines roaring as they claim space in the name of fun. Traffic slows, pedestrians step back, and a sense of unease replaces ease. Crowds swell in popular spots, turning simple outings into stressful experiences for families who seek a pleasant day out. Public spaces begin to feel less welcoming and more chaotic.

This change becomes more troubling when joy crosses into harm. A video from Eid captured a deeply uncomfortable moment. A person with special needs was pushed and pulled by a group, treated as part of a spectacle rather than as an individual with self-esteem. Laughter filled the frame, though the discomfort on that person's face stood out just as clearly. Many who watched felt anger and sadness, as the line between fun and cruelty had clearly been crossed.

Such incidents point to a wider concern about how celebration is understood. Kashmir has seen difficult times and has learned the value of empathy and awareness. That shared experience calls for a sense of responsibility during moments of joy. Celebration gains meaning when it includes respect for others and an awareness of public space.

Public behaviour during festivals influences how people feel about stepping out. Families who plan a simple outing deserve streets that feel safe and welcoming. Children deserve spaces where joy feels genuine and free from fear. Elderly people deserve calm surroundings where they can take part in festivities without anxiety.

Authorities have a role to play in setting clear limits. Visible enforcement on busy days can discourage reckless driving and prevent overcrowding from turning into disorder. Swift action in cases of public misconduct can send a clear message that harmful behaviour carries consequences. Community leaders and local voices can also guide younger people toward more thoughtful ways of celebrating.

A small shift in attitude can ensure that joy remains inclusive and respectful.



Dr Sohail Nasti

The confrontation with Iran looks increasingly like a war nobody needed.

Driven by Donald Trump's policies and Benjamin Netanyahu's long-standing strategic posture, this escalation arrives without a clear or imminent threat to justify it.

That absence matters, as it suggests political calculation, ideology, and the pursuit of regional dominance propelled this conflict forward.

The human and economic toll now spreading across the globe makes the choice even harder to defend.

Netanyahu has spent years advocating hard-line action against Tehran. Critics view this moment as the fulfillment of that agenda, perhaps even a step toward expanding Israeli influence across the region.

That interpretation remains contested inside diplomatic circles, though it circulates widely.

What remains beyond debate: the price ordinary people pay when leaders opt for military solutions over sustained negotiation.

The damage extends far beyond the Middle East. In India, families queue for hours to secure cooking gas as energy supplies tighten and prices spike. Hotel owners shutter businesses they built over decades, unable to absorb surging operational costs. On roads throughout South Asia, traffic has thinned visibly.

An eerie, concrete sign fuel shortages have begun to bite into daily routines. These disruptions signal deeper strain gathering force across the global economy.

Energy markets have turned volatile, as supply chains, already stressed, now face additional fractures. Developing economies stand closest to the edge, vulnerable to inflation shocks and currency instability that richer nations absorb more easily.

The crisis exposes how thoroughly interconnected, and genuinely weak, modern economic life

“  
Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya stand as monuments to a particular failure: the belief that force alone can build lasting peace. Military intervention without inclusive diplomatic frameworks leaves fractured societies and generational instability. The world needs no additional chapter in that grim anthology.

has become. A decision made in Washington or Jerusalem influences dinner tables in Mumbai and commutes in Bangkok.

History brings no comfort here, reminding us how similar decisions have unraveled before.

The Iraq War promised quick results and delivered regional destabilization that persisted for decades. Insurgency, sectarian violence, and humanitarian catastrophe followed American troops home in reputation, while Iraqis bore the actual devastation.

Afghanistan's long war ended without the stability its architects predicted, leaving behind economic collapse and a government unable to govern. Libya's intervention fragmented into militia rule and political chaos that continues today.

Each conflict began with strategic or humanitarian arguments that sounded compelling in the moment. But each lacked a coherent plan for what came after the fighting stopped.

The pattern repeats with grim consistency: military action without a diplomatic framework produces prolonged chaos. Its cost is measured in millions of disrupted lives, in refugee flows that alter politics across continents, and in trust eroded between nations and within societies.

Contemporary statecraft demands transparency, multilateral engagement, and genuine commitment to negotiation. This escalation gives none of these.

Decisions arrive through back channels, lacking international consensus, unclear in purpose and endgame alike.

That opacity should trouble anyone who believes democratic accountability matters in matters of war and peace.

The architects of this conflict will neither queue for fuel, nor close family businesses or calculate which meals to skip as prices rise.

Ordinary people, distant from corridors of power, absorb these consequences. Their suffering represents the true cost of ill-calculated ventures: economic tremors that weaken global stability while crushing innocent populations.

We are watching something take form: a global order defined by shock, uncertainty, and strain. Instability in one region now reverberates across continents with speed previous generations never experienced. Confidence frays, security feels provisional, and growth, already uneven, grows more precarious.

Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya stand as monuments to a particular failure: the belief that force alone can build lasting peace.

Military intervention without inclusive diplomatic frameworks leaves fractured societies and generational instability.

The world needs no additional chapter in that grim anthology.

Leadership rooted in accountability, foresight, and genuine negotiation remains possible. It requires rejecting the seduction of quick military solutions and accepting the harder work of sustained engagement.

Without that shift, this conflict risks repeating mistakes history has already judged harshly.

The consequences will reach far beyond the battlefield. The entire world will bear them, again.

The author is a UK-based diplomacy analyst of Kashmiri origin. He can be reached at sohai.nasti@gmail.com.

### CASH COURSE

Read This Before You Buy Anything

## Market Patience

When markets fall, discipline and patience matter more than daily noise.

Irshad Mushtaq

Markets fall and fear rises. Many investors feel the urge to act fast. That instinct often does more harm than good. Short term declines usually come from global events like war, rising oil prices, and foreign money moving out. These shocks push prices down for a while, but they do not define the long journey.

Think of the market like Dal Lake. Some days bring strong waves. Water looks rough and uncertain. The lake still remains. Markets work in a similar way. Volatility is normal. Stability returns with time.

Panic selling is the biggest mistake. Good funds sold in fear rarely get bought back at the right time. Constantly checking prices only increases stress and leads to poor decisions. Following neighbours or social media adds noise instead of clarity. Each investor has different goals and timelines.

A better approach starts with thinking long term. Ten to twenty years gives investments the space to grow. Systematic investment plans work best when treated like a daily habit. Regular investing builds strength through both good and bad phases. A balanced portfolio also helps. Equity for growth, debt for stability, and a small portion of gold can reduce risk.

Reviewing investments is useful, but it should not become an emotional reaction to headlines. Compounding needs time and consistency. Small steps taken regularly create meaningful results.

The real question is simple: what habits are being built today for the future of the family?

Strong habits create confidence even when markets fall, while discipline turns uncertainty into opportunity over time. Falling markets test patience. They also reward those who stay the course.

The author is a Srinagar-based reputed financial educator.

### Letter to Editor

## Stop Sending Kashmiri Kids to Beg for Faith

Kashmir sends its children to collect money for mosques and madrasas. Eight-year-olds knock on doors, receipt books in hand, gathering cash for religious causes. The practice has spread so widely that many families barely notice it anymore.

They should. This custom carries costs we refuse to count.

Islam teaches that children hold sacred status. The Quran calls them an amanah, a trust delivered directly from Allah. That trust comes with clear obligations: protect their bodies, nurture their minds, preserve their self-esteem.

Sending young children out into the streets or to knock on strangers' doors cuts against every basic duty of care. These situations expose them to real risks, put them in positions where rejection carries emotional weight, and leave them vulnerable to words or actions that can stay far longer than

the moment itself.

Children learn quickly that their worth connects to what they can extract from others. And this lesson sticks.

The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, discouraged begging in all its forms. He praised the hand that gives over the hand that receives. He taught that labour, even humble labour, elevates the soul. Islamic charity operates through willing generosity, never through pressure or pity. Charity flows from open hearts and hands. It never demands that children serve as emotional leverage.

Religious institutions in Kashmir need support. Madrasas preserve language, scripture, and tradition, while mosques anchor community life.

Their cause driven by financial struggles deserves backing, but the method matters as much as the mission.

Adult volunteers can organize transparent fundraising drives. Digital

platforms reach donors directly. Community councils can manage collections with accountability and care. These alternatives exist, but communities still prefer the easier path.

Every adult who presses cash into a child's palm shares responsibility for this system's survival. The giver feels virtuous, the child feels useful, and the institution receives funds. But everyone participates, and avoids the harder question: why do we accept this?

Kashmir holds a distinguished place in Islamic intellectual history. Scholars from this valley defined theology, law, and poetry across centuries.

That legacy demands higher standards, requires communities to examine their customs with honest eyes, and insists that religious practice align with religious principle.

Childhood passes quickly, but its wounds endure. The children now collecting funds will raise the next genera-

tion. They will remember how society treated them. And they will carry those memories into classrooms, homes, and mosques. We determine what those memories hold.

Reform demands action from multiple directions. Religious leaders must speak clearly against child fundraising. Parents must refuse requests that place children in these roles. Donors must channel support through proper channels. Institutions must build sustainable funding models that respect everyone involved.

The choice stands before Kashmiri communities: convenience or principle. The answer will echo through generations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shoib A. Baba  
shoibnazar25@gmail.com

# The Finland We Forgot

Kashmir adopted a global best practice but ignored the training, pay, and clarity that make it succeed.



Mushtaq Hurra

Jammu and Kashmir's education department followed the best in the business.

The United States, the United Kingdom, Finland, Canada and Japan all place a second adult in pre-primary rooms to steady small bodies long enough for minds to learn.

We liked the idea, so in 2018 we advertised for "Aayas," promised 5,000 rupees a month and forgot to write what the job actually is.

The omission turned a global best practice into a maid post and wasted the cheapest chance we have to lift early learning across the valley.

The government order that created the position runs to four lines. It says "engage Aaya on need basis."

It never spells out the need, never lists tasks, and never sets working hours.

Head teachers filled the blank the way institutions always do: they handed the new hire a bucket.

Overnight the classroom assistant became the school maid, and the concept that helps Finland top world charts was reduced to scrubbing toilets and peeling onions for the midday meal.

Aayas are not make-believe characters. They are real women already on the payroll: 6,400 across the valley, one for every 25 Balvatika, kindergarten, pupils.

Most never finished high school, but they spend seven hours a day with four- and five-year-olds whose brains are forming faster than at any later stage.

Research from the National Council



of Educational Research and Training shows rural first-grade classes with a trusted ancillary worker record 17 percent lower absenteeism.

We have the ratio right. We simply refuse to treat the worker as educator.

The salary tells the story. Five thousand rupees is less than the price of a single school blazer sold in Srinagar's boutiques. It arrives quarterly, often three months late.

Three quarters of Aayas hold a second job after the last bell. 40 percent report chronic back pain from mopping floors. Burnout is routine, turnover is rising, and still the department wonders why the teaching-learning process stays stuck.

We could blame headmasters for overloading the position, but they were never given guidance.

One principal sends the Aaya to maintain voter rolls during village elections. Another makes her midday-meal incharge. Neither violates the original order, because the order is silent. And silence is expensive.

Finland spends 4 percent of its education budget on auxiliary staff training. We spend zero and then complain that our reading scores trail the global median.

Signs of repair are visible, but they are tentative.

This summer the State Council of Educational Research and Training teamed up with a local nonprofit to run three-day workshops in all ten



districts. Two thousand Aayas have already practised breathing games and learned to flag early signs of dyslexia.

Attendance is voluntary, enthusiasm is high, and the first cohort of schools reports a 9 percent jump in daily attendance from kindergarten sections.

The program costs less than the price of two smart classrooms that usually stay locked for want of a key.

What comes next is neither mysterious nor costly.

Double the honorarium to 10,000 rupees and pay on time through the same direct-benefit portal already used for pensions. Issue a one-page role chart signed by the director of school education: Aayas will assist in classroom management, main-

tain play corners, accompany sick children to the nearest health center and will not cook lunch.

Finally, guarantee twelve hours of refresher training every year, the same way we refresh math teachers on new textbooks.

The package would add 1.2 percent of the existing central education outlay for the region, and could place a trained second adult in every Balvatika room by next spring.

Kashmir public schools enroll 1.2 million children. One in four is a Balvatika pupil, the age group whose test scores predict later retention, employment and even civic participation.

Give each of those rooms a confident, trained Aaya and we add the equivalent of a full academic year to



**THREE QUARTERS OF AAYAS HOLD A SECOND JOB AFTER THE LAST BELL.**

40 percent report chronic back pain from mopping floors. Burnout is routine, turnover is rising, and still the department wonders why the teaching-learning process stays stuck.

a child's life before grade three.

Keep the mop and we lose the moment, probably for another generation.

The women are ready. Visit any primary school at eight in the morning and you will find them kneeling to tie shoelaces, humming lullabies when the bus is late, and collecting broken bangles to turn into counting tokens.

They already do the work. They simply need the wage, the title and the training that acknowledge the work matters.

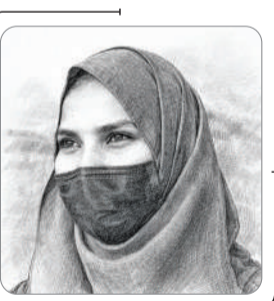
We imported the position from the best systems on earth. Now we must import the respect.

Otherwise we are not saving money. We are stealing futures.

—The writer teaches in a government school in Bandipora and writes on education and culture.

# The Loom & the Limit

Women's skill defines pashmina, but social barriers continue to define their place within it.



Kulsuma Bano

When I began my postgraduate research on women in pashmina work in Baramulla, I imagined I was studying a traditional art form.

I did not expect to walk into a world where women's hands sustain an industry that forgets their names.

Every household I visited had the same sound in the background: the soft, steady whirr of a spinning wheel. It was almost musical.

But behind that sound lay a silence about ownership, pay, and recognition.

Pashmina is a symbol of heritage, patience, and pride in Kashmir. A single shawl can travel from a small village in Baramulla to a boutique in Delhi or Paris, fetching thousands of rupees.

But the woman who spins the wool into fine yarn may earn less than what a city café charges for a cup of coffee.

I met Sara, a 23-year-old spinner, one cold morning in her modest home. Her fingers moved fast and sure over the spindle, twisting the fine fibres of raw wool into perfect threads.

"I start before sunrise," she told me, her eyes fixed on her work. "Once I finish my house chores, I sit here till late evening."

She worked beside her brother, but when it came to money, the control shifted. "He decides how to spend it. I only get a small amount for myself."

That pattern was everywhere I looked. Women produced the yarn,

the most delicate and time-consuming part of the process, while men handled the selling and transactions. They travelled to markets, negotiated prices, and brought back the earnings.

At home, women worked long hours, often under poor light, and rarely saw the real value of what they created.

In one village, I met a group of women who spent up to four months weaving a single shawl. When their total earnings were divided across that time, they made roughly 300 to 400 rupees a day, less than an unskilled labourer.

The finished product would sell for fifteen to twenty thousand rupees. "It's like our hands make gold," one woman said with a faint smile, "but we only touch dust."

Beyond wages, this imbalance is about control, over money, mobility, and decisions.

In most families, women are expected to work from home. They are discouraged from visiting markets or attending cooperative meetings.

In some cases, they are not even allowed to interact with buyers.

"Men talk to men," Naina, a 29-year-old weaver, told me. "We are not supposed to sit in the market."

Their exclusion extends to policy and planning.

In the villages where I conducted my fieldwork, over 90 percent of households were involved in pashmina weaving, but few women's names appeared in cooperative or union records.

Since their work takes place within the home, it is often dismissed as "family labour." They do not exist as workers. And that invisibility has real consequences.

Without income in their own name, women lose agency. They cannot save, invest, or make choices that improve their lives.

Some I met spoke of being mocked or scolded for asking about money. Others described verbal abuse when they questioned how their earnings were spent.



Economic dependence leaves them with little power to challenge such treatment or walk away from it.

During interviews, I often found myself struggling with anger. These women were not unskilled or passive. They were experts at what they did: patient, precise, and deeply proud of their craft.

What they lacked was access. The tools, the raw material, and the buyers were controlled by men. Even the language of the industry reflects this hierarchy: "master weaver," "dealer," "exporter" - all male titles.

The pashmina that adorns global runways owes its existence to invisible hands. Every strand that passes through a loom carries the touch of a woman who is rarely paid what she deserves. The global market celebrates the product but forgets the person behind it.

Real change must begin with ownership. Women-led cooperatives could transform this landscape by letting artisans sell directly and earn collectively.

When women control their sales, they earn more and command respect at home. In a few parts of Kashmir, small self-help groups have started doing this, but they remain underfunded and unsupported.

Skill recognition is another missing link. Government certification could help women gain fair rates and enter export chains.

If a spinner's name appeared on the product she created, her value would increase, so would her pride.

Legal protection matters too. Home-based artisans must be brought under labour laws to ensure minimum wages and social security.

Money alone cannot solve every-

thing. The deeper challenge lies in changing attitudes that see women as helpers rather than earners.

Awareness campaigns in weaving communities could help families understand that women's income is not a threat but an asset.

Access to microfinance is equally vital. Many women told me they would like to buy their own spinning wheels or raw material but lacked funds.

Small, interest-free loans could give them independence and stability.

When I look back on my research, I remember those long winter afternoons spent inside rooms where women sat spinning by the hearth. Their fingers were fast, their talk gentle, and their laughter rare. They spoke of dreams, of sending children to school, buying a machine, and having their own name on the product they make.



**THE PASHMINA THAT ADORNS GLOBAL RUNWAYS OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO INVISIBLE HANDS.**

Every strand that passes through a loom carries the touch of a woman who is rarely paid what she deserves. The global market celebrates the product but forgets the person behind it.

The beauty of a pashmina shawl lies in its softness and fine weave, but its story is one of endurance.

Behind every shawl sold abroad is a woman in Kashmir who works through cold mornings and late nights, her labour woven into something she can never claim as her own.

True value for these women will come only when the hands that create Kashmir's most treasured fabric are also allowed to own it.

Pashmina's future depends on whether the women behind the wool are finally seen, valued, and free to shape their own lives.

—The author works at HWVO and holds an MA in Gender Studies from Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. She can be reached at kulsunayousuf413@gmail.com

## Supreme Court Judge Flags Overuse Of UAPA

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Supreme Court Judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan has asserted that the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047 cannot be achieved through criminalisation of dissent, mindless arrests under the anti-terror law UAPA and "deep social fault lines".

Speaking at the first national conference of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in Bengaluru on Sunday, Justice Bhuyan also lamented the poor representation of women in the higher judiciary. He contrasted it

with the figure of more than 50 per cent women making it to the posts of judicial officers in district judiciary across the country. "But has it been replicated in constitutional courts? That is the question. That is where the scrutiny of the collegium system comes in. Why is it that when the assessment becomes subjective, women do not make the grade? Out of 287 SC judges since 1950, we had a total of only 11 women judges. Why? Starting with Fathima Beevi and now Justice Nagarathna, it is some two per cent," Justice Bhuyan said.

He said that as per the collegium's subjective assessment criteria, only a minuscule get selected as judges of high courts and the Supreme Court.

Raising serious concerns over the application of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), he referred to the data from 2019 to 2023 and said a truly developed nation must prioritise constitutional values over political slogans.

"Low convictions under UAPA show overuse, if not misuse, of the law," he said. Presenting data from 2019 till 2023 of the people arrested under the UAPA,

he said thousands were arrested, but the conviction rate is around five per cent.

"It shows consistently low conviction. What does it indicate, overuse if not misuse, and its impact on the criminal justice system. How much burden does it put on courts? This shows the vast majority were arrested but could not be convicted. This indicates many arrests were premature and unsupported by sufficient evidence," the judge said.

On the low representation of women in higher judiciary, he said they made up only 14 per

cent of high court judges.

"In the 25 HCs, we have only two women chief justices (CJs) - Gujarat and Meghalaya. One more will become CJ in a month's time. That is also highly inadequate, three out of 25 HCs," he said.

"My research shows that whenever the recruitment process is objective, more women enter the judicial space. When India becomes a developed nation (Viksit Bharat by 2047), there should be more parity in gender representation in judiciary. SC must be a rainbow institution, truly reflecting the

diversity of the nation," he said.

"My model of Viksit Bharat is equal distribution of wealth and disappearance of acute disparity... which is also the goal set in directive principles of state policies in the Constitution," he said, adding that in developed India the "judiciary must remain judiciary" and "it can't be an eternal critic or a cheerleader".

He said in developed countries, there should be more room for debate and dissent.

"Debate should not be criminalised. There should be more tolerance towards diverse views. Divergent views should be

respected. There should be more tolerance towards diverse views and criticism," he said.

On societal imbalances, he said, "Deep social fault lines are there. Viksit Bharat cannot countenance such fault lines.

"Parents cannot insist that their children will not have food prepared by a Dalit woman. That cannot be a Viksit Bharat model. We cannot have Viksit Bharat when Dalit people are made to stand in the corridor and people urinate on them. This can't be the model of development. Respect for the individual must be protected," he said.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Era Of Terror Is

long-awaited justice to affected families.

Appointment letters were also issued to 29 NoKs of government employees who lost their lives in service, along with beneficiaries under age relaxation provisions, under the Jammu and Kashmir Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022 and SRO 43.

Paying tribute to the victims, the Lieutenant Governor reiterated his administration's commitment to ensuring justice, support and recognition for families who, he said, had remained "erased from society's memory for decades."

"I pledge to the families of terror victims that we will work with full commitment to secure their dignified and honourable lives. We will discharge every duty towards them with utmost seriousness, and we will not rest until justice reaches every family," Sinha said.

Framing justice as a broader social responsibility, the Lieutenant Governor said it must extend beyond punitive action. "Justice also lies in which stories society chooses to remember. It means wiping the tears of grieving families, acknowledging their pain, and healing the wounds inflicted on their souls," he said, adding that the narratives of terror victim families were now being "rewritten with renewed memory and honour."

Calling the present moment a "decisive turning point" for Jammu and Kashmir, Sinha said both the youth and affected families aspire to a stable and dignified future. "It is our shared responsibility to make that future a reality and create the opportunities they deserve," he said.

At the same time, the Lieutenant Governor issued a strong warning to what he termed the "terror ecosystem" and its supporters. "I want to tell the remaining elements of the terror ecosystem and conflict entrepreneurs that their era of terror is over. There is no longer any safe haven in Jammu and Kashmir for terrorists or the networks that support them," he said.

Sinha also pointed to what he described as systemic failures of the past, calling the neglect of victim families a "civilisational failure." He said that, for years, families suffered not only personal loss but also social and institutional neglect, while those linked to terror were, at times, allowed to benefit.

"The most painful truth is that these families were let down by the very system whose duty was to protect them. This was not merely an administrative lapse but a collapse of social morality," he said.

#### '438 Terror Victim

where "laughter was replaced by silence" and families that had to fend for themselves for years, often facing social neglect in addition to personal loss.

Sinha on Monday handed over appointment letters to 37 next of kin of victims of terrorism and 29 next of kin of government employees who lost their lives in service.

"So far, appointment letters have been given to 438 terror-victim families. This is not merely a number - these are 438 shattered worlds," Sinha said while addressing the gathering.

Paying tribute to the victims of terrorism, the Lieutenant Governor vowed the strongest action against the terror ecosystem and its supporters.

"I pledge to the families of terror victims that we will work with full commitment to secure their dignified and honourable lives. We will discharge every duty towards them with utmost seriousness, and we will not rest until justice reaches every family," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that justice for terror victim families is not limited to punishment alone but also involves healing wounds and restoring dignity.

Sinha said that for decades, families affected by terrorism were sidelined while elements linked to terror networks allegedly received protection and benefits. Such circumstances, he said, represented a collapse of social morality and weakened law, trust and the foundations of a just society.

Over the past five to six years, however, the structure that enabled terrorism and its ecosystem has been dismantled at a rapid pace, he said, adding that individuals with direct links to terror who had secured government jobs are being removed from service. (PTI)

#### LG God Sent

families of terror victims across Jammu and Kashmir in the past eight months - many of whom had waited 15 to 26 years for relief under the rehabilitation policy.

Recalling his ordeal, Abrar said that militants slit his mother's throat in 2000, locked the family along with livestock inside their house, and set it on fire. A year later, his father was also killed in a similar manner.

"For us, the LG has come like a god-sent angel. I had lost hope long ago after running from pillar to post to pursue my case. But today, when the LG handed me the appointment letter, I could not believe my eyes," Abrar said.

Addressing the gathering, Sinha termed the prolonged delay in justice a "civilisational failure," stating that the affected families were not only devastated by terrorism but were also failed by a system meant to protect and support them.

"Justice cannot be delivered unless injustice is first recognised," the LG said.

Several other beneficiaries echoed similar

sentiments, recounting years of suffering, loss, and neglect.

Muhammad Rafiq from Bandi in Poonch district said that his father was killed by terrorists in 2001, after which he was raised by his maternal grandfather and later educated in an orphanage.

"By giving us this job, it feels like we have been given a new life. I am thankful to LG sahib," he said.

Muskan from Reasi, whose mother died in a blast and was identified only by a part of her leg, said the appointment brought long-awaited relief. "We followed the files for years, but we got job letters today. We thank LG sahib from the core of our hearts. After so many years, we feel justice has been done," she said.

Another appointee from Ramban said that his father was taken from their home and killed in 2001. "We were very young and had no understanding then. Today, after 25 years, we finally got this government job," he said, crediting his grandmother for raising and educating him through difficult times.

Many beneficiaries said they had spent decades visiting government offices without success.

"Our files gathered dust from 1991 till now," said a relative of an appointee, adding that several families in Ramban district lost multiple members in terror incidents, including mass killings in remote areas like Sumbal and Totar Dhar in 2001.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to both the Union Territory administration and the Central government for implementing a "zero tolerance" policy against militancy and ensuring long-pending cases were addressed.

Officials said the initiative aims to provide both financial stability and a sense of justice to families affected by terrorism, many of whom had been left without support for decades.

Sinha said that each such case represented homes where "laughter was replaced by silence" and families that had to fend for themselves for years, often facing social neglect in addition to personal loss.

"So far, appointment letters have been given to 438 terror-victim families. This is not merely a number - these are 438 shattered worlds," Sinha said while addressing the gathering.

"I pledge to the families of terror victims that we will work with full commitment to secure their dignified and honourable lives. We will discharge every duty towards them with utmost seriousness, and we will not rest until justice reaches every family," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Sinha began this special initiative by handing over appointment letters to the Next of Kin (NoKs) of terror victims at Baramulla on July 13, 2025. (PTI)

#### Trump Delays

lead to the "irreversible destruction" of critical energy and oil infrastructure across the region, with long-term consequences for global oil markets.

Despite the hardening positions, Trump on Monday claimed that "positive and constructive talks" had taken place with Iran over the past two days and said strikes would be postponed to allow diplomacy a chance.

However, Iranian officials swiftly dismissed the assertion.

"There are no talks taking place between Tehran and Washington," Iran's Foreign Ministry said, describing Trump's remarks as an attempt to "manage energy prices and buy time" for military planning.

Tasnim News Agency, quoting an unnamed "informed source," denied any direct or indirect contacts, suggesting the US decision to delay action was driven by concerns over the scale of Iran's potential response.

The conflict, now in its fourth week, has already widened beyond Iran's borders, with strikes reported on nuclear-linked sites in both Iran and Israel, and a reported Iranian attack on a joint UK-US base in the Indian Ocean. Casualties have mounted sharply, with over 1,500 deaths reported in Iran, more than 1,000 in Lebanon, and smaller but significant tolls in Israel and among US forces, alongside widespread displacement.

Trump's shifting stance has drawn criticism both domestically and internationally, with analysts pointing to contradictions between calls for de-escalation and a continued military buildup in the region, including the deployment of additional US Marines and naval assets.

For a president who came to power vowing to avoid "stupid" wars, the conflict he helped set in motion now risks slipping beyond his control. His administration's messaging has remained openly contradictory - talking de-escalation while deploying three more amphibious assault ships and roughly 2,500 additional Marines to the region.

The United States has also struck Iran's Natanz nuclear facility again, despite Tehran's explicit warnings against any attacks on its energy infrastructure.

Trump has repeatedly called on China, Japan and NATO to help secure and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, but none has responded.

The economic pressure at home is mounting. Gas prices in the United States have risen by 93 cents per gallon, while crude oil prices are up more than 70 percent since the start of the year.

In a striking paradox, the Trump administration has quietly begun easing restrictions on Iranian crude, allowing allies to purchase the very oil that

helps fund Tehran - while simultaneously seeking to curb its revenues.

Financial markets reacted sharply to Trump's latest comments, with Brent crude prices briefly dropping by around 13 percent before stabilising near \$101.80 per barrel.

As diplomatic uncertainty deepens and military posturing continues, the gap between Washington's ultimatums and subsequent recalibrations has emerged as a defining feature of the crisis - raising fresh questions over whether the situation is moving toward de-escalation or a broader regional confrontation.]

US Holding Talks take Iran's enriched uranium critical to its disputed nuclear program.

Axios news website quoted a US source as saying that Turkiye, Egypt, and Pakistan have been passing messages between the US and Iran over the past two days.

The foreign ministers of the three countries held separate talks with Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, the US source told Axios.

#### NIA Raids Multiple

in Faridabad, Haryana, who blew up an explosive-laden car he was driving outside the iconic monument.

The NIA has so far arrested 11 accused in the case.

#### PM Stresses Diplomacy

per cent of the world's energy is transported, are "wholly unacceptable".

He said endangering any life in this war runs counter to the interests of humanity and "India's effort is to encourage all parties to arrive at a peaceful resolution as soon as possible".

On India's diplomatic response to the West Asia conflict, the Prime Minister said India's stand has been clear from the very beginning, when the US and Israel attacked Iran and the latter retaliated by targeting its Gulf neighbours and Israel, "one of expressing deep concern, advocating de-escalation, and opposing attacks on civilians and on energy and transport infrastructure".

"India, through diplomacy, is making continuous efforts for the safe passage of Indian ships even amidst the war environment. Due to such efforts, several of our ships that were stuck in the Strait of Hormuz have also arrived in India in recent days," he said.

The prime minister also drew the attention of the House to the internal security dimension of the crisis, warning that certain elements attempt to exploit such situations.

He said all security agencies have been placed on alert and that security across all domains, coastal, border, cyber, and strategic installations, is being further strengthened.

"Whether it is coastal security, border security, cyber security, or strategic installations, the security of all is being reinforced," he said.

Urging patience, restraint, and vigilance, and cautioning against those who may seek to exploit the situation by spreading falsehoods, engaging in black-marketing, or hoarding, Modi appealed to all state governments to ensure strict monitoring and swift action against such elements.

Expressing his abiding faith in the collective resolve of the nation, the Prime Minister said that when every government and every citizen of this country walk together, "we can challenge every challenge, this is our identity, and this is our strength".

The prime minister remarked that the difficult global conditions caused by this war are likely to persist for a long time and called upon the nation to remain prepared and united, just as it had stood together during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are also making efforts to ensure that the Kharif sowing takes place properly. For this, the government has made adequate arrangements for fertilisers to deal with any emergency. In the past as well, our government did not let any global crisis impact our farmers," he said.

Modi said that as the summer season has begun in India, electricity demand has increased, but all power plants in the country have adequate coal stock available.

"India has created a record by producing more than 1 billion tonnes of coal for the second consecutive year. In the last decade, the country has also taken major steps towards renewable energy," he said.

'West Asia Situation Worrisome, Impacting Economy'

Modi described the prevailing situation in West Asia as "worrisome," warning that the ongoing conflict is adversely affecting the global economy and people's livelihoods.

Making a statement in the Lok Sabha, Modi said the crisis, now continuing for over three weeks, has created significant economic, humanitarian and security challenges.

"The current situation in West Asia is worrisome. It is having a very adverse impact on the global economy and on people's lives. The entire world is urging all parties to resolve this crisis as quickly as possible," he said.

Highlighting India's concerns, the Prime Minister said disruptions in cargo movement through the Strait of Hormuz have posed challenges since the beginning of the conflict. However, he assured that the government is working to minimise the impact on fuel supplies.

"India imports around 60 per cent of its LPG requirements. In view of uncertain supply, we are prioritising domestic availability and increasing production," he said.

Modi noted that the conflict has direct implications for India, given its strong trade ties with countries in the region and its dependence on West Asia for a significant share of crude oil and gas imports.

He also pointed out that nearly one crore Indians live and work in the region, making their safety a top priority for the government.

"The security of Indians is our foremost concern. Since the beginning of the conflict, every Indian in the affected areas has been provided necessary assistance," he said.

The Prime Minister said he has held telephonic conversations with several leaders from West Asia, who have assured the safety of Indian nationals.

He, however, acknowledged that some Indians have lost their lives and others have been injured in the conflict. "Assistance is being extended to the affected families," he said.

Calling for unity, Modi said it was important for Parliament to send a unanimous and collective message on the crisis to the world.

#### Evacuation Drags

may secure clearance within the given timeframe.

The evacuation process through land routes has remained sluggish, with only 8 to 20 students crossing the Azerbaijan border each day. Authorities had earlier established evacuation corridors through Armenia and Azerbaijan to facilitate the safe return of Indian nationals, but the limited daily movement has slowed overall progress.

Several students have already been routed to Mumbai through alternative arrangements, with a majority of those evacuated so far belonging to Jammu and Kashmir.

In total, around 200 Indian medical students are still stranded across different parts of Iran, awaiting evacuation or relocation options.

Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, Vice President of the All India Medical Students Association, acknowledged the challenges but appreciated the efforts of authorities involved in the operation. He said that despite major holidays such as Nowruz and Eid, officials and support teams have remained active on the ground.

"If the current pace continues, we are hopeful that most stranded students will be able to leave Iran by March 31," he said.

The evacuation effort is being carried out through coordination between government agencies and student bodies to ensure a safe and orderly return.

Meanwhile, parents have suggested alternative destinations such as Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Germany, expressing concern that prolonged delays could disrupt the academic future of their children.

#### Ex-Tehsildar Awarded

service, clean antecedents, and the prolonged trial spanning over 15 years.

"The gravity of the offences and the consideration that he should have acted with more composure, decorum and fairness because of his official position as Tehsildar Chadoora cannot be doubted. Law will require this Court to adequately punish him and properly sentence him....", the court said, adding, "Certain mitigating or extenuating factors do exist which are thought to be peculiar to the accused. He is now an elderly aged person having retired from services; he has faced the ordeal of a long trial for a period of some 15 years; he is stated to be the first offender; the Prosecution did not produce on record anything which could suggest that he has any track record of taking bribes or being a habitual bribe taker or that he has earlier to the instant case/incident or subsequent thereto faced any corruption allegations."

Accordingly, the convict was sentenced to one year of simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs 20,000. In default of payment of fine, the court said, he shall undergo an additional one month of simple imprisonment.

The Court also ordered that the period already undergone in custody, if any, be set off against the sentence.

#### 50 Paise Sells

coin among the donations. Though insignificant in monetary terms, organisers said its meaning elevated it far beyond its value.

"This coin has been donated for the Imam of our time. It may appear small, but it is priceless," an announcer told the gathering.

The remark struck an emotional chord, prompting an enthusiastic response from locals, who joined the auction with deep sentiment.

After competitive bidding, Javid Ahmed Sofi secured the coin with a final bid of Rs 17,000.

Residents said the moment captured the true spirit of the campaign - where sincerity and intention transformed even the smallest offering into something invaluable.

In the end, it was not the coin that carried value - but the emotion behind it.

#### J&K To Get

The Ministry further said that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) currently

operates 1,008 Automatic Weather Stations across the country, including 17 in Jammu and Kashmir.

The government added that these stations play a key role in strengthening weather forecasting systems and supporting sectors like agriculture, disaster management and aviation.

It also clarified that there is no proposal at present to install new AWS alongside existing departmental observatories, and locations are selected based on technical feasibility, coverage gaps and observational requirements.

The Centre said the initiative is part of broader efforts to enhance India's meteorological infrastructure and ensure better climate resilience, including in regions like Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

#### Para Moves Bill

would be empowered to assign districts to Jammu, Kashmir, Chenab or Pir Panjal divisions through official notifications, while ensuring geographical continuity, administrative convenience, socio-cultural cohesion and balanced regional development.

The bill seeks to address long-standing administrative challenges posed by vast geographical areas, difficult terrain and perceived regional imbalances. It also proposes a transparent legislative mechanism for the creation of new administrative units to strengthen decentralised governance and improve public service delivery.

The proposal has been submitted to the Assembly Secretariat for consideration during the ongoing Budget session. The session is set to resume on March 27 after a five-week recess following its first phase held from February 2 to 20.

During the earlier phase, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah presented the Budget on February 6, and the House passed grants for various departments after detailed discussions held in extended sittings.

As per the notified business schedule, March 30 and April 1 have been earmarked for private members' bills, while March 31 and April 2 are reserved for private members' resolutions. The session is scheduled to conclude on April 4.

#### 72 Private Bills

history. Despite politicking over these bills, records show that they have failed to move beyond the stage of introduction, leaving most proposals without legislative success. Since 1980, only three private member bills have been cleared by the legislature of the erstwhile state.

Two of those were the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement in (or Permanent Return to) the State Act, 1982 and The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 2007, both moved by Abdul Rahim Rather, Speaker of the J&K Assembly. The third was the Jammu and Kashmir State Legislature Members Pension (Amendment) Act, 2014, jointly moved by NC and PDP MLAs to enhance the pension of former legislators.

Among the 72 private member bills to be listed in this session, the spotlight is on NC MLA Tanvir Sadiq's proposal to amend the Land Grants Act, a bill addressing the issue of expired leases. Sources have not ruled out the possibility of MLAs from the ruling party and its allies supporting the bill in the House. The proposal has already evoked responses from smaller opposition parties such as the PDP and the PC.

However, it is not certain that the bill will come up for introduction - the stage where the government decides whether to allow bill for consideration before it proceeds to other stages. This uncertainty arises because the bill is likely to be listed at serial number 27. Normally, 10 to 12 bills are taken up each day when private member bills are scheduled.

Other significant private member bills include four separate proposals on liquor ban, submitted by Ali Muhammad Sagar, Mir Muhammad Fayaz, Sheikh Khursheed, and Ahsan Paradesi. Besides, three bills seeking regularisation of daily wagers have been submitted by M.Y. Tarigami (CPI(M)), Waheed-ur-Rehman Para (PDP), and Devinder Manyal (BJP).

NC MLA Bashir Ahmad Veeri's bill for amendment to the Jammu & Kashmir Reservation Act could be taken up for introduction in the House, given that it is likely to be listed at serial number 16.

A bill submitted by BJP MLA Balwant Singh Mankotia seeking ownership rights for occupants of Evacuee property could also come up for introduction in the House.

NC MLA from Pahalgam, Altaf Ahmad Wani, has submitted a bill for the protection of land and employment rights of the domiciles of the Union Territory. Its chances of coming up for introduction in the House during this session is bleak.

PDP MLA Waheed-ur-Rehman Para has submitted a bill for the creation of separate divisions for Chenab and Pir Panjal Valley and the creation of new districts. The bill is unlikely to come up for introduction in the House before 2028, given that it is likely to be listed at the tail end of the business.

Similarly, the National Law University Bill submitted by RS Pathania is also likely to be listed at the tail end of the business.

Private member bills are listed in business of the House according to the date their notices are received. Since 46 such bills of 2025 are pending for introduction, they will be given priority in the day's business as per the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the J&K Legislative Assembly. (KNO)

# From Piggy Banks To Gold: Kashmir's Emotional Outpouring For War-Torn Iran

Syed Mohammad Burhan

**SRINAGAR:** Ten-year-old Jibran Hyder from Zadibal had spent nearly a year saving for a bicycle. Every rupee went carefully into a small piggy bank, carrying a child's quiet dream.

But the developments in Iran changed his plans, and he chose to give it all away. The dream was set aside in a moment of conviction.

"The martyrdom of Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei motivated me," Jibran said. "I donated Rs 17,600 from my piggy bank, including my Eidi. We did not celebrate Eid. I was saving this money for a cycle for the past one year, but after his martyrdom, I decided to donate it."

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a US-Israeli strike on February 28, triggering widespread mourning and global reactions.

Jibran's story has come to symbolise a much larger movement unfolding across Kashmir—one marked by sacrifice, emotion, and an overwhelming sense of solidarity.

Across the Kashmir Valley, thousands have stepped forward to donate money, gold, and personal belongings for war-affected people in Iran. What stands out is not the scale alone, but the depth of what is being given.

At a small roadside stall in Khomeini Chowk, currency notes, copper vessels and gold lay scattered across a metal tray, mixed with coins and small offerings. A handwritten sign reading "Donation for Iran" hung across the front, while an Iranian flag fluttered above. People stopped briefly, reached into their pocket



Abid Bhat/KO

ets, and quietly handed over what they could.

Children have emerged as some of the most moving participants.

Seven-year-old Banafsha Zehra donated Rs 7,000—her entire Eidi—saying she was deeply affected by the suffering of children and those who died in the Minab school bombing. "I donated this for the children and for the school," she said.

Nine-year-old Mohammad Hasnain contributed Rs 2,100 from his savings. "I donate this for our new leader, in his love," he said.

Such moments have repeated across districts—children breaking piggy banks, young girls removing earrings, and families giving

away what little they possess.

Women, too, have led the effort with quiet resilience. At donation points, many parted with gold ornaments—often their most valued assets. Outside an Imambara in Bemina, one woman said, "I am an orphan. If I could, I would have sacrificed all seven members of my family. This is all I could do."

At Chak Sadrabal, a physically challenged woman arrived in a wheelchair and donated gold earrings along with Rs 6,000. "This is for the esal-e-sawab of my mother," she said.

Most of the donation drives are being organised by local mohalla committees operating through Imambaras, with collections taking place at the neighbourhood

level. The overall amount raised across Kashmir, however, is yet to be officially consolidated.

In Gund Hassi Bhat, locals said they collectively raised around Rs 30 lakh, reflecting the strength of grassroots participation.

Among the larger contributions, Sadat Ali Mir donated a tipper vehicle, symbolising the scale of commitment seen across the Valley.

In another video circulating on social media, a man from Budgam claims to have collected 11 lakhs from the people.

The campaign has also transcended sectarian boundaries, with members of the Sunni community joining in significant numbers, reinforcing a shared hu-

manitarian spirit.

"I sold my bike to support the cause," said a member of the sunni community.

Budgam MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi announced that he has donated his one month's salary towards Iran.

Organisers said many people are also directly transferring funds to accounts linked to the Iranian embassy.

Observers say what defines this movement is not the amount collected, but the intention behind it.

"This is not about charity," a volunteer said. "It is about feeling someone else's pain as your own."

From a child giving up a bicycle to others parting with lifelong savings, Kashmir's response has turned into a powerful expression of empathy, where every contribution carries a story.

Reacting to a woman's donation of gold kept for 28 years in memory of her late husband, the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi called the gesture the greatest source of comfort for the people of Iran.

"A respected sister from Kashmir donated the gold kept as a memento of her husband who passed away 28 years ago with a heart full of love and solidarity for the people of #Iran. Your tears and pure emotions are the greatest source of comfort for the people of Iran and will never be forgotten. Thank you #Kashmir. Thank you #India," the Iranian Embassy X handle 'Iran in India' posted.

The contributions are expected to be channelled through official relief organisations, including the Iranian Embassy, the officials said.

## Cybercrime Cases in J&K Rise Steadily, 185 Reported in 2023: GoI

**SRINAGAR:** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has revealed that cybercrime cases in Jammu & Kashmir have witnessed a steady increase over the past three years, with 185 cases reported in 2023. According to official data presented in the Lok Sabha, J&K recorded 154 cybercrime cases in 2021, which rose to 173 in 2022 and further to 185 in 2023, indicating a gradual upward trend in such offences.

The data, compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and accessed by KNO, highlights the growing challenge of cyber-related crimes across the Union Territory, amid increasing digital penetration and online activity.

The Ministry further informed that multiple forensic mechanisms have been strengthened at the national level to tackle cybercrimes. At present, seven Central Forensic Science Laboratories and 27 State Forensic Science Laboratories are operational across the country to assist in investigations.

Additionally, under centrally sponsored schemes, financial assistance has been extended to several states and Union Territories for enhancing cyber forensic capabilities, including setting up cyber forensic training laboratories.

Officials said the government continues to focus on capacity building, modernisation of forensic infrastructure, and early-stage cyber investigation support to curb the rising trend of cybercrimes. (Observer News Service)

## Centre Focuses on Developing J&K as Mountain Tourism Hub

**SRINAGAR:** The Centre on Monday said that Jammu and Kashmir is receiving focused attention under various central tourism schemes aimed at developing world-class infrastructure and promoting mountain tourism in the region.

Replying to a question in Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Tourism said that while development of tourism remains primarily the responsibility of States and Union Territories, the Centre is supplementing efforts through flagship schemes like Swadesh Darshan, Swadesh Darshan 2.0, PRASHAD and other initiatives.

The government said that Jammu and Kashmir has been included in the Himalayan tourism circuit under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, with multiple projects sanctioned to boost tourism infrastructure across key destinations, including Jammu, Srinagar, Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Baramulla and Kupwara.

According to official details accessed by KNO, several projects worth crores have been sanctioned in J&K under the Himalayan Circuit, focusing on the development of tourist facilities, connectivity, and infrastructure in both the Kashmir and Jammu regions. These include projects for areas such as Anantnag, Pulwama, Kishtwar, Daksam and Ranjit Sagar Dam, among others.

The Ministry further said that the government is also investing in restoration and development works, including infrastructure created in lieu of assets damaged during the 2014 floods in the region.

Under the PRASHAD scheme, the government has also sanctioned development works at Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar to enhance pilgrimage tourism and improve facilities for visitors.

Highlighting future plans, the government said that in the Union Budget 2026-27, special emphasis has been laid on developing world-class trekking and hiking trails in Jammu and Kashmir, recognising its vast potential in mountain tourism.

The Centre added that under various national schemes, financial assistance is being provided to improve tourism experiences, infrastructure and sustainability across the region, aiming to position Jammu and Kashmir as a global tourism destination. (Observer News Service)

## SSP Kulgam Chairs Joint Security Review Meeting

**SRINAGAR:** Senior Superintendent of Police Kulgam Anayat Ali Chowdhary-IPS, chaired a joint security review meeting with officers of the Police, CRPF and Army at DPO Kulgam. The meeting was attended by the CO 18-BN CRPF, Jitendra Mohan Shilswal, CO 163-BN CRPF, Nripendra Kumar Singh, CO 46-BN CRPF, Devender Singh Pal, CO 90-BN CRPF, Kamlesh Prasad Singh, CO 9-RR, Kumar Varun, CO 34-RR, Sandeep Kumar Mehta and Addl. SP Kulgam Mohd Aftab Awan-JKPS.

According to a statement issued to Kashmir Observer, the primary agenda of the session was to review and assess the overall security situation in the district. During the meeting, SSP Kulgam laid special emphasis on maintaining proper coordination and professionalism between police, Army, and CRPF in handling anti-terror operations and law and order situations. He highlighted the growing importance of adopting proactive security measures and increasing vigilance to prevent any untoward incident.

Furthermore, the discussions focused on intelligence gathering, threat assessments, emergency response preparedness, and inter-agency coordination. SSP Kulgam underlined the need to bolster synergy among all security and intelligence agencies for seamless information sharing and joint operational readiness. Besides, the security of the minority population residing in the area was also reviewed and measures to augment their security were also assessed to make them vibrant. (Observer News Service)

## Zojila Axis Partially Restored After Snowfall

Ganderbal: The Srinagar-Ladakh highway has been restored for one-way movement of light motor vehicles, with traffic allowed from Sonamarg towards Kargil from Monday afternoon, Traffic Police said.

The decision follows improvement in weather conditions and completion of snow clearance operations along the route, particularly across the Zojila axis.

The reopening is significant as the highway serves as a crucial link between Kashmir and Ladakh, and its closure since March 19 had left hundreds of passenger and goods vehicles stranded on both sides. According to officials, the road was opened for limited traffic after the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) gave clearance following emergency snow removal efforts carried out from both ends of the highway.

A Traffic Police officer told the news agency Kashmir News Trust that light motor vehicles, including passenger vehicles and Tata Mobile vehicles, were allowed to proceed from Sonamarg towards Kargil from 2 pm.

He added that heavy vehicles and goods carriers have not yet been permitted due to prevailing weather conditions and the risk of avalanches at vulnerable points along Zojila.

"Movement of heavy vehicles will depend on weather stability. A separate advisory will be issued once conditions improve," the officer said.

Authorities said the highway had been closed as a precautionary measure on March 19 following heavy snowfall, leading to accumulation of snow and heightened avalanche risk.

The Border Roads Organization undertook intensive clearance operations on a priority basis to restore connectivity, officials said. (Observer News Service)

## 3-Month Ration Likely in J&K from April

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu & Kashmir is likely to roll out a three-month ration supply scheme from the month of April, with the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) working on modalities following directions from the Government of India, officials said here on Monday.

A CAPD official told KNO that the department has received instructions to ensure availability of ration for three months, but the proposal is still under process.

"We have received directions from the Government of India (GoI) to provide three months' ration. The department is working on it, but things have not been finalised yet," the official said, adding that the directions have been issued to all States and Union Territories and not only to Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the scheme is anticipated to be launched at the earliest from April. "It is expected that from next month the ration scheme can start, but final-stage meetings are yet to take place and modalities are still being worked out," he said.

The official said the move is aimed at ensuring smoother and more efficient distribution of foodgrains to beneficiaries across the Union Territory.

Regarding the quantity, he said

the monthly ration entitlement will be multiplied by three and provided at once.

Meanwhile, the development comes as the Centre recently reviewed key aspects of foodgrain procurement, storage and Public Distribution System (PDS) reforms with States and Union Territories.

As per details of the meeting available with KNO, chaired by the Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD) in New Delhi, the wheat procurement target for the upcoming Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2026-27 has been fixed at 303 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), while paddy procurement for Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2025-26 (Rabi crop) has been estimated at 76 LMT (in terms of rice).

The Centre also projected procurement of around 7.79 LMT of coarse grains, including millets (Shri Anna) and ensured availability of packaging material with allocation of 7.83 lakh jute bales and 9.22 lakh HDPE bags.

Key PDS reforms discussed in the meeting included pilot distribution of improved rice with up to 10 percent broken grains, QR code tagging of foodgrain bags and expansion of digital tools like "Anna Chakra" for supply chain optimisation along with Vehicle Location Tracking System (VLTS).

## No Fuel Shortage in Kashmir: Div Com

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg on Monday said there is no shortage of fuel or LPG in the Valley, asserting that adequate stocks are available and the situation is under close monitoring at multiple levels.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, the Divisional Commissioner, per KNO said the domestic LPG supply across Kashmir is running smoothly, with an available stock position of around 10 to 15 days. "The stock position is dynamic, but at present we have sufficient availability. Continuous monitoring is being carried out at both divisional and district levels to ensure there is no disruption," he said.

He added that supplies of petrol and diesel are also stable, with oil marketing companies being closely monitored by district-level committees to prevent any irregularities such as hoarding, black marketing or overpricing.

"Control rooms at district and divisional levels are actively following up on supply and distribution. The Food and Civil Supplies Department is generating daily reports in a centralised format, which are be-

ing reviewed regularly to ensure the public does not face inconvenience," Garg said.

Addressing complaints regarding delays in LPG deliveries, he said such issues are being handled on a case-to-case basis by Deputy Commissioners and concerned departments. "Teams on the ground are actively resolving these complaints to ensure timely delivery," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner urged people to rely only on official communication and avoid panic. "There is no need to believe in rumours or unverified information. The government is committed to keeping the public informed and ensuring uninterrupted supply," he added.

On the issue of students from Jammu and Kashmir stranded in Iran, he said both the Government of India and the Union Territory administration are making sustained efforts to ensure their safe return.

He said dedicated helplines have been set up and continuous communication is being maintained with parents through control rooms. "We are sharing every update received from the Government of India with the families. The Chief Minister has also assured all possible support," he said.

## Mustard Fields across Kashmir Draw Crowds, Cameras

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** With the onset of spring and mustard flowers in full bloom, several stretches along the national highway and adjoining areas in Kashmir have been transformed into vibrant yellow landscapes, drawing hundreds of tourists, mostly locals, who are flocking to these fields to relax, take selfies, and capture the seasonal beauty.

From Pampore's saffron belt to the outskirts of Anantnag and Baramulla, mustard fields have become a major attraction over the past one week. The bloom, enhanced by recent rains, has created picturesque scenes that are increasingly being compared to the Valley's tourist spots.

Locals said the foothill has surged significantly, especially with the festive rush around Eid, adding to the number of visitors.

"Over the last few days, we have seen an increase in tourists visiting these fields. But since Eid, the rush has grown even more. People stop their vehicles along the highway and spend time here, clicking pictures," Ghulam Rasool Wani, a resident of Awantipora, told KNO.

He added that the recent spell of rain has further brightened the mustard bloom, making the fields more attractive. "Every day, hundreds of people—families, youngsters, and even elderly visitors—are coming here. The yellow fields look stunning, and people don't want to miss the chance to capture the moment," he said. In south Kashmir's Aishmuqam area, locals echoed similar observations.

A local, Tariq Ahmad Dar, said that the scenic beauty of mustard fields is compelling visitors to step out of their vehicles and immerse themselves in the surroundings.

## DC Sgr Presides over Mega Job Fair at Kashmir Haat

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Monday presided over a one day Mega Job Fair at Kashmir Haat (Numaish Gah) Exhibition Ground, aimed at promoting employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and enhancing self-employment opportunities among the youth of the district.

Deputy Director Employment, Srinagar, Shubi Tabasum, District Employment Officer, Career Counselling Officer (CCO), other senior Officers from the Employment Department and other concerned also attended the event.



"Tourists who are on their way to Pahalgam or other destinations often stop here. They walk into the fields, spend time, and take photographs. The atmosphere is lively, especially these days," he said.

In north Kashmir, the trend is equally visible. Umar Mushtaq, a resident of Tangmar, said that tourists heading towards Gulmarg are also halting in nearby mustard fields to enjoy the spring bloom.

"People visiting Gulmarg make it a point to stop along the way. These fields have become like mini tourist spots. You can see groups taking selfies, children playing, and families enjoying picnics," he said.

Tourists themselves described the experience as refreshing and memorable. Many said that visiting Kashmir during spring offers a unique charm that sets it apart from other seasons.

Vijay Gupta, a tourist from Gujarat, said that spending time in the mustard fields has been a peaceful experience. "I feel lucky to be here during spring. The weather is pleasant, and these mustard fields are simply beautiful. It gives a sense of calm and happiness," he said.

The job fair witnessed an overwhelming response from the youth who registered online for participation in the event.

Around 22 companies with adequate vacancies in diverse sectors including Tourism, Agriculture, Horticulture, Insurance, Banking, Automobile and Hospitality were part of this event offering a wide range of employment opportunities.

During the programme, the Deputy Commissioner inspected several stalls set up by government departments showcasing various self-employment schemes. These stalls provided detailed information on scheme

benefits, financial assistance, and application procedures aimed at facilitating and encouraging aspiring entrepreneurs.

Addressing the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner underscored the importance of such job fairs in creating a direct interface between job providers and job seekers, thereby enabling placements, selections, and formal registration of unemployed youth with the Employment Department.

He further urged youth to avail hassle-free credit facilities offered under key government initiatives such as Mission YUVA, HADP, and JKICP.



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